

## CHAPTER 3.

# ASSESSMENT'S WORD WORK: EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY AMERICAN IMPERIALISM AND THE COLONIAL FUNCTION OF THE MONOLINGUAL WRITING CONSTRUCT

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**Research Problem:** Because U.S. overseas colonial expansion in the early twentieth century is a much ignored part of our nation's history, archival work in writing assessment has overlooked the colonial legacies informing the ways we think about the role of language in writing and its assessment. This has led recent assessment work to ignore international scholarship that is already asking important questions about the colonial legacies of writing assessment practices.

**Research Questions:** What can writing assessment during the U.S. colonial period in the Philippines tell us about the racist assumptions in our current assessment practices? Where can we look outside of our familiar disciplinary territories in addressing these assumptions?

**Literature Review:** To contextualize the historical context of U.S. colonialism, I rely largely on the work of Filipino and Filipino–American scholars. This move is especially important because the voices of Filipinos not working for the U.S. colonial administration have been largely erased. I situate my own history within the tradition of histories in composition and writing assessment, and bring these traditions in conversation with “internationalization” scholarship in composition and assessment.

**Methodology:** I began this case study with the Monroe Report,

a 1925 report that contained over 200 pages of analysis of large scale assessments administered across the entire colony of the Philippines. I supplemented this report with digitized archival materials in the HathiTrust Digital Library, which provides access to a wealth of documents from the U.S. colonial period. These documents would have otherwise been extremely labor and time intensive to locate and sift through.

**Conclusions:** The “internationalization” of composition and writing assessment are not recent phenomena of global capitalism, but were, in fact, an essential part of enacting the “white man’s burden” of a supposedly benevolent colonialism. Writing instruction and assessment have from their beginnings been animated by a colonialist inside/outside binary, and much of our current practice is still problematically animated by this binary.

**Qualifications:** My study covers only a very small part of the assessments that were carried out in the Philippines. Further, my characterization of writing instruction in the U.S. colonies is based largely on one report. The complexities of the colonial educational contexts are relegated to the background, but not addressed directly and in depth.

**Directions for Further Study:** Deeper study into rhetorical education in overseas U.S. colonies needs to be done, not only in the Philippines, but also in Puerto Rico and Guam. Very different decisions about education were made in these colonies, most notably regarding language policy. There are hints of attempts at localization in the Monroe Report that a deeper study would look at in order to shed more light on recent calls for localization in writing assessment. Comparative analysis within Native American boarding schools is essential to understanding the depth and breadth of the colonialist legacy of U.S. rhetorical education.

You see, my ancestry is partially Filipino. Even as I remain largely a stranger to the Islands, and though learning my mother’s language was never a task I undertook, I am a Filipino. One of my many online identities is named “bundok,” a Tagalog word denoting “mountain,” and connoting “remote area.” Significantly, bundok is also the root word for the American word “boondocks,” which was adapted into the U.S. English vernacular by Philippine–American War soldiers to connote a remote and confusing place. The earliest print usage of the word in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is from 1944 in a publication called *The Marine*

*Corps Reader*, referring to the “boondocks” of Paris Island, South Carolina. Given the textual evidence, it seems that the adoption of the word *bundok* into the U.S. English lexicon as “boondock” has roots in imperialist military action. The *OED* identifies 40 entries of Filipino origin and “boondock,” is the only entry that can be said to have actually changed the U.S. lexicon at all. All other entries are the names of Filipino flora, fauna, foods, and customs. “Boondock” stands in stark contrast to the development of a widely used creole English/Tagalog language in the Philippines called Taglish. The word illustrates the lasting influence linguistically and educationally that U.S. colonialism had on Philippine culture after establishing an English Only public education system. That the Philippine origins of “boondock” are unknown to so many Americans, is a symbol of our forgotten colonial history in the Philippines, and especially the long colonial war fought there in the name of the “white man’s burden.” One additional legacy of the colonial project in the Philippines was the establishment of educational testing that modeled the forms of assessment given in U.S. schools.

