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**Care of the Postcolonial Self:  
Cultivating Nationalisms in *The Philippine Readers***

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# Care of the Postcolonial Self: Cultivating Nationalisms in *The Philippine Readers*

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## Abstract

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The article examines the cultivation of revolutionary nationalisms and the construction of postcolonial subjectivities under a foreign regime. The analysis centers on *The Philippine Readers*, one of the longest published and most widely adopted reading series for elementary students in grades 1 to 7 in the Philippines from the 1920s to the 1960s. Due to its use and scope, the *Readers* significantly impacted the development of Filipino mind, character, teaching, and learning for generations. The article mobilizes Michel Foucault's notion of care of the self, whereby individuals undergo intensive self-scrutiny through texts that serve as manuals for living. It contends that the *Readers* functioned as a crucial guide that enabled Filipinos to care for themselves in instilling furtive yet subversive forms of nationalism under United States rule. More specifically, two forms of nationalism are discussed, and the concepts of covert and hybrid nationalisms are situated within scholarly discussions regarding colonial complicity and opposition as well as Western and indigenous influences.

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**Keywords:** nationalism, colonialism, care of the self, basal readers, Philippines, United States, Michel Foucault

# **El Cuidado del Yo Postcolonial: Cultivando los Nacionalismos en la Serie de Libros *The Philippine Readers***

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## **Resumen**

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El artículo analiza el cultivo de los nacionalismos revolucionarios y la construcción de subjetividades postcoloniales bajo un régimen extranjero. El análisis se centra en la serie de libros escolares “*The Philippine Readers*.” Esta serie de libros fue ampliamente adaptada para estudiantes de primaria grados 1 a 7 y fue una de las publicaciones más conocidas en las Filipinas durante las épocas de 1920 hasta 1960. Debido a su uso y alcance, esta serie de libros impactaron significativamente el desarrollo del pensamiento de los Filipinos, en el carácter, la enseñanza y el aprendizaje de varias generaciones. El artículo se basa en la idea de autocuidado de Michel Foucault, en la cual personas se someten a un intenso autoanálisis a través de textos que sirven como manuales para la vida. Este trabajo sostiene que los libros funcionaron como una guía fundamental que permitieron a los Filipinos cuidarse por sí mismos por medio de persuasiones subversivas e encubiertas de nacionalismo por el gobierno estadounidense. Más concretamente, se analizan dos formas de nacionalismo, además de los conceptos de nacionalismo encubierto y nacionalismo híbrido que se encuentran dentro de las discusiones académicas sobre la complicidad y oposición colonial y sobre las influencias occidentales e indígenas.

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**Palabras clave:** nacionalismo, colonialismo, autocuidado, lecturas basales, Filipinas, Estados Unidos, Michel Foucault

In the short story “Carlos and the Flag,” a young boy named Carlos asks his mother about the two flags flying over the schoolhouse. His mother replies that Filipinos have two flags, the flag of the United States and the flag of the Philippines. When he inquires about the Philippine flag, his mother tells him:

If it could talk, the flag would say many things to us. It would tell us how men have had faith in it, and how they have died in battle to keep it safe. It would ask us to help our country. It would ask us to be brave and strong and good. Our country needs such men and women. Our flag means more to us than we can put into words. It means our country. When you look at it, think what our country does for us. (Osias, 1932b, p. 138)

Set in the early 1900s when the Philippines was occupied and governed by the United States, the story conveys an intergenerational dialogue on nationalism within the context of colonial rule. The mother’s response to her son’s query about the Philippine flag begins with “if it could talk, the flag would say many things to us.” Signifying the country metonymically, the flag would narrate stories of Filipino faith and sacrifice, their duty and service, and their need to remain “brave and strong and good” so that they could keep the country safe. Carlos’ mother reminds him to “think what our country does for us,” prompting him to consider what he could do for it in return. Yet, as her first line indicates, these narratives and urgings could only be expressed if the flag could talk.

Why could the Philippine flag *not* talk? At the time, the Philippine flag hangs below the United States flag, which asserts its colonial authority and control not only over Filipino people, institutions, and resources, but also over the historical narratives that could be told and not be told. Under US colonial governmentality, silenced are the chronicles of revolutionary resistance and struggles for national sovereignty. The history and continuation of anti-colonial independence movements by Filipinos against US rule during this time period become subjugated knowledge that cannot be explicitly relayed in official narratives (see, e.g., Kramer, 2006; Linn, 2000; Mojares, 1999; Rafael, 2000; Taylor, 1971). The scene between the mother and son in the short story “Carlos and the Flag” consequently indexes a clandestine technique to explain the sociocultural and political

dynamics of the period. It functions as a subversive tactic by Filipinos to express revolutionary ideas and yearnings that they could not openly discuss and act upon. The fictionalized conversation does not call for outright opposition and direct resistance, but it offers a mechanism to speak the unspeakable and instill a pro-independence nationalist aspiration within the younger generation living under colonialism. Such undercover form of nationalism is the “more to us” in the mother’s response that could hardly be put into words in the dominant discourse of empire.

