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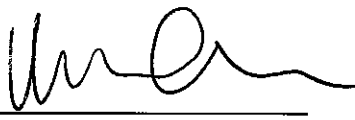
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“Hollywood Dreams”: Postcolonial Nationalism and Gender Oppression
in Jessica Hagedorn’s *Dogeaters*

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Abstract

This paper addresses how gender, sexuality, and resistance affect personal and national identity construction in *Dogeaters*. This 1990 novel traces the lives of Filipino characters during President Ferdinand Marcos's dictatorial regime—a period that reshaped the Philippines's national identity.

Using gender theory and nationhood studies, I highlight how women and queer individuals who challenge masculine norms attempt subversion by creating communities outside of patriarchal constructs but ultimately fail. Specifically, I read Joey Sands's and Daisy Avila's marginality and failure to comply with societal expectations as futile pushbacks against the larger system.

Furthermore, their embrace and use of violence as a means of final resistance makes them complicit with their oppressors.

“Hollywood Dreams”: Gender Oppression and Postcolonial Resistance
in Jessica Hagedorn’s *Dogeaters*

INTRODUCTION

Jessica Hagedorn’s novel *Dogeaters* (1990) focuses on the lives of multiple characters living in 1960s Philippines. Set during the authoritarian regime of Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos, a time where the young Philippine nation recently gained independence from being an American commonwealth, the characters find themselves situated in a country now reshaping and reconstructing its own identity as a sovereign state. This reshaping in turn necessitates grappling with gendered structures as part of this new identity¹.

Both gender theorists and scholars who theorize about national identity comment on the intersection between conquest and masculinity. Sociologist Michael Kimmel explains how colonial projects like the Philippine Commonwealth, a budding nation still reeling from American colonial rule, were often tied to issues of masculinity. He argues that the globalization of White American influence garnered power and identity for the U.S. through a kind of sexual prowess, penetrating other nations and claiming them as its own, and as a result, feminizing them. As Ania Loomba explains, “From the beginning of the colonial period until its end (and beyond), female bodies symbolize the conquered land” (154). It becomes clear that through various forms, concepts of masculinity informed the acts of conquest and ownership, thus creating an inherent gendering of the formation of national pride and identity. For America, wars and colonization thus helped define what it meant to be a man for both the colonizer and the colonized (Kimmel 3), thereby mirroring

¹ The Philippines gained independence from America as the Republic of the Philippines in July 4, 1946 through the Treaty of Manila. However, per terms of the treaty, American people and businesses would still have equal access to Filipino resources if the Philippines desire any post-World War II rebuilding funds (Bell Trade Act). Moreover, despite its status of sovereignty, American intelligence and government still heavily influenced how politics in the Philippines would develop through their connections with those in presidential power.

the formation of masculinity described by gender theorist Todd Reeser, in which “representations of masculinity” both “reveal a form of masculinity that already exists in culture” while at the same time “they construct the masculinity that they depict in culture” (25). Echoing Reeser, in her exploration of masculinity and nationalism Cynthia Enloe observes that “nationalism has typically sprung from ‘mas-culinized’ memory, masculinized humiliation and masculinized hope” (Enloe 45). In other words, the weight of creating an imagined national identity rests on the shoulders of men. These varying but complimentary theorists make it clear that the formation of a national identity is based around the ability for men to conquer, protect, and commodify a less dominant nation. In essence, then, the designation of national identity and pride is inherently gendered.

Given this context, in the novel’s time period, one can see that as a country finally moving away from years of American military and political influence, Spanish rule, and Japanese conquest, the Philippine islands had a chance to re-establish its place in the world as sovereign nation, and in the process, to re-establish its masculinity. As part of this process, certain masculine behaviors and status become privileged and upheld; this, in turn, informs and creates a social system where particular masculine conventions dominate and rule—a hegemonic (controlling) power that codes for the legitimization or subordination of social identities. As R.W. Connell describes it, hegemonic masculinity is the cultural practice that regulates male dominance and thus places women and other non-traditional forms of being a man in a position of subordination. The only examples of national power and sovereign existence available to those forming this new Philippines, however, came in the form of foreign oppressors. It is therefore not surprising that in *Dogeaters*, this hegemonic masculinity is depicted as hyper-militarized, oppressive, and violent. Many of the dominant male voices in the novel display a hunger for power—whether by wealth, sexual prowess, or control. This dynamic suggests that in Hagedorn’s Philippines, the government and nation have indeed adopted the same methods by which they saw masculinity and power established—through American

military presence, violence, and oppression. For *Dogeaters's* Philippines, then, nationhood and the construction of a national identity is fundamentally shaped by American colonial designs of gender, sexuality, and power.

JOEY SANDS AND DAISY AVILA

I thus focus my analysis of *Dogeaters* onto the stories of Joey Sands and Daisy Avila. Joey Sands, as a queer prostitute, does not meet or fit into many traditional social conventions of the novel's Philippines. A child of a deceased Filipina prostitute who abandoned him and a non-present Black-American soldier, Joey lives in the slums of the city. He funds his living by working as a disc jockey (DJ) at a gay bar and as a prostitute, sleeping with several white tourists throughout the narrative. From a young age, Joey has lived in the margins of society, learning to steal and use his body as a method for survival as taught by his abusive guardian Uncle. The vignettes into his life show the struggles he goes through as he explores several affairs with foreign tourists. It is during one of his rendezvous that he finds himself thrust into danger; his life of sexual exchanges ultimately concludes during the assassination of Senator Domingo Avila. At the wrong place at the wrong time, Joey Sands becomes the scapegoat for the senator's death and must run away to escape wrongful incrimination. Ultimately, he absconds and finds security with a rebel guerrilla group hiding out in the mountains.

Daisy Avila is introduced as the daughter of Senator Domingo Avila, a progressive human rights activist and outspoken disputant of current Filipino politics. Seen as aggressively leftist and nationalistic by the political regime, he becomes targeted by the military police for his outspoken resistance against the current powers. Despite this resistance to neonational norms, he supports Daisy's choice to be a public beauty figure. She comes in as the black sheep of the pageant, all while being criticized by her university professor mother for going against progressive feminine roles. Upon winning, she becomes a beloved figure to the public eye and a representative for Filipina

beauty. However, after two failed marriages and states of isolation and depression, Daisy publicly renounces the crown, calling it a step back for women and subsequently becomes publicly shamed. Upon her ostracization, she finds a lover in Santos Tirador, a member of the leftist guerilla rebel group, and runs away with him. Her father, soon after, gets assassinated prompting Daisy to secretly return to mourn and discover more about her father's death only to be kidnapped by the President's militia due to her connections with Santos. There, she is interrogated, abused, and raped. Upon her release, she flees to the mountains, joining the rest of the rebel army to continue on her search for answers, ultimately meeting Joey and teaching him how to use a gun.