My grandmother was an English teacher in the English Only U.S. colonial school system discussed in this chapter. It is entirely possible that she was a student when the assessments I discuss were administered. Whatever her attitudes towards English Only education and American linguistic imperialism were as a student, to hear her, and many of my family members, tell it, the U.S. occupation of the Philippines was nothing but perfect, a truly benevolent partnership. I have no doubt that this aspect of my family history played a role in my sister and I not learning either Tagalog, the national language of the Philippines, or Visayan, the language spoken by the majority of my Filipino family. So while my Korean-American friends in high school took classes in Korean language, I did not learn the language of my family. I do not necessarily regret this, but I don’t *not* regret it. As a teenager, I would have resisted spending my Saturday afternoons in a community center learning a language I would never have to use. But this is, in large part, the point. Having grown up in the metropole, raised as a citizen of the center rather than the periphery and speaking the language of the colonizer, the legacy of English language policy in the Philippines means that I can function there without an understanding of local language. My cousins and their friends, especially the ones who live far from urban centers, struggle to speak English with me while I do not struggle to speak theirs.

What my history with Filipino languages and American varieties of English illustrate is that being raised a native speaker of a prestige variety of English is an unexamined privilege, one that has only recently received scant attention from compositionists who study writing assessment (Behm & Miller 2012; Inoue, 2015). Not only were arguments in favor of English Only education born during “the high tide of imperialism, colonial adventure, and overseas mission-

ary societies” (Horner & Trimbur, 2002, p. 608), but was actually the official educational policy in the Philippines. So it is through this word work that I connect the same colonial history to writing assessment.

My own purpose is to look directly at the policies enacted within the colonies as reflected in the assessment practices. In particular, I will look at score interpretation practices that expose parallels in the ways we talk about language, composition and writing assessment today and the ways that colonial administrators justified enforced English monolingualism. It is especially important to note that U.S. colonialists characterized their mission as a social justice one from the start. It is odd, even contradictory, from our perspective to imagine an overseas social justice mission that consisted of violent colonial war and a public education system informed by white supremacist theories of intelligence. Yet, as my analysis below will show, this was the case. At least the colonial administrators responsible for the writing assessments I review really did believe that U.S. colonialism was in the best interest of the Filipino people, no matter how anglo-centric. Further, I will show how their discourse regarding the relationship among writing education, writing assessment and language have parallels in recent writing assessment discourse, especially with regard to international students. These parallels should give us pause to reconsider the ways that writing assessment practices, when framed by a white supremacist language ideology, reify colonial attitudes toward non-white composition students.

## **ENGLISH LANGUAGE IMPERIALISM IN THE ARCHIVES OF RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION**

U.S. compositionists’ histories of both composition and writing assessment tend to focus solely within U.S. borders, despite the fact that early twentieth century imperialism, the rise of college composition and early educational assessments were deeply intertwined. My study will look at literacy assessments undertaken in U.S. colonial Philippines in 1924 in order to look at the historical intersection of these three phenomena. If we are concerned with the social justice work of writing assessment, we should consider the colonial settings in which the earliest efforts to internationalize composition and writing assessment took place. The Philippines is a particularly productive location to look at because it was there that American exceptionalism drove educational administrators to implement a universal education requirement by importing American education wholesale. But importing U.S. education faced what administrators frequently called “the language problem.” The Philippine Islands were only unified into a single nation by Spanish imperialism. During the 400-year period of Spanish colonialism, the local church never insisted on enforcing a royal decree that all locals learn Span-

ish because priests found it easier to learn the local dialects themselves rather than to teach Spanish. As a result, at the time of U.S. imperialism, Filipinos still largely spoke the hundreds of local vernaculars, with the exception of a small local elite called *ilustrados* who had learned Spanish in religious private schools. If the U.S. colonial administration were going to institute a universal education requirement, they decided after much debate, that English Only would be the appropriate policy. This insistence on English Only haunts composition and assessment to this day.