This article begins with a short story in order to address two central research questions: How does nationalism develop under the regime of a foreign power? What kind of postcolonial subject is produced under such conditions? The first question will center on “nationalism” because, following Benedict Anderson (1991), “nations inspire love, and often profoundly self-sacrificing love” amongst people who imagine their communities within particular cultural, spatial, and temporal boundaries (p.14). Nationalism ignites people’s pride and courage to defend their nations and to fight for their freedom, thereby operating as a powerful oppositional discourse and praxis against foreign rule. The second question will mobilize the term “postcolonial” to convey the ongoing discourses, practices, and effects of coloniality during and after territorial occupation as well as the various ways individuals and multitudes navigate within and against colonial subjugation (Coloma, 2009). My interest in the ways in which postcolonial subjectivities are constituted is intricately linked to the first question through my investigation of how dynamics of nationalism under colonialism produce particular selves.

To answer the research questions anchoring this article, I will examine *The Philippine Readers*, the first series of basal readers written and edited by a Filipino during US colonial rule in the Philippines. Used in public schools from the 1920s to the 1960s, the *Readers*—from which the short story “Carlos and the Flag” derived—was one of the longest published and most widely adopted reading series for elementary students in grades 1 to 7 in the country. Due to its use and scope, the *Readers* significantly impacted the development of Filipino mind, character, teaching, and learning for generations. For my analysis of the *Readers*, I will draw on Michel Foucault’s (1988) concept of “care of the self” to delineate the production of postcolonial subjectivity within the historical context of nationalism under foreign control. According to Foucault, care of the self is “an

intensification of the relation to oneself by which one constituted oneself as the subject of one's acts" (p. 41). In other words, one's attention is intensely brought to bear on oneself, on one's thoughts, values, bodies, behaviors, and interactions, for self formation and mastery. In taking care of the self, one uses texts "as a manual for living, a tool that can be used over the course of one's existence and adapted to life's changing circumstances" (p. 6). I contend that *The Philippine Readers* functioned as an important "handbook-for-daily-living" (p. 6) that enabled Filipinos to take care of themselves in cultivating oppositional forms of nationalism under the US regime.

To elaborate on these ideas, the article will be divided into four sections. The next section will situate my examination of *The Philippine Readers* within the historical context of the Philippines under US colonial rule and through my use of Foucaultian analytical concepts. The subsequent two sections will highlight the two types of nationalism under colonialism that are enabled by the *Readers*. First, covert nationalism is a furtive yet subversive mode to instill passion and pride for the nation while under colonial control. Second, hybrid nationalism is an integrationist mode to juxtapose local and global cultural aspects for self and community formation. In the conclusion, I will elaborate on the cultivation of a postcolonial self that moves away from the binaries of colonial complicity and opposition and of Western and native influences in order to pursue more liberatory possibilities for subjectivity and agency.

### **Historical Context and Foucaultian Analysis**

The Philippines is an archipelago of 7,107 islands, located in Southeast Asia on the western edge of the Pacific Ocean. Due to its strategic geographical location as an entryway into Asia and its rich natural resources, it has been highly coveted by colonial powers. Three empires have occupied and governed the country: Spain, from 1565 to 1898; the United States, from 1899 until 1941; and Japan, during the Second World War. Under different colonial administrations for close to four hundred years, the Philippines became an independent nation-state in 1946. Because of its long history of subjugation under Western and Asian regimes, the Philippines is an important and revealing site to examine the intricate

connections between education and the development of nationalisms under colonialism.

My work scrutinizes the United States colonial period because the US developed a more extensive system of free public education in the Philippines, compared to its Spanish and Japanese counterparts (Alzona, 1932; Martin, 1953). The US system of public schooling in the Philippines oversaw the construction of new school buildings in rural and urban areas and the importation of educators from the United States to teach Filipino students and train Filipino teachers and administrators. It enrolled thousands of students, with little regard for their class, religious, and linguistic backgrounds, unlike the privileging of children from elite and middle-class families by private Catholic schools during the Spanish period. The three-year Japanese occupation was brief, and overall it had relatively little substantive impact on the public school system. When the Philippines became independent after Japanese rule, the public school system retained many of the educational policies, programs, and practices established under the US regime. One of the most crucial and still ubiquitous educational policies from the US era was the use of English as the main medium of instruction in public schools (Hsu, 2013; Wesling, 2011). US officials in the archipelago initially ordered basal readers from the United States to instill English literacy, but subsequently realized that their content held minimal relevance to Filipino students. For instance, stories of White children enjoying Thanksgiving dinner and playing in snow were completely foreign to children in a tropical country who were immersed in different cultural traditions and activities. US and Filipino educators identified a curricular and pedagogical solution to the problem of colonial literacy: for the English language to take root in the country, more culturally appropriate materials for Filipino students were direly needed.

To advance the cause of English literacy and generate curriculum content that was relevant to Filipino children, various basal readers were developed by US and Filipino authors and teachers in the early 1900s. However, none could compare to the educational longevity and impact on English literacy in the Philippines as *The Philippine Readers*. First released in 1918 by the Boston-based US publisher Ginn and Company, the *Readers* was adopted for use in the public schools in the Philippines from the 1920s to the 1960s. The series was written and edited by Camilo Osias, a Filipino educator who later became a prominent politician (Coloma, 2005). Born in

1889 in Balaoan, La Union in northern Philippines, Osias hailed from a humble farming family, but gained the attention and support of US educators due to his intellectual prowess and diligence. From 1905 to 1910, he was a government-sponsored student in the United States, and matriculated at Western Illinois State Normal School (now Western Illinois University) and Teachers College at Columbia University in pursuit of his bachelor's and advanced degrees in education. Upon his return to the Philippines, Osias rose to become the first Filipino school division superintendent, the highest ranking Filipino in the US-controlled national Bureau of Education as assistant director, the president of National University, a senator in the Philippine Congress, and a resident commissioner in the United States House of Representatives.