I choose to pair Joey and Daisy because of their intertwining storylines. When read together, these two characters seemingly push back against the hegemonic masculine ideals crucial to the new, young Philippines's burgeoning national identity. Most notably, they resist the system of politicized gender through their un-masculine identities and non-traditional performance of it. Yet despite their marginality as a queer man and a hyper-feminized woman, and despite their differing avenues deployed to subvert and create communities outside of the hegemonic masculine society, I argue that their efforts are futile. More specifically, I posit that through their inevitable participation with Western patriarchal constructs, they ultimately cannot escape its influences in a time where postcolonial forces still pressure societal and national changes and identity. Indeed, not only do their attempted resistances fail to transform national politics, their final fate as guerrilla resisters make them complicit with the same systems of violence and oppression that subdued them.

In order to comprehend the formation of a nation, and more specifically the Philippines described in *Dogeaters*, it is imperative to understand the interrelation between nationalism, imperialism, and gender. Essentially, as explained by Benedict Anderson, "the goal of nationhood, 'nation-building', involves 'imagining' a national past and present" (Anderson 3). Thus, nationalism is the desire of a specific place and people to create a history and a future. According to Edward

Said, “Western imperialism and Third World nationalism feed off each other...and it is those new alignments that now provoke and challenge the fundamentally static notion of identity” (xxiv). This contention with identity therefore fundamentally affects issues of gender, class, and race. In her assessment of the roles that these identity categories play in the colonizing process, Anne McClintock explains, “race, gender, and class are not distinct realms of experience...rather, they come into existence in and through relation to each other—the intimate relations between imperial power and resistance; money and sexuality; race and gender” (5). Repeatedly, then, theorists link conquest, national identity, and gender as mutually informing. Because of this close interrelation, I argue that the performance of gender can potentially become a form of resisting hegemonic national, imperialistic ideologies, especially regarding the oppression of certain gender and sexual identities. Notably, Judith Butler states that “it becomes impossible to separate ‘gender’ from the political and cultural intersections in which it is invariably produced and maintained,” because of how deeply gender is associated with the constitution of racial, ethnic, sexual, and regional identities (Butler 6). In fact, Butler introduces the idea that the subversion of gender performance and identities is possible; this undermining breaks down the traditional concepts of gender expectations (Butler 180). Thus, challenging the traditional and dominant cultural concepts of masculinity, within the realm of nation-forming, becomes a form of resistance.² Together these theorists help shape the framework for my analysis on how nationalism and the gendering inherent to it oppresses women and non-traditional, specifically queer, men in Hagedorn’s *Dogeaters*.

By and large, scholars who have engaged with this text notice the disproportion of power between men and women in *Dogeaters*. They additionally note the feminist resistances and

² A figurehead in the criticism of Orientalism, Edward Said posits that “opposition and resistance to imperialism are articulated together on a largely common although disputed terrain provided by culture” (Said 201).

neonational and imperial politics present in the novel. However, while multiple readings of this text tend to focus on the experiences and plight of women and queer characters separately, my paper pairs both queer and feminine resistance.³ Those who have studied this text also often read the vexed gendered politics of the novel as optimistic for the future of the Philippines, viewing both Daisy and Joey as heroes and strong activators of postcolonial and neo-national resistance. Yet I want to place my argument in contention with several of these scholars by positing that any or all resistance is futile when these characters use imperialistic patriarchal methods of resistance or benefit from it. Moreover, I posit that defiance of postcolonial Filipino identity leads to a fate of powerlessness, isolation, and removal from the neonational hegemonic culture, as well as an embrace of the colonizer's ideals.

GENDERED IDEALS IN POSTCOLONIAL PHILIPPINES

The intersections of colonialism, national identity, and gender can be seen in the construction of Filipino gender ideals. As a country once colonized by Spain and then controlled by America, the newly independent nation of the Philippines inevitably developed a society that followed the traditional Western codes for masculinity. For example, the colonial history of the Philippines embedded notions of gender and sexuality into Filipino society mostly through the Spanish concepts of *machismo* and *marianismo*. These gendered conventions created a delineation of accepted social behavior that thus othered individuals who deviated from those concepts. According to Kevin L. Nadal in his investigations of Filipino cultural psychology, *machismo* is essentially aggressive and exaggerated masculine pride. Stemming from Spanish constructions of gender, this ideology promoted the belief that men were superior to women; this became most apparent in the Spanish colonial friars' and government officials' use of rape and beatings to punish Filipina women.

³ Misun Dokko is one scholar who pairs queer and feminine resistance through the militaristic transformation of Joey Sands and Daisy Avila. Her pairing, however, concentrates on the play adaptation of the novel.

Moreover, Nadal explains that the concepts of *machismo* informed the notions of *marianismo*; whereas men were physically strong and stoic, women had to be morally and spiritually strong and selfless. Nadal further argues that the colonial establishments of gender expectations ultimately conflict with pre-colonial Filipino culture where more gender-neutral roles existed between men, women, and the third gender (*bakla*).⁴ Multiple scholars⁵ note that in pre-colonial Philippines the concept of complementary sexes existed, meaning that males and females existed in different but interdependent roles. These roles included becoming *baybaylan* (highly regarded socio-spiritual leaders and healers). However, this position was not exclusive to biological females; men who performed the female gender via cross-dressing and feminine behavior were allowed to take on these spiritual roles as well. J. Neil Garcia, in his study of gay Filipino culture, posits that this mobility suggests that the crossing of gender was an invocation of the divine; they could access femininity and therefore access a higher level of spirituality (Nuñez 22). However, this identity, which was once integral to the spiritual functions of a community, was ultimately outcast and demonized by Spanish Christian missionaries and colonizers (Nadal 49-50). Coded as unmanly, demonic, and feminine by the Western colonizers the *bakla* identity, and likewise womanhood, lost their complementary status. Mirroring the gender dynamics of this national history, within the neo-national constructs of *Dogeaters's* Philippines, women and men who deviate from concepts of traditional *marianismo* and *machismo* are characterized as trapped, oppressed, and “less than.” Effects of Spanish colonial rule, these are the traditional roles and expectations by which women and men must live and accomplish in order to fit their place in society; as noted above, this often included staying submissive, chaste,

⁴ This Tagalog term currently defines both gay males and transgender individuals. Even today, while baklas are accepted members of Philippine society, they are placed low in the social caste. Scholar Alex de Jong notes that baklas have high visibility but are situated in a social ghetto due in part to the pushback against LGBTQ identities (de Jong 3).