Bruce Horner and John Trimbur (2002) point to parallels between the ways that we talk about the role of language in composition and pro-English Only arguments from the turn of the twentieth century. Significantly, they demonstrate that many of these parallels surface even in arguments *against* English Only today because “assumptions about language that were institutionalized around the turn of the century, at a high tide of imperialism, colonial adventure, and overseas missionary societies, have become sedimented in the way we think about writing pedagogy and curriculum” (Horner & Trimbur, 2002, p. 608). They identify a “chain of reifications” which “purifies the social identity of U.S. Americans as English speakers, privileges the use of language as written English, and then charts the pedagogical and curricular development of language as one that points inexorably toward mastery of written English” (2002, p. 607). This chain of reifications created the notion of an idealized, monolingual English understood as the goal of writing education. Though Horner and Trimbur draw our attention to important assumptions behind our language practices in U.S. composition, they are nonetheless focused solely on practices within United States universities. This tendency of U.S. compositionists to look at practices only within U.S. borders, rooted in our disciplinary histories which treat internationalization as a recent phenomenon, looks similar to the American Exceptionalism that informed composition and assessment practices in colonial Philippines.

In fact, American exceptionalism informed both pro- and anti-imperialist arguments at the time (Baldoz, 2009). On the one hand, anti-imperialists argued that the United States’ exceptional character as the world’s leading democracy could not impose government unwillingly on another country, while pro-imperialists argued that it was exactly the nation’s exceptional character that would allow them to lead other nations such as the Philippines into the twentieth century. Donahue (2009) identifies a similar pattern in the ways we talk about internationalization work in composition. She identifies import/export metaphors which tend to depict international composition work thus: “Notice that we ‘import’ problems (the challenges of multiliterate, multicultural students, for example) and we ‘export’ our expertise about higher education writing instruction” (2009, p. 226). And

though Donahue goes on to question the assumption within composition studies that we U.S. compositionists are always the colonizers, she nonetheless points us in the direction of two concepts that should never be far from our minds when we consider the parallels between U.S. colonial policy and current composition practice: American exceptionalism and assumed monolingualism. It may seem odd to use Donahue's criticism in order to make a point about the ways that we read a composition practice instituted within a blatantly colonial past by unapologetic colonialists. However, her warning about always reading colonial relationships as one-way resonates with the ways we should read our discipline's colonial legacy, especially with regard to language policy.

Pennycook's (1998, 2009) work on English language policies in former British colonies is particularly instructive when addressing these notions, in particular because of his continued rejection of the assumption that colonial language policies always function unidirectionally from metropolitan center to colonized periphery, even when they are intended to do so. Pennycook's *English and the Discourses of Colonialism* (2009) traces a long history of shifting educational policies regarding the English language. Unlike the American administration in the Philippines, the British never attempted to implement English as the medium of instruction for all citizens (Pennycook, 2009); rather, English language instruction was reserved for local elites who would eventually serve in administrative roles. As the British expanded education beyond the elite, it was decided that the vernacular would be best suited for educating people "in such subjects as will best fit them for their position in life" (*Report* as cited in Pennycook, 2009, p. 71). In Pennycook's discussion, he shows the ways that the debate over the role of the English language was never settled in colonial India, fought between the Anglicists on one side who advocated for English language education and Orientalists on the other who advocated for vernacular education.

What both sides shared was an assumed Otherness by their colonial subjects and a perceived need to import European culture. The difference between the two camps was to what *extent* to import European culture and the best means, linguistically, for achieving those ends. Although American exceptionalism allowed U.S. colonialists to imagine a very different colonial mission which valued educating an entire populace for the stated purpose of eventual democratic self-rule, the importing of American culture was seen as a necessary component of this mission. Though American goals in the Philippines were different, and therefore supposedly more progressive, than those of the British in India, both colonial missions nonetheless shared the assumption of the "white man's burden" to "civilize" supposedly savage nations. The colonial policies in India and Hong Kong that Pennycook's work addresses were very different than that of the United States' policies in the Philippines, but looking to this legacy is nonethe-

less instructive when we consider that U.S. colonial policies were purposely set up in contrast to European colonial policies. The insistence on English as the medium of instruction stands in strong contrast to European colonial missions in Asia, but there are important parallels in colonial thinking that inform the two divergent practices. Most important for our purposes is the “white man’s burden:” the perceived need to export Western culture in an effort to “civilize” locals.