For my analysis of *The Philippine Readers*, my focus will be neither on the author and the reasons why he wrote the books, nor on the process of the books' production and circulation. Elsewhere I have written a biographical essay on Camilo Osias (1889-1976), detailing his childhood at the turn of the twentieth century, his colonial schooling in the Philippines and the United States, and its impact on his educational and political career (Coloma, 2005). Admittedly authors have goals and intentions for their books, often infusing them with their own interests, backgrounds, and perspectives. In one of the *Readers* prefaces, Osias indicates that "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. Both are aware of the things in Philippine and foreign life and literature worthy of transmission to Filipino children" (Osias, 1932a, p. iv). I do not dismiss the fact that Osias as the author/editor played a crucial role in writing and organizing the ideas and principles that were embedded in the *Readers* stories. However, following Michel Foucault's (1977) critique of the author, I consider the author as "a function of discourse" whereby "authentication no longer required reference to the individual who produced [the texts]" and "the role of the author disappeared as an index of truthfulness" (pp. 124, 126). My goal for this article is not to track and validate the relationship between the author and the text. In other words, it is not to determine the representational correspondence between Osias' experiences and the values and beliefs conveyed in the *Readers*. My objective is rather to discern the discourses of nationalisms in the *Readers* and the textbooks' role as literacy guides in the



production of subjectivities under colonial rule. Instead of searching for origin or correspondence, I am particularly interested in the generative effect of the *Readers* in constituting a postcolonial self.

My analysis of the *Readers* will also center on a complete set of books for Grades 1 to 7. With the aim of finding the books' earliest editions, I pursued archival research online and in person (Hill, 1993; Ramsey et al., 2009). For archival research, I drew insights from Ann Laura Stoler who indicates that

“the archive” for historians and “the Archive” for cultural theorists have been wholly different analytic objects: for the former, a body of documents and the institutions that house them, for the latter, a metaphoric invocation for any corpus of selective collections and the longings that the acquisitive quests for the primary, originary, and untouched entail. (Stoler, 2009, p. 45)

Bringing both notions together and reading the archive “along the grain” instead of against it, she notes that “the archival turn provides a way to cut through the distorted optics of colonial historiography and the distinctions that cordoned off fiction from authorized truths” (p. 47). In the United States, I searched in the Library of Congress and the libraries at University of Michigan and University of California–Berkeley with their extensive archival collections on the Philippines. In the Philippines, I explored the National Library and the libraries at Ateneo de Manila University and University of the Philippines–Diliman, two top-ranked institutions of higher education. Although I was able to locate and gather books for Grades 1 to 7 from different sources, I was only able to have access to two first edition books; the rest were of later editions. The first edition copies of *The Philippine Readers* that I read and examined were Book 1 with a 1927 copyright and Book 7 with a 1920 copyright. The earliest revised edition copies for Books 2 to 6 that I located physically all had a 1932 copyright. I note the limitation of my archival research by not being able to locate the first edition copies of the *Readers* for originality and a complete set of all seven books from the same copyright year for consistency. When I came across books of the same grade level but from different editions and copyright years, my comparative review revealed very minor changes in the books' introductory prefaces and story selections.

Even though my methodological approach did not completely resolve the problem of textual originality and consistency, I directed my analytical attention to the ways in which the *Readers* were structured as an archive. According to Foucault (1972), an archive is “the law of what can be said, the system that governs the appearance of statements as unique events” (p. 129). It regulates what can be included and excluded in a discourse, thereby defining “at the outset the system of its enunciability... [and] the system of its functioning” (p. 129). With my research question on discourses of nationalism in mind, I examined the *Readers*’ introductory prefaces for governing rules and patterns. At the beginning of Book 1, the *Readers* announces its literacy goals and target audience: “the first of a series of story readers which relate stories and depict activities of genuine interest ... [to] meet the language and reading needs of Filipino pupils” (Osias, 1927, p. 3). Book 2 features the experiences of “four typical Filipino children” (Pedro, Rita, Juan, and Clara) and the concept of helping (Osias, 1932a, p. iii). Book 3 continues with “character-building” and the “formation of habits which Filipino children ought to form” (Osias, 1932b, p. iv). The promotion of characteristics and habits for nationalism are more explicitly articulated in subsequent books: “to develop civic spirit and patriotism” in Book 4 (Osias, 1932c, p. iii); and to instill courage, compassion, and awareness through “stories that tell about brave and kind deeds, and selections that will help you understand more about life and the things you see about you” in Book 5 (Osias, 1932d, p. iii). Book 6 fosters diligence and perseverance because “people who work hard succeed best ... because they never cease trying even in the face of failure” (Osias, 1932e, p. iii), while Book 7 foregrounds patriotic service through “men and women who were brave and unselfish and patriotic, and whose lives were filled with service” (Osias, 1920, p. v).

I argue that the textual cultivation of nationalist values and principles in the context of foreign rule constitutes the formation of subjectivities that work within and against colonial subjugation. For this argument, I draw on Michel Foucault’s (1988) concept of “care of the self” from *History of Sexuality, Volume 3*, the last book in his published trilogy on Western sexuality. Although this volume investigates philosophical and medical reflections on sexual pleasure and conduct during classical antiquity in the Greco-Roman world, I want to deploy queer insights *beyond* their common use in studies of sexuality. Posed differently, “what if [queer theory] is

mobilized in ways that are different from the ways in which it is typically employed? What is a queer trespassing like, a dangerous yet useful move that gazes away from gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) subjects, and dallies with other realms of possibilities” (Coloma, 2006, p. 639)? My move to de-link queer insights from GLBT subjects is not meant to minimize the significance of theoretical and empirical inquiries into conventional GLBT topics. Rather it is meant to expand the analytical reach of queer theory and delve into topics outside of its so-called proper and normative parameters. In other words, my queer-beyond-sexuality approach does not disregard the realities and conditions of GLBT subjects or the need to continue pursuing research on this area of inquiry. It chooses, instead, to create new analytical connections and articulations.