⁵ This brief overview of the history of the bakla is based on studies by Alex de Jong, Inton Micahel Nuñez, and David R. Corpuz.

and humble for women and being self-reliant, macho, and prideful for men. Expectations of performing and conforming to established roles thus created a system of “order” for members of society in order to establish a functioning community, one which reveres traditional masculine and feminine behaviors.

These gendered codes of championing idealized masculinity became bulwarked as American values of imperialism penetrated Filipino culture; American colonial ideals and their conquest of the Philippines reflected similar gendered ideals as the Spanish in this budding nation. These concepts of masculinity and femininity seeped into America’s expansion of power and inevitably shaped the male-dominated and militarized vision of *Dogeaters’* Philippines. Throughout the novel, Hagedorn inserts excerpts of historical texts, selections, publications, and testimonies to situate the story. In fact, Hagedorn quotes President William McKinley’s address to a Methodist delegation:

We could not give them back to Spain, that would be cowardly and dishonorable; two that we could not turn them over to France and Germany—our commercial rivals in the Orient...three, that we could not leave them to themselves—they were unfit for self-government—and they would sooner have anarchy and misrule over there than Spain’s was; and four that there was nothing left for us to do but to take them all, and to educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize and Christianize them....(71)

Here, there is a clear display of power and disproportion of status and class in regards to how America viewed the Philippines. A society of “lesser people,” the Philippines, by American standards, needed American presence to become more stable. The country and its people, essentially “unfit for self-government,” were reduced to a state of subordinated otherness. This difference between colonizer and colonized subject “represented the ‘other’ as inferior and radically different and hence incorrigibly inferior,” according to Partha Chatterjee (Chatterjee 33). In other words, American imperialist values created a system of inequality that bulwarked their identity as masculine

figures over their colonial subjects. This difference again is emphasized in Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds's exploration of White countries' legacies of imperial conquest and the challenge for racial equality. They note that historically, for White-American citizens, "[Asians] lack the manly independence and self-possession necessary to participate as individuals in a representative democracy...rice-eating men...had neither the rights nor responsibilities of masculine beef-eating men" (Lake and Reynolds 39). Not only did conquest emasculate the Philippines's national identity, American imperial masculinity likewise subordinated and feminized Asian men and manhood.

Thus, as more masculine or "real" men, America had to establish dominion over the Philippines. The American view of Asian bodies lacking manliness meant the Filipino body could be seen as effeminate and subordinate. As Connell suggests, females (and feminized individuals) are not equal to males; thus, males that are unequal to "real" males must then be female. This, then, meant that by being subordinate, the Filipino body could be dominated and controlled. As such, conquering the Philippines as a colonial project meant upholding an inequality between American and Filipino nations and identity. Furthermore, for America, the military was the epitome of masculinity and used their militant might to establish their dominion over others. Partha Chatterjee comments on these institutional and systemic inequalities by saying that "these instances come up not only in relations between countries or nations, but even within populations that the modern institutions of power presume to have normalized into a body of citizens endowed with equal and non-arbitrary rights. Indeed, invoking such differences are...commonplaces in the politics of discrimination, and hence also in the many contemporary struggles for identity" (Chatterjee 33). In terms of the Filipino colonial project, this meant maintaining a American military presence in the Philippine terrain. This ideology then seeped into the postcolonial identity of the Philippines as they tried to re-establish a masculine image. They too wanted to portray a masculine identity that could compete with their colonizers. Traditional Western concepts of masculine behavior include notions

of power, domination, stoicism, virility; the military provided that image of control, domination, and power. However, homosexuality and femininity challenged these expectations for men as these gendered sexualities were believed to be less than and potentially threatening to masculine behavior. (Connell 77). Speaking to this notion, Hagedorn uses McKinley's excerpt to emphasize the deeply engendered and imbalanced social structure of the Philippines produced by the country's history of Spanish and American colonization. Thus, these gendered ideals of masculine superiority, control, and idealization became reflected in *Dogeaters's* hyper-militarized, violent, and glamorized Philippines.

Consequently, those who defy these normalized gendered conducts threaten the structure and stability of a male-dominated society and are accordingly criticized and suppressed. For Kimmel, this disparity in value stems from the sociological idea that

All masculinities are not created equal; or rather [humans] are all created equal, but any hypothetical equal evaporates quickly because our definitions of masculinity are not equally valued in our society. One definition of manhood continues to remain the standard against which other forms of manhood are measured and evaluated. (61)

He further describes how in order to preserve these positions of power for hegemonic masculinity, the cult of masculinity will inevitably fear the "other," in this case, women and queer⁶ individuals.

Because these identities interfere with the traditional concepts of masculine behavior and thus their

⁶ According to the Oxford English Dictionary, "the word queer was first used to mean 'homosexual' in the late 19th century; when used by heterosexual people, it was originally an aggressively derogatory term. By the late 1980s, however, some gay people began to deliberately use the word queer in place of gay or homosexual, in an attempt, by using the word positively, to deprive it of its negative power. Queer also came to have broader connotations, relating not only to homosexuality but to any sexual orientation or gender identity not corresponding to heterosexual norms. The neutral use of queer is now well established and widely used, especially as an adjective or noun modifier, and exists alongside the derogatory usage." Thus, I specifically use the term *queer* to establish that in my reading of Joey Sands, I do not view him as explicitly gay. While Joey participates in sexual relations with many male Western tourists, in one instance he sleeps with a female prostitute and in another, he dreams about what it would be like to run away and live with an American mistress to start a new life. Moreover, he explicitly states that "[he] is open to anything;" therefore, I cannot read him as a character who identifies as solely gay (44).

privileged positions, men must create a space where they can always win by oppressing their subordinates; through this oppression, they can reclaim and retain their masculine identity (Kimmel 66). To clarify, this gendered oppression is the privileging or disadvantaging, by degrees, of certain groups because of their gender, and relatedly, their sexualities. Drawing on studies of nationalism and resistance, as well as theories on the construction of gender, the plight of minority characters in *Dogeaters* thereby becomes a window into how the formation of postcolonial identity may oppress non-hegemonic genders and sexualities. This essay thus dialogues with current conversations on how the characters who cannot fully participate in the male-dominated society of postcolonial Philippines search for ways to find their place in a young nation.