It is not a new statement to say that education is an important process for reinforcing colonial hegemony, but in the history of the Philippines, the role of English language education and its literacy assessments were tools of hegemonic control within larger, historical contexts of nation-building. Thus, Pennycook offers guidance for us in resisting “a common representation of colonial history in which a simple past is contrasted with a complex present” (2009, p. 69). After all, if we see our work in a simple dichotomous relationship with our colonial history, we can too easily overlook the problematic assumptions and practices that survive into our current moment. Canagarajah (1999) has similarly used Pennycook to illustrate the ways that colonial histories tend to be driven by stereotypes and create dichotomies that fail to describe actual language practice and policy. Like Canagarajah and Pennycook, I reject the narrative told by Phillipson (1992) which depicts a one-way power relationship between English and local languages. If the benevolence of the U.S. colonial mission is disputed, the role of English language education is even more so largely because of the prestigious status of English in a global economy. For example, a now canonical article in Filipino-American studies by Constantino (1970) depicts the U.S. colonial education system as “a means of pacifying a people who were defending their newly won freedom from an invader who had posed as an ally” (p. 179). He then goes on to make the further claim that “English became the wedge that separated the Filipinos from their past and later was to separate educated Filipinos from the mass of their countrymen” (p. 181). However, he then lists English language literacy as a virtue of the colonial education system. Importantly, in addition to English language literacy, Constantino also lists becoming “more conversant with the outside world, especially the American world” (p. 180) as additional virtues of this educational system.

Hamp-Lyons (2014) has leveled a similar criticism at U.S. compositionists working in writing assessment who do not share their expertise internationally. Though it might appear at first that Hamp-Lyons’ argument looks like the “exporting expertise” end of the problematic binary described by Donahue, we should not read Donahue’s caution as a call to withhold our expertise, but rather to avoid seeing our expertise as existing within an inside/outside binary. This has recently led Hamp-Lyons (2016) to extend her critique of the insularity of the



“large majority in the U.S. composition community” (p. A2) to the ways that our opposition to psychometric testing “ignores the reality [. . .] of the existence of ‘big tests’ and powerful testing agencies” (p. A2). Though we have used validity theory to move toward more just assessments, our insularity ignores the international success of U.S. psychometric testing “techniques developed in the first half of the last century” (Hamp-Lyons, 2014, p. 357). Hamp-Lyons identifies these techniques as an instrumental driver of international writing instruction in English which “looks very much like [. . .] current-traditional rhetoric: an emphasis on correctness, adherence to a conventional form, conscious practice of modes of discourse, and translation (not from Latin but from the dominant local language)” (p. 358). The composition and assessment landscape described by Hamp-Lyons in contemporary overseas settings is startlingly similar to the colonial Philippines. Given that our history of “exporting” composition began simultaneously with developments in educational measurement and in response to a supposedly more just form of colonialism, it is important to keep in mind the parallels with current composition and assessment practices, especially with regard to localization. In addition to keeping U.S. compositionists from participating in international conversations about writing assessment, our tendency to see composition through a U.S.-centric lens has similarly led us to ignore important language policy work in international writing assessments.

For example, Behm and Miller (2012), while rightly asking for a new wave of assessments which “challenge entrenched, ‘white’ linguistic patterns lionized as normal, natural, and rational; and to repudiate racialized standards reinforced by rubrics and other classroom assessment practices that reify discursive practices of whiteness and privilege” (p. 137) by developing “multifaceted criteria [. . .] that follow appropriate standards, including the standards of AAVE, Latino/a Englishes, and World Englishes” (p. 138), they seem unaware of work in international language policy which has already looked at the role of assessment in suppressing language variety and marginalizing users of non-dominant languages (Hamp-Lyons, 2007; Shohamy 2006, 2007; Spolsky 2012). Shohamy (2006) would even caution against defining standards for *any* variety of English. Drawing on Hutton and Pennycook, she specifically demonstrates that the drive to classify and describe languages at all was historically rooted in early twentieth century nationalism. Even terms such as “code mixing” come from a desire to see languages as pure, closed systems (p. 32). All of this suggests that defining alternate standards as a response to monolingual assessment designs is an extremely complex and potentially problematic undertaking. Interestingly, some of Shohamy’s recommendations are not that far from those made by Behm and Miller, such as “the inclusion of different voices” or “shared and collaborative assessment models” (p. 108). But she is additionally concerned with the *uses* of



tests and not exclusively the construction of tests, proposing “ways in which test takers can guard themselves from misuses of tests” and “consider[ing] the uses of tests from a critical language-testing perspective” (p. 108). The latter of these two suggestions might remind us of Brian Huot’s (2003) introduction of assessment scholarship to composition, in which he asks us to consider the way a test is used as a validity criteria. Because so much of our historical work, especially regarding writing assessment, has been so inwardly focused, even our scholarship that has taken up a critical language perspective has talked about students in terms similar to the import/export model. The question then is whether or not setting standards for non-prestige uses of English is sufficient to undo this binary, or worse, would it, as Shohamy’s analysis seems to suggest it might, perpetuate it? And would setting these standards ensure fair score interpretation as long as the lens through which those scores are interpreted is still seen through this binary?