Toward this point, Foucault’s interest in how subjects are constituted serves as a useful framework for my research on nationalism, postcoloniality, and education. In *History of Sexuality, Volume 3*, Foucault (1988) tracks the “development of the art of living under the theme of the care of oneself” (p. 45). Although he foregrounds sexuality in his elaboration of the care of the self, I mobilize it instead to examine the construction of postcolonial subjectivities within the historical context of nationalism under foreign control. For Foucault, care of the self

took the form of an attitude, a mode of behavior; it became instilled in ways of living; it evolved into procedures, practices, and formulas that people reflected on, developed, perfected, and taught. It thus came to constitute a social practice, giving rise to relationships between individuals, to exchanges and communications, and at times even to institutions. And it gave rise, finally, to a certain mode of knowledge and to the elaboration of a science. (p. 45)

Care of the self, therefore, is an overarching way of living that shapes one’s beliefs, thoughts, and behaviors as well as one’s sense of self, interactions with others, and engagements with institutions. It is not an attitude that is innate or natural in oneself; it is instilled as an “application of oneself to oneself” (p. 46). In other words, one learns, reflects on, self-examines, adopts, and eventually internalizes particular values and

practices. Care of the self is “a corpus of knowledge and rules ... in the form of regimen, a voluntary and rational structure of conduct” (p. 100).

So, how does one develop the art of living through care of the self? According to Foucault (1988), teachers and texts serve as guides in one’s development of care of the self. Teachers are usually “the most advanced members” of a group who have “the task of tutoring the others (either individually or in a more collective fashion)” (p. 52). They can also be “a private consultant who served in a family or a group as a life counselor, a political adviser, a potential intermediary in a negotiation” (p. 52). They often take the interchangeable roles of “professor, guide, adviser, and personal confidant” (p. 52). Similar to teachers, texts “give advice on behavior and precepts for living” (p. 36). They enable one “to get to know oneself, through reading, through the precepts and examples that will provide inspiration, and, by contemplating a life reduced to its essentials, to rediscover the basic principles of a rational conduct” (pp. 50-51). In this article, I consider *The Philippine Readers* as significant guiding texts to instill basic principles of nationalism to Filipino students during the US colonial period. To delineate the ways teachers utilized the *Readers* pedagogically in their classrooms will require additional archival research and will be beyond the scope of this article. Hence, I will focus on the discourses of nationalism embedded in the *Readers*, such as the covert and hybrid forms of nationalism, that will be discussed in the next two sections.

### **Covert Nationalism**

The scholarly literature on nationalism is quite extensive and diverse, with research topics including its origins, circulations, and effects; group identities, affinities, and conflicts; governance and power; cultural and geographical boundaries; reactions to changing social, political, and economic dynamics; and impact of globalization and diaspora (Gellner, 2006; Harris, 2009; Smith, 2013; Spencer & Wollman, 2002). Within this richly complex and highly contested field of inquiry, my theoretical and empirical interest lies in colonialism and the use of nationalism as anti-colonial resistance. One of the most strident critics of nationalism is Frantz Fanon (2005) who argues that nationalism primarily benefits native elites who replace ousted colonizers, define the new national culture, and govern the (formerly colonized) country under similar structural hierarchies and

inequities. For genuine societal transformation to occur in postcolonial states, he advocates for the justified use of violence in liberatory struggles especially against armed military power. Fanon's ideas on nationalism and decolonization have been highly influential in social movements across the world.

In my view, Fanon's formulation of nationalism and anti-colonial resistance is premised on a dichotomous and, ultimately, limiting binary that positions postcolonial subjects either as complicit accommodationists or as oppositional revolutionaries. Consistent with Marxist views, he situates the native bourgeois as complicit accommodationists and the general populace as having the potential to become oppositional revolutionaries. The public's unveiled realization of the psychic and physical dehumanizing effects of colonialism at individual and institutional levels may catalytically turn their revolutionary potential into direct action (Fanon, 2005). My work challenges Fanon's binary positions of complicity versus opposition for postcolonial subjects, especially when opposition is interpreted mainly in terms of direct and open confrontation. In his formulation, little to no room is provided for undercover yet still dissident forms of resistance. I contend that what I am calling "covert nationalism" offers another way to understand, cultivate, and enact anti-colonial opposition.