JOEY SANDS: QUEER EYE IN THE P.I. (PHILIPPINE ISLANDS)

Joey Sands, in particular, continually undermines the Filipino desire for a strong independent national masculinity through his sex work. Despite the underlying presence of traditional manhood, he subverts the desired national macho identity of the Philippines in which homosexuality and queerness is defined as a perversion of the male gender (Connell 73). More clearly, viewing the construction of Filipino identity through the eyes of a queer character challenges the desired trajectory of national masculinity in the Philippines. As Ashok argues, the Philippine nation determined to regain the manhood lost through Western colonialism in its island borders, yet Joey's role as a prostitute is to literally be used for sexual pleasure by white male tourists in the Philippines (Hagedorn 37). This imagery around Joey as a Filipino man being taken by a white man undermines the very basis of the anti-colonial movement for an independent Philippines. Uncle speaks to this when he teases Joey, "You like that foreigner didn't you? He fuck you good and treat you good like the American? *Alam mo na* [you already know], Joey—us *Pinoy*s, *basta puti* [as long as they're white]...Is he going to send for you anyway, now that he knows you're a thief?"⁷ (193). In this

⁷ All Tagalog-to-English translations are my own.

exchange, Uncle evokes the image of Joey's body as a commodity, a willing tool ready to be used by White conquerors. Using words *foreigner*, *fuck*, and *American*, Uncle reduces Joey's own modes for survival as acts by which the Filipino body remains submissive, supine, and passive towards its White oppressor. Furthermore, by implying the fascination with Whiteness that Filipinos developed, "*basta puti*," Uncle connotes the Philippines' willingness to continue being controlled as long as their despot is white. Essentially, Filipino masculinity is continually challenged and subverted through Joey's homosexual relations with in-transit white tourists—remainders and reminders of the imperial influence of Western culture in Filipino society.

That said, while Joey may undermine Filipino masculine behavior, he ultimately upholds America's notions of gendered imperial inequality. Indeed, Joey's sexual encounters with white men reflects Loomba's claims regarding sexuality and gender in colonial discourse. She states that "colonialism entrenched the connections between foreign lands and deviant sexualities even deeper... colonial sexual encounters, both heterosexual and homosexual, often exploited inequalities of class, age, gender, race, and power" (Loomba 159). As a queer male, a son of a whore, and a working prostitute in Manila, Joey was raised in and ascribed a life of poverty. In fact, throughout the novel, Joey's inferior identity keeps him within the margins of Philippine society, with him only ever participating inside the higher spheres of hegemonic influence when he sleeps around inside it and more specifically when he sleeps with white men. As posited by Ashok, feminine identities could feel "an illusion of power is through collusion with the patriarchy" (Ashok 2). As a queer male, Joey's sexuality is seen as similarly feminized and "less than" in comparison to the traditional concepts of masculinity. Therefore, his only "real" or influential interaction within the sphere of "real" men is when he beds them. Without the allure of his body, Joey would continue to live in the slums, forgotten by the glamour-obsessed world of *Dogeaters's* Philippines; his class and sexuality alienate him from the ongoing political world of his larger community. It is only by allowing rich

White tourists to engage with his body that Joey is able to experience the lavish world of the upper classes. Yet even as his sensuality and illicit behaviors help him survive, he allows the West to continue a degree of control through sexual conquest. In one of his final affairs, Joey Sands imagines he is in a film as an exotic creation crafted by God (his new German John). He states,

I'm the strong young animal—I'm the panther. Or else I'm the statue of a magnificent young god in a beautiful garden. The old man with the elephant skin drools. Maybe he's God the Father, lost in paradise. He can't get over how perfect I am; he can't get over the perfection of his own creation. He falls in love with me. They always do. (132)

This moment suggests a level of inferiority and subordination when paired against his German counterpart. While Joey may recognize himself as a desirable being, he ultimately is still a creation of the man whose gaze he has acquired—he remains less than the original. When Joey thinks, “He can't get over how perfect I am; he can't get over the perfection of his own creation,” he actualizes Jacques Derrida's notion of the supplement, where the feminine (his sexualized Asian-Black body; the creation) can only exist by its dependence on the masculine (White/German John; the creator). A supplement, to be clearer, is simultaneously something that completes another thing and something that may replace it, play the role of substitute for it, and therefore, be a threat for it (Reeser 37-8). This interdependency for definition and power thus furthers Loomba's assertions about the colonial discourse being present in hetero/homosexual relationships and becomes clear in Joey's own psyche. As a commodity and a creation, Joey internalizes the hierarchy of White dominion over the Filipino body. A product of colonial projects, the Philippines became an extension for White Western control—a supplement of the Spanish and American rule. This essentially makes Joey an object that can complete and affirm White imperialist presence and masculinity through sex. However, as a queer individual, his subordinate masculinity still threatens

the very concepts of traditional Filipino and Western patriarchal conceptions of manhood in a country looking to reclaim its masculinity.

Moreover, Joey is not only representative of a subordinated masculinity but also literally embodies Western colonialism by being half-Black and half-Filipino. Considered a *mestizo*—meaning of mixed blood—Joey’s exotic looks made him a commodity and a desirous object for sexual exploitation by white tourists, as he notes about one of his customers, “I could tell he was fascinated, just like all the rest of them. . . my head of tight, kinky curls, my pretty hazel eyes, and my sleek brown skin” (Hagedorn 72). Joey is a unique individual living in the gay bars of Manila, a prize to be slept with, and yet it is this same part of Joey’s convoluted identity that separates him from fully embracing or being accepted into the Filipino national identity. Without a mother, Joey loses an integral feminine figure in his life—his blood link to the Philippines. When reminiscing about her, Joey states that she was “disgraced and abandoned,” echoing President McKinley’s words of conquest where to give up the Philippines would be “cowardly and dishonorable” and in turn, where being “less than” meant weakness and a de-masculinized image (42). If the Filipino body represents the politics of nation according to Ashok, then the prostitution, abandonment, and death of Joey’s mother suggests that the colonial Philippines, as a feminine body and colonial subject, was disgraced through its subordination, emasculation, and ultimate abandonment. Like the Philippines, he loses access to the feminine energy that was his mother (its less-gendered precolonial history). Like the Philippines, he carries vestiges of American imperial conquest in his blood. Like the Philippines, his body becomes a terrain by which White westerners can continue to assert their masculine energy. Like the Philippines, he is abandoned by his parental (pre-colonial identity/colonizing presence) heritage, left to fend for himself in a vexed new postcolonial society.