Drawing on the work of Ellen Cushman, Elliot (2016), in “A Theory of Ethics for Writing Assessment,” has stated that “When diverse populations are considered in terms of curricular initiatives and assessment programs, [. . .] the aim of decolonization must extend from task design to consequence determination” (sec. 3.2.3). What this means is that fairness must be considered along every step of the process by taking such action as, for example, ensuring “maximum construct representation” (Elliot, 2016, sec. 3.1) and disaggregating data in order to ensure fairness for the least advantaged groups before making decisions about the use of the test results. Under Elliot’s theory of ethics, the constant testing of fairness for the least advantaged would ask us to make sure that the active creation of standards for uses of English considered nonstandard were really in the best interest of students. More recently, Poe and Inoue (2016), drawing on the work of Young, have asked us to look to Young’s axis of decision making as a place for a “toehold for the project of writing assessment as social justice” (p. 117). More directly relevant to this chapter, they ask:

How can we engage in fostering a more just society within our classrooms or programs, perhaps around the priorities that translanguaging approaches to language offer, when we know that most outside our classrooms will assess our students’ writing in vastly different ways, often to our students’ detriment, often in contradiction to the lessons we offer them about language and its valuing? (Poe & Inoue, 2016, p. 121)

As expected, the score interpretations discussed below are deeply problematic and informed by racist theories of language. After all, if problematic understandings of language are so prominent today, causing the dilemma discussed by this

volume's editors in the above quote, how could we expect any different from early twentieth century colonial administrators? Yet, alongside their very problematic and racist views of language and writing, we also find these colonial administrators reacting to the dilemmas posed to Filipino students by English monolingualism in surprisingly progressive—though certainly still problematic—ways. Specifically, if we look to decision making as the axis upon which to build our toehold for assessment as social justice, and consider the role of language in this decision making, we find, then as now, a retreat from decision making about language that we commonly see in both writing assessments and composition pedagogies. If others, frequently more powerful others, are demanding a standard English from our students, the thinking goes, then what power do we have in composition and assessment to resist this? I don't want to imply that this is an easy dilemma to navigate. But make no mistake that this question looks very much like arguments made by early twentieth century colonialists who felt that the murder of Filipinos in 1901 had been committed for their own good (Figure 3.1).

Previous archival research in writing assessment—at least from within U.S. composition—like much historical work in composition in general, tends to focus on composition practice strictly within U.S. borders. The familiar narratives center around the emergence of composition at the beginning of the twentieth century at Harvard in response to more democratic admissions policies and shifting socioeconomic and cultural priorities in post-Civil War United States (Berlin 1987, Brereton 1995). Though many subsequent composition histories have questioned the narrow focus of disciplinary narratives focused on elite universities, they are still geographically limited to the United States. Even Trimbur and Horner's history, though recognizing the way that colonial attitudes influenced language theories in early composition scholarship, is still focused solely U.S. composition. Similarly, internationalization work such as Donahue's tends to talk about internationalization as if it were a new phenomenon. In fact, the internationalization of both composition and assessment were phenomena of early twentieth century U.S. imperialism. As one example, we can look directly at one historical figure who features prominently in both Berlin and Brereton's now canonical composition histories, as well as Elliot's (2006) history of writing assessment: former Harvard President Charles W. Eliot. Eliot was prominent both in the establishment of a composition requirement at Harvard, the implementation of an admissions test and was an early advocate of U.S. universities adopting the German research model. According to curriculum historian Coloma (2009), President McKinley consulted with Eliot prior to picking Fred Atkinson, at Eliot's suggestion, to administer the public education system in the Philippines. So Eliot had a hand—however indirectly—in the earliest internationalization efforts of U.S. composition.