I began the article with the short story "Carlos and the Flag" in *The Philippine Readers* (Osias, 1932b) to foreground covert nationalism. I construe covert nationalism as a furtive yet subversive mode by the colonized to instill and ignite passion and pride for the nation while living under the governing control of a foreign power. It does not operate as an overt tactic of resistance that openly declares revolutionary struggle against colonial rule. As an alternative, its subtle yet powerful oppositional force is concealed within subdued messages of patriotism, duty, and love for the nation. In constructing a postcolonial self, this form of nationalism becomes, following Foucault (1988), a "permanent framework of everyday life, as it were, making it possible to know at every moment what was to be done and how to do it" (p. 101). The intergenerational dialogue between the mother and her son in "Carlos and the Flag" exemplifies precisely the spirit and advancement of covert nationalism. Carlos' question about the two flags hanging over the schoolhouse marks the historical condition of the Philippines as a US colony at the time. His mother's response obliquely

refers to Filipino resistance against the United States by mentioning the men and women who sacrificed their lives to protect the Philippine flag. She subtly reminds Carlos of his responsibility to the nation by telling him what the previous generation has done. The short story's placement in the book further facilitates its discreet mode of cultivating this form of nationalism. Located on pages 137-138, the story and its anti-colonial nationalist message may have been overlooked or considered minor by US officials and educators in relation to the entire 184-page book.

The *Readers* also includes short biographies and written selections on Filipino heroes. The commanding officer of the Philippine revolutionary army, Antonio Luna appears in Books 4 and 6. Apolinario Mabini, considered the brains of the revolution for his intellectual and political contributions, is featured in Books 5 and 7. Regarded as the father of the revolution, Andres Bonifacio, a self-educated, working-class man who co-founded a dissident secret society, is highlighted in Book 7. Bonifacio's poem, translated into English as "Love of Country," follows his biographical entry. Included in the *Readers* are the following lines from his poem:

There is nothing worth having the patriot  
Will not give for his native land:  
Blood and wealth, and knowledge and effort,  
Even life, to be crushed and taken.  
Why? What thing of infinite greatness  
Is this, that all knees should be bended  
Before it? That it should be held higher  
Than the things most precious, even life?  
Ah! The land it is that gave us birth,  
Like a mother, and from her alone  
Came the pleasant rays like the sun's  
That warmed the benumbed body. (*Osias, 1920, pp. 75-76*)

One particular Filipino prominently included in all seven *Readers* is the national hero Jose Rizal. The first two books are centered on Rizal's childhood and education: learning to read from his mother, growing up in the provincial town of Calamba, and then attending school in Manila, the

nation's capital. The story on Rizal in Book 2 ends with "One day of the year we call Rizal Day. On this day we think about Rizal. We tell about the things that made him a great man" (Osias, 1932a, p. 144). Underneath the lines is an illustration of the Rizal memorial monument, a bronze sculpture on top of a marble pedestal, surrounded by hoisted flags and illuminated by rays of sunshine in the background. Stories about Filipino heroes certainly instill patriotic pride, and may be deemed as obvious displays of nationalist sentiment. However, the illustration and last lines on Rizal in Book 2 offer another example of covert nationalism. The monument and national holiday commemorate his martyrdom because he was executed close to where the shrine stands on December 30, 1896, which became known as Rizal Day. The biographical entry in the *Readers* does not directly state that young people ought to protest against cruel injustices and to sacrifice their lives for the nation. In fact, the short story is titled "How Rizal Grew Strong," and centers on Rizal's admiration of his Uncle Manuel who was "big and strong. He liked to be out of doors. He liked to walk and run. He could ride a horse well" (Osias, 1932a, p. 140). The story's last lines, at a glance, seem to be disconnected from the main narrative: "we think about Rizal" and "tell about the things that made him a great man." Yet as an enactment of covert nationalism, the ending actually suggests pedagogical possibilities for Filipino teachers to share about Rizal to their students, perhaps including his subversive writings that critique colonial subjugation. It also asks students to consider role models to be emulated, how they can grow strong, and what their patriotic duty is to a nation still under colonial rule. These are the types of "testing procedure" and "self-examination" that Foucault (1988) discusses regarding care of the self. According to Foucault, "If one 'conceals nothing from oneself,' if one 'omits nothing,' it is in order to commit to memory, so as to have them present in one's mind, legitimate ends, but also rules of conduct that enable one to achieve these ends through the choice of appropriate means" (p. 62). Through the process of analyzing the self, one internalizes both the means and ends of one's conduct. At the end, through veiled messages and illustrations in Filipino biographies, the *Readers* provides inspirational examples of famous heroes, and nurtures nationalist courage and sacrifice in the care of the self of the younger generation.

One of the major limitations of *The Philippine Readers* is the question of gender and the representation of women. Feminists contend that many

nationalist narratives position women in two ways: one, women as bearers of culture, who transmit histories and traditions to the next generation; and two, the nation as motherland, metaphorically represented by a woman to be defended by her sons against other male invaders and conquerors (Coloma, 2003; Kaplan, Alarcón & Moallem, 1999; Mohanty, 2003). In these problematic depictions, women are construed as passive subjects who not only uphold cultural traditions, but also require protection from harm. The *Readers* reproduces patriarchal narrations of nation and gender, for instance, through the short story of the mother and son in “Carlos and the Flag” and the biographical selections of male heroes. The entire reader series is dominated by stories that center on male protagonists. My examination of the selection titles and story content reveals a much higher proportion of male-centered stories in comparison to female-centered ones and the continued perpetuation of normative gendered roles. The proportion of male-centered to female-centered stories ranges from a 3-to-2 ratio in Book 1 to a 7-to-1 ratio in Book 7. Male-centered stories, such as “A Game for Boys,” “How a Young Man Won a Race,” and “The Three Brothers: Juan, Pedro, and José,” depict active boys who participate in the public sphere. Female-centered stories, such as “Juana in the Garden,” “Cecilia and the Golden Slippers,” and “Maria Clara’s Song,” primarily relegate girls in the private sphere attending to domestic care and personal wellbeing. Even a seemingly gender-neutral story, such as “The Search for a Good Child” in Book 5, has all male protagonists.