Joey thus represents this budding and “freed” Filipino identity. Growing up under the watchful and exploitive gaze of the abusive Uncle, Joey learns to use his body as a means of living

and survival. This turns his body into a resource used by other men for pleasure and excess, similar to the how America exploited the Philippines for its resources and their own imperialistic goals. While he may resist the desired conventions for heteronormative masculine behavior, he remains subject to others, especially White men. Furthermore, he is a legacy of imperialism—his blackness, an echo of American military and colonial presence in the Philippines. Said suggests that “imperialism lingers...[it] has entered the reality of hundreds of millions of people, where its existence...still exercises tremendous force” (Said 9, 12). For Joey, his Black-American blood is a symbol of exotic sensuality, Western values, and privilege as exemplified when Joey’s friend Andres states, “You’re lucky you have Negro blood...a little black is good for the soul” (34). Yet it is interesting to note how Hagedorn characterizes Joey’s half-Filipino and half-black identity. In bell hooks’s studies of black masculinity, she notes how black men have historically been seen as inherently hyper-sexual and hyper-violent. Understanding how the hyper-sexualization of black men and the subsequent relation to the raping of white women criminalized them can be a fruitful element to explore with Joey’s identity. Anxieties surrounding black men stealing white women emerged as a way for white men to reinforce their “superior” and “pure” masculinity. This propaganda further set up black men as second class-citizens (hooks 77). Similarly, the raping and conquering of Filipino bodies becomes another way for White men to re-establish a level of masculine and imperial superiority and control over the Philippines. In framing Joey as Filipino, black, and queer, Joey not only becomes a third-class citizen, he also embodies multiple subordinated identities that threaten “moderate” and acceptable masculinity. Yet despite these conflicting identities, like the Philippines, Joey remains a corporeal politicization of American imperial, military, and patriarchal presence and an abandoned colonial project.

This mixed identity thus forms Joey into a vexed character that not only represents a postcolonial Philippines, but one that resists both neonational and imperial ideals. Filipino identity is

explicitly described by Senator Avila, a political figure in the novel, when he expresses that “you can’t describe a real *Pinoy*⁸ without listing what’s most important to him—food, music, dancing, and love...” (Hagedorn 154). In effect, Joey’s come-and-go affairs call for emotional detachment, but as a marginalized member of society, his position prevents him from ever pursuing wholesome romantic and familial relationships. Namely, as a queer prostitute living within the traditional patriarchal constructs of postcolonial Philippines, Joey finds himself incapable of loving, his profession imbedding in him that incapability as a mode of survival (37). In fact, I argue that this method, coupled with his sexuality, is Joey’s own form of resistance against the growing nationalistic and imperialistic Filipino patriarchy. He sleeps with rich white men on his own terms, making sure that he never fully accepts their attention. “I’ll steal from them...to make a point,” Joey states, “it keeps the element of danger alive in their luxurious rooms. I never keep what’s given to me as a gift; I like to let them know how little their trinkets are really worth. It’s my warning” (37). Joey’s philosophy suggests that he views these men as nothing but his own sexual and monetary conquests, giving him agency despite being a marginalized member of society. Ultimately, Joey’s belief in distancing himself from his affairs with white men represents acts of resistance against the dominating imperial, patriarchal influences in postcolonial Philippines. Due to his literal embodiment of the colonized nation, his methods of resisting echoes of imperial conquest represent a pushback against oppressive neonational principles.

The most oppressive symbol of the neo-national patriarchy for Joey, however, comes in the shape of Uncle. Being the man who took Joey in after his mother’s death, Uncle taught Joey how to survive the slums of Manila. He likewise taught Joey how to use his body and sexuality for money, later becoming his pimp. He essentially became Joey’s father-figure, boss, and landlord. Joey states

⁸ Pinoy is another term used interchangeably with Filipino/a.

that in his youth he “would [have done] anything for Uncle,” suggesting a desire to please his lifesaver and possibly his feelings of indebtedness (43). Either way, this begins the cycle of Uncle’s control over Joey. Like Joey says, “[Uncle] made things possible. He taught me everything I know” (43). By teaching Joey how to live and survive and essentially giving him a new lease on life, Uncle asserts a type of dominion over him. Succinctly, Uncle created the current Joey and as such evokes President McKinley’s assertions to “teach the Filipinos and uplift them.” This control over Joey’s body and guardianship of his dependent as pimp and “father” elicits the image of the colonizer as father and dominator of the Filipino body.

Thus, being the most consistent patriarchal Filipino figure in Joey’s life, Uncle represents the exploitive and domineering side of male control. As a pimp, he literally owns effeminate bodies, which he could give to others for his own personal gain. Joey is just another one of these commodities—a body to be thrown away once deemed useless. The roles of male dominance and feminine commodification become apparent during Joey’s escape from Manila. When Joey attempts to seek refuge with Uncle after Senator Avila’s assassination, he is ultimately betrayed by the masculine power that is Uncle. Hagedorn writes, “The old man was going to kill him...[Joey] had been waiting for this his whole life—this moment of betrayal from Uncle...for the right price [Uncle] was capable of anything” (204). Here, we see that Joey’s body is a commodity and subject to the greed and control of the more powerful Uncle. Joey’s life and fate is, quite literally, now in Uncle’s hands. Yet stuck in the tiny bedroom in Uncle’s home, Joey expresses his foreknowledge of this man’s betrayal, showing his inherent mistrust of the nature of powerful men in this country. Joey had been waiting his whole life for Uncle to betray him, noting that while he owed his life to Uncle, he also felt the looming oppressive and violent nature of this man. And now literally trapped by this oppressive male figurehead, “[Joey] knew he had to escape...Joey ransacked the room...he had to leave a message the old man would understand...Joey grabbed the scruffy fur at the back of

the dog's neck...thrusting the sharp blade...kept stabbing the animal...until the dog finally lay still" (205-7). Like the White men he would sleep with, Joey knows that acts coded with violence effectively demonstrate successful resistance to masculine dominators. As such, stabbing a longstanding member of Uncle's household, the dog, means that Joey could "stick it to him," literally. He embraces the phallic image of the knife and thrusts it into an object which Uncle uses to keep him trapped in the room, an object Joey fears and knows Uncle cares for. This final act of violence against his most oppressive figure, then, becomes a very clear message that violence remains the most influential form of resistance in the sphere of men. Unfortunately, this embrace makes Joey complicit with his male conquerors; the violence he enacts only perpetuates the dangerous patriarchal system coded into the burgeoning postcolonial and neonational Philippine identity.