Assessment histories from U.S. scholars are similarly focused on local and national assessment contexts. Elliot's comprehensive history tells the story of writing assessment in the twentieth century exclusively within U.S. borders. More recently, work by Serviss (2011) looks at New York State literacy assessments administered to immigrants and finds that the tension between localization and standardization is "not just a new, contemporary problem, but a long-standing historic one" (p. 226). Serviss' study nuances one of the master narratives we have long told ourselves about assessment history, and also shows how early twentieth century tensions between localism and standardization can offer us guidance by illuminating how complex the construct of literacy is. She further shows that recent scholarship that recognizes validity as a process that "allows for even more overt negotiation of constructs like literacy that, if molded, allow for vast, complicated notions of 'literacy' that address both local and broader conceptualizations" (p. 226). Yet, it is possible for an uncautious reader to read her narrative through the lens against which Donahue cautions us: that of importing problems. As Donahue demonstrates, this issue of importing problems represented in the bodies of foreign students, is always a risk when we look at composition strictly through a U.S.-centric lens. It is exactly this inward looking tendency that historiography can help us address in order "to wrestle with the compulsion of English to 'help' the so-called third world, minority, student, or basic writers by creating and legislating their 'needs'" (Lu, 2009, p. 10). In doing so, we should "dwell on the complexities of power relations, on power and resistance as multiply located, and on both being examined in specific historical and material contexts" (Bahri, 1998, p. 35). Looking at these assessments tells us that the internationalization of composition and educational measurement are not recent phenomena tied exclusively to globalization, but a feature of composition and writing assessment from the beginning. In studying this relationship, I will look at a set of assessments carried out in 1924 in the Philippines, and will point to parallels with our own arguments about the role of language in writing assessment that our inward focus has allowed us to ignore.

## **U.S COLONIAL EXPANSION, AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM, AND ENGLISH ONLY IN THE PHILIPPINES**

The image of dead Filipino soldiers in Figure 3.1 is a reminder that the U.S. colonial mission was never as benevolent as its proponents wanted their publics to believe, a narrative that has led to the very erasures I discussed in my opening paragraph. It also serves as a reminder of the "violent" part of Mohanty's (2003) claim that "colonization almost invariably implies a relation of domination and a suppression—often violent—of the heterogeneity of the subject(s) in ques-

tion” (p. 18). Violence and the suppression of heterogeneity of colonial Others has been central to white colonialism in the Philippines. The very denial of heterogeneity of the English Only public educational policy of U.S. colonial Philippines was built on the bodies of these Filipino soldiers. Unifying the Philippine Islands as a single colony under Spanish colonial rule was itself an act of denying heterogeneity. These Filipino dead are a reminder of the violence necessary to carry out the supposedly benevolent practice of tutelary colonialism. This photograph depicts “the high tide of imperialism, colonial adventure, and overseas missionary societies” (Horner & Trimbur, 2002, p. 608) that is the context for assumptions about language we carry with us today identified by Horner and Trimbur. This photo depicts the aftermath of the specific military action which enabled the US to take its first steps to becoming a world power and made its first steps toward economic expansion in Asia. Just as war paved the way for large scale testing in the US (Eliot, 2005), the death of these Filipino soldiers paved the way for the wholesale exportation of racist American pedagogies, including current-traditional rhetoric. As such, it is the military action that enabled the internationalization of composition and, twenty years later, U.S. psychometric testing which was to first occur in the Philippines in 1924.



*Figure 3.1. Dead Filipino soldiers following the first day of fighting in the Philippine-American War (source: National Archive)*

A common telling of U.S. occupation in the Philippines entails exclusively the signing of the 1898 Treaty of Paris in which—following their defeat in the Spanish–American War—Spain “granted” the U.S. possession of Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines. In describing the ways that Americans tend to remember the occupation of the Islands, Filipino historian Iletto (2002) cheekily writes that “the myth generally persists that there was merely a ‘Spanish–American War’ in 1898 which almost magically landed the Philippines on Uncle Sam’s lap after some treaty in Paris and the payment of a check to Spain” (p. 4). But, in fact, there was a prolonged war, which, similar to recent military intervention in Iraq, was declared over long before the cessation of hostilities. Filipino scholar Oscar Campomanes has looked at the disputed casualty figures during the “official” war versus the figures during the “guerrilla” fighting after the war was officially over to ask why the Spanish–American War is told as the “real” action while the Philippine–American War is told as the afterthought, if told at all.