The Preface in Book 4 indicates that “Biographies of great men, Filipino and foreign, and poems and selections calculated to develop patriotism have also been incorporated” (Osias, 1932c, p. iii). Throughout the series, the stories of Filipino revolutionaries Andres Bonifacio, Antonio Luna, Apolinario Mabini, and Jose Rizal are alongside the biographies of US presidents George Washington and Abraham Lincoln as well as notable Europeans, such as explorers Christopher Columbus and Ferdinand Magellan and writers William Shakespeare and Miguel de Cervantes. In contrast, there are only five biographies of women in the entire *Philippine Readers*. The two Filipinas are Olivia Salamanca (1889-1913), one of the first Filipina physicians in the country, and Teodora Rizal (1827-1911), the mother of Jose Rizal. The three Europeans are military leader Joan of Arc (1412-1431), political advocate Marie-Jeanne Roland de la Platiere (1754-1793), and nurse Florence Nightingale (1820-1910). While the *Readers*



promotes covert nationalism as a furtive yet subversive technique to cultivate civic duty and patriotic sacrifice, its universal appeal to inspire all Filipinos is constrained by its mostly male-centered orientation. The gender imbalance in the *Readers* is not undercover when one looks cursorily at the books' table of contents, and is much less so in closer inspection. With fewer story selections and a limited range of representations and role models, girls and young women unfortunately confront more mediated textual pathways not only to transgress normative gender roles and expectations, but also to serve the nation and resist colonial subjugation.

### **Hybrid Nationalism**

*The Philippine Readers* was developed in order to provide curricular and pedagogical materials that would facilitate English language acquisition and literacy through stories and activities that were culturally meaningful to Filipino students. As a basal reader series, it was intended to replace and rectify previously adopted schoolbooks from the United States that featured White children and adults participating in activities, holidays, and settings that were foreign to Filipinos. It also emerged as part of a broader sociocultural and political movement at the time to "Filipinize" institutions across the country and to highlight and integrate aspects that were more culturally grounded in Filipino ways of being and living (Kramer, 2006; Wesling, 2011). The Filipinization movement was noted explicitly in the *Readers*: "The nationalization of our education system has been definitely adopted, and the Philippine Readers have been written with this policy in view. The demand for more things Philippine is met in this volume by the inclusion of native folktales and legends with which many of the children are already familiar in the vernacular" (Osias, 1932c, p. iii). Another *Readers* Preface further ads: "In determining the materials for Book Three many Philippine selections were chosen. These deal with animals, plants, and experiences which are familiar to Filipino children" (Osias, 1932b, p. iv).

The *Readers* certainly contains substantial amount of Filipino content. Almost all of the first and last stories in the series for Grades 1 to 7 focus on "more things Philippine" (see Table 1). The Filipino-oriented stories include native folktales and legends, animals and plants, and biographies. Four of the selections are marked "Filipino folk tale" in the table of

contents: “Why the Sky is So High” in Book 3; “The Ricebird” in Book 4; “The Story of a Monkey” in Book 5; and “Why the Crow is Black” in Book 6. Three are biographical entries on Jose Rizal (two entries) and Antonio Luna. Only two out of the 14 selections are not Filipino topics: “When It Gets Dark” in Book 3 and “The Last Supper” in Book 7.

Table 1.

*First and Last Stories in The Philippine Readers*

<b>Book</b>	<b>First Story Title</b>	<b>Filipino Content</b>	<b>Last Story Title</b>	<b>Filipino Content</b>
1	Pinipig	Yes	Rizal’s School Days	Yes
2	Swinging	Yes	Under the Acacia Tree	Yes
3	Why the Sky is So High	Yes	When It Gets Dark	No
4	The Ricebird	Yes	General Luna	Yes
5	The Story of a Monkey	Yes	Patriotic Pledge	Yes
6	Why the Crow is Black	Yes	How to Labor	Yes
7	The Last Supper	No	Thoughts from Jose Rizal	Yes

Book 7 provides insightful explanations about the literary genres of the stories included in the *Readers*. For example, folk tales, such as “Why the Crow is Black” in Book 6, “have come down from a time when there was no written history, and they help us to understand the present language, customs, and laws of the country” (Osias, 1920, p. 286). Fables, such as “Chongo and Slow Foot” in Book 2, use “animals and even inanimate objects [that] are made to speak and act like human beings” in order “to teach a useful truth or precept” (p. 283). Myths, such as “Why the Fire Tree Loves the Rain” in Book 4, are based on “traditional beliefs, sayings, and tales of people who have not yet found a scientific explanation for the things in nature which they do not understand” (p. 286). Legends, such as “Monico and the Giant” in Book 5, center on “a hero who does brave and wonderful deeds” (p. 285). Lastly, fairy tales are short stories “primarily for entertainment and pleasure,” but they also carry “lessons about customs and ideas of the people who told them” (p. 284). “Cecilia and the Golden Slippers” in Book 3 is a Filipino rendition of the Cinderella fairy tale. These different types of stories are meant to fulfill the goals of English language acquisition and literacy, including “to develop power of thought and expression; to create a love for good reading; to arouse appreciation of the

beautiful; to cultivate worthy motives and interests,” as stated in the Preface of Book 4 (Osias, 1932d, p. iii). Simultaneously, these goals are fulfilled with the use of stories that are culturally meaningful to Filipino children.