DAISY AVILA: A WOMAN'S REMONSTRANCE, RESITANCE, AND RANCOR

While Joey's resistance and queer identity begins his story in the margins of postcolonial Filipino society, Daisy Avila (while still subordinate through her gender) starts at the center. However, Daisy subverts traditional roles and expectations for Filipina femininity. This pushback against patriarchal traditions of femininity become most prominent in the days following her crowning glory as beauty pageant queen; she begins to isolate herself from the public eye, becoming a "reclusive beauty" (107). Rather than celebrating the public's fascination with and epitomization of her femininity, she covers her lauded attributes. This suggests that while the masculinized standards of the Philippines craft women to become objects for desire and commodity, Daisy's reluctance to leave the safety of her home resists the practice of objectifying women. In her essay *Gendered Codes of Americanness*, Rachel C. Lee posits that

This...objectifying of women becomes the modus operandi of...men's social bonding.

Women act as the terrain upon which...men "discover" their collusive appetites, which have

as their ostensible object the bodies of women but which have more to do with the...men's developing brotherhood, than a desire for women. (Lee 61)

For the purposes of this essay, I read the word "men" as not only literal males but also a term that includes the masculine ideals and identity of a postcolonial patriarchal society. By becoming a recluse, Daisy denies the nation a terrain they can exploit with their gaze and a place to develop their fraternal identity as a more masculine and ideal Philippines. This is reflected in the outcry of the Philippine media: "Tell Daisy *naman* to stop being such a killjoy...Does our foremost nationalist family consider us common *Pinoy*s nothing more or less than a bunch of savages?" (Hagedorn 106-7). Seeing Daisy as a "killjoy" speaks to the notion that women's bodies are made for the pleasure of others, in this case, the nation. Moreover, upon being denied access to Daisy, the media crafts the narrative that the most "nationalist family" has created a hierarchy where the common public are seen as "less than a bunch of savages." Creating this disparity between the championed beauty, her anti-colonial family heritage, and the public in effect showcases how Daisy's refusal to become a commodity pushes back against the neocolonial desire and savage hunger for an object in which they (the budding nation) can discover their shared masculine identity. Her choice to shut in her beauty thus incapacitates the nation from an avenue of social bonding, an integral part of nation forming.⁹

Even still, this resistance against public desire turns Daisy into an object of social anxiety and excitement; as a central figure, her platform becomes an advantage in her deconstruction of the national Filipino patriarchy and its gendered constraints. Her refusal to entertain the nation thus inevitably makes her a national pariah, especially when scorned by the First Lady during a televised interview, "the First Lady's eyes, as if on cue, fill with tears... '*Walanghiya* (How impudent)...Daisy

⁹ As aforementioned, Benedict Anderson states that identity of nation comes through an imagined and shared history and trajectory. Steven Grosby also argues that nationalism and nationhood come from a social bond as well.

Avila has shamed me personally and insulted our beloved country” (107). By denying the nation’s gaze on her body, Daisy absents herself from the gendered political turmoil currently occurring in *Dogeaters’s* Philippines. Thus, as a proponent for gendered Filipino traditions, the First Lady’s outcry represents the political effects that Daisy’s refusal establishes. More clearly, Lee argues that, in the novel, feminist resistances to hegemonic gendered traditions can showcase the place of women in this vexed postcolonial society. She states that “when politics is conceived in terms of a struggle between the nation and its imperialist invaders (or its variant, the nation versus transnational corporations) women’s issues run the risk of being marginalized as subordinate points (only symbolically attended to) through the mechanism above, whereby women are both seemingly present yet apparently absented from nationalist and imperialist agenda” (Lee 84). Here, the scrutiny of the public and the female political figurehead indicate that women can only have real influence or interaction within the male-centered society of postcolonial Philippines when they allow themselves to follow tradition and become objectified; by denying the subordinate classes of their bridge to power, Daisy therefore becomes a hated figure. By refusing to remain policed by the public, she realizes a new and resistant role, however. Taking agency over her femininity and her public platform, “[She] seizes the opportunity to publicly denounce the beauty pageant as a farce, a giant step backward for all women. . . she accuses the First Lady of furthering the cause of female delusion in the Philippines. The segment is immediately blacked out by waiting censors” (109). Daisy’s first public and explicit denouncement of the crown and pageantry of Filipina bodies thus brings light to the marginal and objectified state of women. Defying both the First Lady and the desired image of femininity, Daisy undermines not only the government but also the misogynistic control of women’s bodies. Already seen as less than men, the subordinated position of women meant they were subject to male control; yet Daisy denies this power over her body by denouncing the figurative weight of the pageant crown. In response, her defiance is censored, symbolizing the national government’s

desire to maintain an image of Filipina beauty because removing this symbolic high achievement of femininity means a removal from patriarchal objectification. This pushback then causes the rock band, Juan Tamad, to create a song dedicated to her entitled “Femme Fatale” (109). Defined as a seductive woman who will ultimately bring demise to men, the title of the song suggests that Daisy’s resistance means a deconstruction of male dominance.

Not only is Daisy a threat to the burgeoning *machismo* of the Philippines, but she threatens traditional conventions of *marianismo* as well. Upon relinquishing her title, Daisy attempts to find new ways to find meaning—first through a traditional but failed marriage with an Englishman and then through an affair with the rebel Santos Tirador. After her public resistance, Daisy is approached by English banker Malcom Webb. He is enthralled by her beauty but more so by her defiance of the Filipino public, calling her the Avila’s “brave daughter” (110). This suggests that her embrace of a traditionally masculine behavior of courage becomes of particular interest to Webb. This wedding of the Western and Filipino bodies thus creates a space for hopeful progress in Daisy’s push back against the constraints of the neonational system; her association with the White colonizer could in fact give her an advantage through his position as a “real” man. However, we learn that he only desires access to Daisy’s publicly resistant femininity for exploitation when “[he] soon tires of the hysteria...no longer find[ing] the publicity useful” (111). Thus, we see that echoes of feminine exploitation remain apparent; the Western colonizer still finds the Filipina body a figure to be used for personal gain and in Webb’s case, personal glory. Angry at the Philippine’s obsession with Daisy and not him, “He blames his naïve wife for turning his life upside down; she retaliates by asking him to leave her once and for all...[she] becomes the butt of many jokes” (111). While he may deflect blame onto Daisy, she takes agency once again and lets him leave “once and for all,” indicating a finality in her association with the Western colonizer and this traditional mode of feminine ideals.