For Iletto, the central question for the telling of the history of American occupation is “Why is it so difficult to speak of the relationship [between the Philippines and the United States] in terms such as invasion, resistance [. . .] war, combat, colonialism, exploitation, discrimination?” (p. 3) For Iletto, the answer, though complex, begins with the public school system established by the Americans. As a historian, Iletto is more interested in the stories told in the school system by colonial administrators who characterized the war as “misunderstanding,” caused by Filipino republican leaders “who were not mature or intelligent enough to understand the intentions of the United States (which was to help the Filipinos complete their revolution [against Spanish colonial rule] under their tutelage)” (p. 3). It is, of course, this tutelage that makes the relationship so difficult to talk about in the terms Iletto prefers.

Tutelary colonialism is the term for a system of colonization in which the colonizers claim the goal of eventual self-rule of the colonized, and used by sociologist Go (2008) to describe the U.S. colonial mission in the Philippines. There is much debate in Philippine–American studies about the sincerity of this claim, and it is important that we remain skeptical of it. But whether or not we maintain this skepticism, it is useful to remember that American exceptionalism informed the educational mission that in 1924 administered the literacy assessments that I will discuss below. Baldoz (2011) explains the American colonial mindset:

The United States itself was a product of anticolonial struggle, with a political mindset that rested in part on universalist principles of natural rights and government by consent [. . .] As a result, U.S. officials were careful to highlight the benevo-



lent and paternal aims of overseas expansion, suggesting that American imperium was different from the kind of rapacious colonialism practiced by European powers [. . .] The United States, they claimed, was uniquely positioned to bring the light of civilization and economic development to populations who had fallen behind the rest of the world while under centuries of Spanish misrule. (pp. 21-22)

In order to justify colonial expansion to a citizenry that might recognize the irony of a nation that prided itself on self-rule, at least in the ideal, the war had to be justified on humanitarian grounds, and policy decisions had to follow those grounds. This included universal education and English as the medium of instruction. The United States' perception of itself as a city on a hill defined the educational mission in the islands as a social justice one. In Go's analysis, colonial administrators used various strategies to "control semiotic resources"—including mandatory universal education in English—in order to remake the Philippines into an idealized image of a democratic state.

Go's analysis goes on to discuss those pro-colonialist Americans who he characterizes as educated, white elites, progressively minded, but still informed by racial theories of social development that held that a society's "level" of development, although not an essential racial characteristic, was nonetheless *related to* the race of its people. And while educated, elite Filipinos were given posts within the colonial government, they still answered to white Americans who held the highest posts in the colonial administration because of their racial superiority. The mission of eventual self-rule identifies those responsible for the colonial project as progressive-minded reformers. For them, colonialism was necessary because the Filipinos could not be trusted to self-govern without the guidance of white colonists, and to many educators competence in a standardized English was necessary both to unify the Islands into a single nation and for the economic and political success of this nation.

## THE MONROE REPORT: "TO DEVELOP KNOWLEDGE OF FORM APPEARS TO BE THE CHIEF AIM"

Educational assessments were first administered in the Philippines in 1924 and test results were reported in *A Survey of the Educational System of the Philippine Islands, 1925*. The report is referred to in the literature as the Monroe Report, named after the assessment committee chairman, Paul Monroe. Prior to his service in the Philippines, Monroe had served as a professor of the History of Education and Director of the Teacher's College at Columbia