Alongside the Filipino stories are literary selections from other parts of the world. The Preface of Book 4 includes the author/editor Camilo Osias’ main objective for including non-Filipino literature in the *Readers*: to avoid “narrow nationalism” (Osias, 1932d, p. iii). He emphasizes that “This is an age of internationalism, and it will not do to deny our future citizens the privilege of adjusting themselves to modern conditions” (Ibid.). In his book *The Filipino Way of Life*, Osias (1940) introduces his philosophy of “dynamic Filipinism” which forms the foundation of his educational and political praxis. He contends that this “intelligent and constructive patriotism” seeks to “preserve and develop what is best in Philippine culture, civilization, and philosophy, and to graft on them the best that is foreign if this grafting can be accomplished advantageously” (p. 35). In a 1921 speech included in the book, Osias elaborates on the possibility of a hybrid form of nationalism that draws from both the local and the global, from the Philippines and the rest of the world. In his view, if the aim of education is “to secure for humanity as a whole and for every human being the highest and fullest measure of freedom, happiness, and efficiency,” then Filipino education must serve as “an agency of harmonizing cultures and civilizations” (p. 72). He calls for “a Filipinism that is compatible with world progress” as “a foundation upon which the superstructure of a new humanity shall rest” (p. 72). He envisions a “sane Filipinization that is by no means an anti-foreign movement,” but one that is embedded in “civic responsibility” and “world consciousness” (p. 73). In developing a postcolonial self, the tenet of avoiding narrow nationalism then becomes “a valuable principle for everyone, all the time and throughout life” (Foucault, 1988, p. 48).

Consequently, the *Readers* reflects story selections from world literature next to those from Philippine literature. Included are Aesop’s fables (“The Boy Who Cried Wolf”), Grimm’s fairy tales (“The Frog Prince”), Scandinavian folk tales (“The Sheep and the Pig”), and Greek mythology (“The Story of Clytie”). There are stories from the Bible about Noah and the ark, Joseph and his brothers, and Moses leading Hebrews out of Egypt. Several stories draw from writings of famous authors, including Miguel de Cervantes (“Don Quixote”), Nathaniel Hawthorne (“The Pomegranate

Seeds”), Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (“The Arrow and the Song”), William Shakespeare (“A Midsummer Night’s Dream”), Jonathan Swift (“Gulliver in Lilliput”), and Alfred Tennyson (“Sir Galahad”). Also included are a few non-Western literary selections from South Asian (“The Turtle That Could Not Stop Talking”), Japanese (“The Jellyfish’s Journey”), Native American (“Hiawatha”), and Arab (“Alladin and the Wonderful Lamp”) communities.

The intermingling of stories from local and non-local literatures in *The Philippine Readers* facilitates the cultivation of what I am calling “hybrid nationalism.” I construe hybrid nationalism as an integrationist mode by the colonized to bring together cultural aspects of the local and the global in the formation of individual and community ways of being and living. It privileges the local, or what may be deemed as native or indigenous, as the primary basis of one’s belief and practice. Yet it is open to the global, so long as its influences benefit and do not supersede the local. In devising a postcolonial self, this form of nationalism, following Foucault (1988), enables one to “search for a new way of conceiving the relationship that one ought to have with one’s status, one’s functions, one’s activities, and one’s obligations” to self and others (p. 84). My formulation of hybrid nationalism through my analysis of the *Readers* engages with a persistent debate in studies of nationalism in regards to the source or driving force of nationalism among colonized peoples. On one side of the debate, Benedict Anderson (1991) argues that colonized subjects identify with Western models and mechanisms through the employment of print-capitalism in constructing their imagined community. On the other side, Partha Chatterjee (1993) contends that colonized subjects develop their subaltern consciousness by counter-identifying with native spiritual values and practices that are not tainted by Western colonialism. The debate on the foundation of nationalism among the colonized, in my view, rests on a dichotomous binary between identification with the West and counter-identification with the native. Similar to Frantz Fanon’s formulation of available subject positions for the colonized, one can be either a complicit accommodationist who sides with the West or an oppositional revolutionary who sides with the native. Might there be a third position?

Following Homi Bhabha’s (1994) notion of hybridity, my work challenges the stances offered by Anderson and Chatterjee in their debate on nationalism. I maintain that hybrid nationalism offers a third position

that avoids the pitfall of the either/or stances and employs the both/and position as a revolutionary stance to bring together seemingly conflicting and contradictory elements in moments of tension and ambivalence. Put another way, the either/or stance of either identifying with the West or counter-identifying with the native constrains intellectual and political options. By navigating the in-between position instead of making distinct and rigid demarcations between Western and native influences, hybrid nationalism enables one to strategically choose, acquire, and benefit from both cultural resources. I believe that the both/and position of the hybrid opens wider possibilities for subject formation and self-determined agency in struggles against colonial domination. Carlos' mother in the short story offers revelatory insights into the potential of the both/and analysis in her response to Carlos' comment on the similarities of the Philippine and US flag colors. "The colors in the two flags stand for the same things," she explains, "The white tells you to be good and pure; the blue tells you to be noble and true; the red tells you to be brave and strong" (Osias, 1932b, pp. 137-138). By pointing to the symbolic convergences of the two flags, she destabilizes the colonial power and authority of United States since Filipinos also have the same values and traits to assert anti-colonial nationalism.