Soon after, she finds Santos Tirador and begins to embrace a “freed” femininity. The latter establishes her role as a resistor of *marianismo*. Her choice to join and run away with Santos indicates an embrace of a deviant femininity. In the scene where she first meets him, Daisy and Santos are surrounded by her cousin’s erotic paintings, “landscapes of bright yellow demons with giant erect penises hovering over sleeping women” (113). The backdrop of eroticism and devilish characters implies a sexual awakening, an embrace of behavior that was non-traditional and un-Christian. Daisy now begins to explore a new and expressive form of her feminine identity, one unbounded by Filipino, Christian, or patriarchal tradition and so she flees with Santos. As Daisy’s cousin Clarita writes, “Run away with him. Just don’t be shocked by how much you’re going to suffer. After all, you’re still a married woman in everyone’s eyes. . .” (116). Where *marianismo* champions an obedient and domestic Christian femininity, Daisy’s affair thwarts this ideal. Still legally married, this affair means she not only disobeys and destroys the integrity of the home, she also pushes back against valued morals of gendered “right” behavior. As such, her deviant performance of femininity and a push back against her wedded identity to a Western man resists imperial and patriarchal control. She becomes an activator of her own sexuality and feminine identity.

However, despite the actualization and embrace of her new feminine identity, it seems that Daisy’s resistance is unsuccessful. Her identity, as a danger to the gendered and patriarchally controlled constructs of society, makes her a target for correction. As Misun Dokko states, “conventional venues for women to perform their nationalism are limited to their objectification as receptacles of heteronormative desire” (Dokko 260). In effect, the military powers of *Dog eaters’s* Philippines must reassert control by capturing and raping her—a violent means of establishing the simultaneous control of a woman’s body and sexuality and their own masculine dominance. Surrounded by a group of military officials in a detention facility, Daisy becomes a victim of a gang rape. Hagedorn explicitly writes, “He assaults her for so long and with such force...her prayers go

unanswered...the Colonel licks Daisy's neck and face... 'My woman,' he announces...the General plans to take her after his men...he calls her *hija*...[he] exclaims at her extraordinary beauty' (232-3). She, to them, must be made obedient, subordinated, and sexualized. They lick her face and neck and awe at her beauty; these acts show that despite Daisy's pushback against the public glamorization of her features, she remains a commodity that the men in power can still use for their own pleasure and fraternal bonding. The violent and lengthy assault alongside the men's desire for her body and beauty showcases the desperate need for the nation to maintain their control. Daisy's position as "[his] woman" indicates the level of ownership and deference by which these military officers view her. Moreover, when the General calls her *hija*, he uses the language of the Spanish colonizer. Calling her *hija* or daughter references a power-imbalance of parent and child, indicating her inexperience, expected obedience, and inability to give consent. Furthermore, this moment reflects how Spanish colonizer would oftentimes rape women into submission as a form of correction. The raping of Daisy explicitly highlights the overwhelming echoes of imperial conquest and violent masculinity present in the taking of a "weaker" body. Thus, not only do the militant males take control and dominion of the Filipino body, they also invoke the colonizer in order to ostensibly retain their control over the colonized Filipino. To be clear, I am in no way implying that Daisy perpetuates rape culture. Rather, I engage with the rape scene to look at how Daisy, as a physical representative of Filipino neonational politics, cannot escape the misogynistic ideals of a militarized Philippines. Her resistant and deviant femininity apparent, the literal embodiment of this regime's masculine identity must attempt to subdue her.

Whereas Joey's sexual encounters with men reflects Western imperial presence in the Philippines, the non-consensual and forced penetration of Daisy's body reflects the means by which the budding nation deems is necessary to assert their masculine image. In Stanley Karnow's analysis of American empire in the Philippines, he states that during the Marcos autocracy,

Both [Marcos] and his people were victims of his illusions... He hoped to depict himself as the personification of the Philippines just as the ancient divine emperors of Asia had embodied the soul of the nation... he contrived a cavalcade of noble, warrior... artistic, colonial and nationalist ancestors, as if their collective spirit resided in him. Imelda [the First Lady]... shared his delusions of grandeur. (Karnow 366-7)

The president evokes images and desired histories of masculine identity; a leader of a budding postcolonial country, Marcos yearns for a *machismo* befitting of the principal patriarch. This history of male authority thus allows him to craft an identity of idealized and legitimized manliness. He therefore wishes to establish that masculine image to stay on par with more developed and “masculine” countries, such as America. And like the colonizers, he establishes his military force to maintain that male control and presence in the country. Daisy’s defiance of these patriarchal limitations, however, breaks the stability of masculinity and ultimately makes her a body that the masculine powers must control. Ultimately, as a single, subordinated figure subverting traditional gendered conventions of the Filipino neocolonial patriarchy, her resistance becomes limited and futile.

Not only is Daisy’s resistance constrained and ineffective, it also becomes complicit with the very systems she resists. After her detention and rape, she escapes into the mountains to find refuge with the same rebel communist guerilla group in which that Joey has found shelter. Once a central figure in the glamorized world of Philippine media, she is now forced into the literal margins of society. Her defiant femininity now actualized but broken, Daisy is a jaded women in a society dominated by violent men and thus makes her final attempts to detach herself from the central hegemony. “She calls herself Aurora,” Hagedorn writes, indicating an erasure of her old identity as Daisy, a beautiful women loved, scorned, and ultimately betrayed by the masculinized ideals of the Philippines (232). As Dokko notes, “Certain figures who have been estranged from a dominant

public sphere might join and create alternative public spheres. Thus, they not only undergo a process of incomplete subject formation in which they experience detachment from a center but they also seek out and become part of different, resistant public spheres” (Dokko 256). Betrayed and pushed away from the center of the Filipino public eye and its political world, she is forced to find a new sphere of influence. Abandoning the gendered national constructs that hurt and disregarded her, Daisy transforms into a new version of her resistant femininity. She refuses to access her traditional femininity and now embraces the militant image of the rebel guerilla group. Daisy therefore seeks out a new form of resistance—one that will be more effective in establishing change in the violent world of a misogynistic militarized postcolonial terrain, one that is similarly violent. In her discourse of gender, language, and identity in *Dogeaters*, Ashok notes the potential for nationalistic thoughts to oppress subordinate genders, especially in Hagedorn’s novel. Ashok posits,

Nationalism, as it appears in the revisionary history of *Dogeaters*, continues the oppression of colonialism by remolding the binary paradigm on which the colonial conquests were based. If the imperialist patriarchy justified its colonizing endeavors by presenting the conquered as the different, savage, inferior and exotic other, nationalism involves a concerted attempt at the recovery of the manhood lost in colonization, projecting woman as the other, to be gazed at, tamed, conquered, and enjoyed. (Ashok 2)