*The Philippine Readers* cultivates a hybrid form of nationalism by integrating local and global literatures in its story selections. However, its full oppositional force is constrained by the ways in which it represents the local and the global. Largely missing in the literary depictions of Filipino life and conditions are the indigenous and non-Christian peoples of the Philippines, such as the Aeta, Igorot, Mangyan, and Muslim communities. Their absence is particularly puzzling, especially since Camilo Osias (1921) worked as an educator in provincial areas with significant indigenous and non-Christian populations. As a result, the local Filipino culture is depicted in the *Readers* in a homogeneous way without full inclusion of its rich diversity and influences. Largely missing, as well, are non-Western communities in the portrayal of the global. Most of the world literary selections in the *Readers* derive from US and European stories and authors. In fact, the entire seven-book series had less than a dozen selections from non-US and non-European world literatures, mainly from Arab, Japanese, and South Asian communities. Consequently, the depicted global culture remains primarily limited to the West. Hence, the cultivation and

mobilization of hybrid nationalism need to go beyond monolithic representations of the local and the global for postcolonial subjects to fully benefit from the wide range of cultural insights and their potential transformative impact.

### **Beyond Binaries: Towards a Postcolonial Self**

In tracking the historical development of the care of the self, Foucault (1988) is keenly interested in addressing what he calls “a crisis of the subject, or rather a crisis of subjectivation” (p. 95). He wants to examine the “difficulty in the manner in which the individual could form himself [*sic*] as the ethical subject of his actions, and efforts to find in devotion to self that which could enable him to submit to rules and give a purpose to his existence” (p. 95). Care of the self becomes a mode for an individual “to take oneself as an object of knowledge and a field of action” by paying “constant attention to oneself, to the state one was in and to the acts that one performed” (pp. 42, 102). In this mode of self examination and monitoring, one uses guides such as teachers and texts for ethical precepts of being and living. As an interpretive approach, Foucault’s notion of the care of the self helps me to consider a particular crisis of the subject, one that deals with the cultivation of nationalisms under the regime of a foreign power and the construction of postcolonial subjectivities under such conditions. My research on Camilo Osias’ *The Philippine Readers* reveals that the texts facilitate two types of nationalism: covert and hybrid nationalisms. Covert nationalism is a discreet mode of opposition that is concealed within subdued messages of patriotism, duty, and love for the nation. Hybrid nationalism is a melded technique of resistance that juxtaposes local and global cultural resources to shape one’s sense of self and engagements with others. Through the *Readers*, these two types of nationalism constitute the “art of existence” for the postcolonial self (Foucault, 1988, p. 43).

What is significant intellectually and politically for these two types of nationalism is the manner in which they enable postcolonial subjects to go beyond dichotomous binaries that limit possibilities for their struggles against foreign control and authority. On the one hand, covert nationalism challenges the widely accepted principle that only direct and explicit forms of revolutionary resistance can fundamentally transform the hegemonic sociocultural and political order. If one does not follow such openly

expressive and aggressive mode of resistance, one is considered apathetic at best or, at worst, complicit to the colonial order. Located in between the binary of sell-out complicity and direct opposition, covert nationalism mobilizes furtive yet subversive tactics that instill pro-independence yearnings and examples under the radar of colonial power and surveillance. On the other hand, hybrid nationalism engages the debate regarding the sources of nationalism within postcolonial subjects as either emulating Western constructs or inspired by native models. In short, the choices are either identification with the West or counter-identification with the indigenous for nationalist influences. Navigating in between these choices is hybrid nationalism that juxtaposes Western and indigenous cultural resources, so long as the integration of Western aspects benefit and are advantageous for the indigenous.

Admittedly I present the covert and hybrid forms of nationalism separately for explanatory purposes, so that I can engage with certain scholarly and political discussions, provide specific examples from the *Readers*, and explain limitations related to gender and to representations of the local and the global. However, it must be noted that these two forms are intricately intertwined and mutually co-constitutive. The covert form of nationalism is enabled by the hybrid form since the use of both local and global literary selections in the *Readers* enables the radical messages and examples of revolutionary sacrifice and patriotic duty to be overlooked by colonial publishers, officials, and educators. The hybrid form of nationalism is similarly supported by the covert form since seemingly innocuous messages of self development and love for the nation that are universal across various communities can have a different meaning and impact for postcolonial subjects.

Ultimately, *The Philippine Readers* is not only a curricular and pedagogical material to advance English language acquisition and literacy. It functions much more than a technology for the transmission of a foreign language and the narration of stories. It is also a platform for the transmission of civic values and the narration of exemplary praxis so that Filipino schoolchildren can cultivate furtive yet subversive forms of nationalism under colonial rule. Eventually, through covert and hybrid modes, students will be able to utilize the master's tools of English literacy to dismantle the master's house of empire. In fact, no curriculum or pedagogy is ever ideologically neutral or value-free. This article will come

to full circle and end where it began. I started the article with an inter-generational dialogue and a Filipino mother's reminder to her son: "When you look at [the Philippine flag flying under the US flag], think what our country does for us" (Osias, 1932b, p. 138). I will close it with the last paragraph in the last book of *The Philippine Readers*, invoking Jose Rizal's hope for the Filipino youth and their independent future:

Where are the youth who will consecrate their golden hours, their illusions, their enthusiasm to the welfare of the land? Where are the youth who will generously pour out their blood to wash away so much shame, so much crime, so much abomination? ... Where are you, youth, who will embody in yourselves the vigor of life that has left our veins, the purity of ideas that has been contaminated in our brains, the fire of enthusiasm that has been quenched in our hearts? We await you, O youth! Come, for we await you! (Osias, 1920, p. 332)

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