Building on this thesis, Ashok argues that as the Filipino hegemony engages in the task of rebuilding its masculine identity after the emasculation resulting from colonialism, subordinated women become removed from the central spheres of influence. As such, these women can only feel a semblance of power through participation with the nationalistic patriarchy (2). I would like to add to her assertions that not only women become subordinated through the hegemonic constructs of machismo culture, but also “deviant” sexualities such as queer identities. Moreover, in her essay, Ashok establishes that the women in *Dogeaters* are physical representations of national postcolonial

politics—their bodies representing the once conquered Philippines and its current vexed and unequal state. As such, her reading of Daisy as a clear feminist dissenter of the male-dominated political world of the Philippines becomes of particular interest to me. Specifically, Ashok argues that Daisy’s use of violence challenges patriarchal dominance for by “choosing violence as her tool, she levels the political playing field” (3). Ashok thereby claims that Daisy’s vilification of the beauty pageant crown and eventual transformation into the rebel Aurora places her in the same sphere of influence as men. However, I contend that while this act of violent resistance may suggest an effective method of influential resistance, her embracing of violence makes Daisy a perpetuator of imperial control and ideologies. Thus, her feminist resistance becomes futile. Already in a position of difference, not only does Daisy’s resistant feminism and feminine identity demonstrate subordination, but through her use of violence, she continues a cycle of control through oppressive and destructive means.

This embrace of violence and rejection of a subordinated feminine image is emphasized in the last scene involving Daisy and Joey. Hagedorn writes, “They will get drunk together on cane liquor night. She cries when Joey describes his mother, what he remembers of her. She reproaches herself, and apologizes for being sentimental. She will not cry when she describes how her lover was captured while she was in detention, or how her unnamed baby girl was born premature and dead. They are together all the time. She teaches him how to use a gun” (232-3). At the moment Joey tries to remember his mother, he cannot fully do so. Abandoned from birth, he cannot completely access his ties to motherly femininity. He, as an effeminate and now outcast figure, must now navigate a new level of marginality far from Manila, far from Uncle, and far from the men with whom he was so used to sleeping. Likewise, Daisy cannot access her motherly, familial, and domestic femininity. She refuses to cry when remembering Santos and her dead baby, her access to that mode of feminine tradition now erased. Furthermore, she reprimands herself for being too sentimental. She

denies herself access to the expected feminine behavior of being more emotionally expressive. Now the militant and rebel Aurora, the once idealized female identity of Daisy removes herself from all modes of traditional femininity and embraces the violent methods of her militant masculine oppressors. She gives and teaches Joey how to use a gun. The image of taking ownership of the phallic, masculine, and violent object thus signifies a total rejection and erasure of the resistant feminine identities of women and queer individuals. Not only have both Joey and Daisy failed to resist their oppressors, they now perpetuate the same systems of militant violence; they participate in the oppression of the militant Philippines. They then disappear from the rest of novel, so that their final acceptance of the gun erases their resistant existence because they are now like their oppressors. Like Joey and the knife, the final scene with the gun indicates that their marginal resistance can only be effective when they can speak in a language that the neonational masculine government can understand; by doing so, they become complicit with the same violent methods that were used to subordinate them.

CONCLUSIONS

Ultimately, while Hagedorn attempts to write in and highlight the plight of effeminized voices of women and queer individuals in a postcolonial society, *Dogeaters* provides a bleak outlook. Their marginality makes their individual resistances ineffective in changing and pushing back against the deeply gendered structures of postcolonial Philippines. Specifically through Joey's and Daisy's conclusion implies that marginal resistance is often futile. While subordinated characters may attempt and enact multiple methods of subversion, the only way to survive and influence such an oppressive and violent system is to speak the same "language" as their oppressors. As Senator Avila states "We *Pinoys* suffer collectively from a cultural inferiority complex. We are doomed by our need for assimilation into the West and our own curious fatalism... [we are] a nation of cynics, descendants of warring tribes which were baptized and colonized to death by Spaniards and

Americans, as a nation betrayed and then united only by our hunger for glamour and our Hollywood dreams” (101). Those in subordinated positions often desire to participate in the same sphere of the privileged. However, their marginal identities prevent them from doing so. The postcolonial identity of the Philippines desired to escape their position of subordinated masculinity in relation to their conquerors and thus attempted to use the same methods of oppression and domination—militant and patriarchal violence. Joey and Daisy’s subversion of these traditions, however, threaten the stability of this budding masculine identity. Their stories of resistance show how the fragile and growing desire for a championed and manly national identity inevitably makes any form of marginal pushback futile. Powerless to escape the gendered traditions of *Dogeaters’s* postcolonial Philippines, Joey and Daisy find that only by embracing the violent methods of their oppressors can their resistant efforts be made successful. Thus, not only does Hagedorn suggest that individual and marginalized feminine queer resistance become futile, she ultimately concedes that subordinated identities, when embracing violence, become part of the problem.

However, the message does not have to remain expressly austere. While my reading of Hagedorn’s novel may suggest a futility in marginal resistance, it can also highlight the issues that underlie the need for these subversive acts. Indeed, for both Joey and Daisy to use violence in the end of their story suggests that masculinity and violence are inherently bound to each other. While a history of male behavior may indicate this relation, as Butler theorizes, coded gendered behavior is learned and formed by us. As such, maybe one answer to effective resistance lies in divorcing violence and subordination from gendered expectations. Moreover, tracing the effects of colonial and postcolonial histories can oftentimes allow following generations a chance to explore their own budding identities. The story of Joey, Daisy, and the Philippines, for example, displays the underpinnings of power, gender, and nation in relation to each other, a story that features the oppression of those that deviate from the norms. For the “deviant” characters of Joey and Daisy,

identity formation means survival in the vexed postcolonial terrain of the Philippines; therefore, resistance could not expectedly be successful. The country needed security and stability and their rebellious identities threatened it. However, there are moments of push back that seem hopeful. Daisy's public denouncement of the crown and utilization of her privileged, central status allows for a moment of large scale introspection and recognition of power and gendered disparities. Her subsequent censorship and ostracization notwithstanding, this portrays a method of resistance that may still prove fruitful. Using privileged positions to highlight issues faced by marginalized groups can often allow subordinated identities a chance to find community and affirmation—an act that may then grow into more than just individual resistances. And perhaps Hagedorn ends the story of Joey and Daisy so grimly to express how complicit behavior with oppressive societies will only bulwark the oppressor. As such, maybe the conclusion and erasure of their marginalized identities can push readers to find methods of resistance that not only move away from violence but also heal hurt communities and embrace discriminated identities.

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