University. He wrote several books on the history of education during his time at Columbia, and prior to his service in the Philippines, he co-edited a collection entitled *The American Spirit: A Basis for World Democracy* (1918) with Irving Miller from the education department of the Washington State Normal School at Bellingham (now Western Washington University). It is a collection of historical and then-current patriotic speeches, essays and poems. In the introduction to the book, the editors write, in reference to the Philippine–American War (or perhaps the Spanish–American War or both—the wording is unclear): “Foreign war and the complicated problems of modern world diplomacy enabled the nation to reject an imperialistic policy in favor of one of generosity and humanity towards the weaker nations, of justice and honor among its peers” (p. iii). Included in the volume are the transcriptions of speeches from President McKinley and former Secretary of War Elihu Root denying that any sort of territorial claims are the goal of U.S. colonialism, but rather that only humanitarian ends are any motivation for war with the Philippines. So it would appear that in Paul Monroe the Bureau of Education had a true believer in a particular vision of the American exceptionalism informing colonial policy that moves beyond tutelage in democracy toward a mission of “humanity [. . .] justice and honor” (p. ii.) Importantly, Monroe and Miller go on to vaguely discuss “insidious attempts in the last few years to array group against group to the end that we may not present a united front” (p. iv). These undefined “recent attempts” have failed, according to the editors, in ways particularly important to this essay: “the very measures employed [. . .] have gradually brought to consciousness and focused the American Spirit until it has asserted its supremacy over hyphenism of any sort” (p. iv). We need to be careful of reading too much into such vague statements, but what is significant is the dichotomy set up between a unified “American Spirit” (however vaguely defined) and “hyphenism of *any* sort” (emphasis mine). Monroe and his co-editor’s vision of social justice, then, depends on assimilation and a denial of heterogeneity. Here, we might recall J. W. Hammond’s discussion of progressive racism in Chapter 1 (this collection), in which progressive educators, though advocates of inclusive education, nonetheless saw the eradication or containment of “‘foreign’ racial difference” as a part of this education.

The Monroe Report (1925) itself is an almost 700 page report on the entire education system from elementary school through college, which includes such topics as administrative structure, costs, curricula, enrollment numbers, history, and other topics related to the administration of a national public education system in the colony, including the University of the Philippines. Most relevant to this article is a section of the report dedicated to a series of assessments administered throughout the entire public educational system.



According to the report, a total of 223,710 tests were administered nationwide (p. 223). The tests were administered to students from grade five through first year of college as well as to elementary and secondary teachers, as shown in the table below, reproduced from the original report in Figure 3.2:

Test	No. given
Paragraph reading.....	2,540
Sentence meaning.....	2,540
Vocabulary (word meaning).....	2,540
Arithmetic reasoning.....	2,540
Arithmetic computation.....	2,540
Nature study and science.....	2,540
History and literature.....	2,540
Knowledge of language.....	2,540
Understanding dictation and spelling.....	2,540
Mental ability (Verbal, Otis Test).....	2,540
Mental ability (Verbal, Thorndike) Entrance Examination.....	376
Total in fourth-year high-school classes.....	26,846
FIRST YEAR UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES (MANILA AND CEBU)	
Test	No. given
Paragraph reading.....	853
Sentence meaning.....	853
Vocabulary (word meaning).....	853
Arithmetic computation.....	853
Arithmetic reasoning.....	853
Nature study and science.....	853
History and literature.....	853
Knowledge of language.....	853
Understanding dictation and spelling.....	853
Mental ability (Verbal, Otis Test).....	792
Mental ability (Verbal, Thorndike).....	153
Total in First Year University of the Philippines.....	8,622
TEACHERS ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY IN MANILA AND TEN PROVINCES	
Test	No. given
Paragraph reading.....	1,077
Sentence meaning.....	1,077
Vocabulary (word meaning).....	1,077
Arithmetic computation.....	1,077
Arithmetic reasoning.....	1,077
Nature study and science.....	1,077
History and literature.....	1,077
Knowledge of language.....	1,077
Understanding dictation and spelling.....	1,077
Mental ability (Verbal, Otis Test).....	691
Mental ability (Verbal, Thorndike).....	386
Total tests given to teachers.....	10,770

Figure 3.2. Number of assessments administered to high school seniors, college freshmen and elementary and secondary teachers.

Figure 3.2 shows a list of the total standardized tests administered for the survey for senior year high school students, first year college students at both the Cebu and Manila campuses of the University of the Philippines, and for elementary and secondary teachers in ten separate provinces. This excerpt of the table focuses on fourth year high school and higher, but it does list the entirety of all of the tests administered, as the same tests were administered to all grade levels. Two things are important to note: first, the number of tests administered to measure the efficacy of literacy instruction in Philippine public schools and second, how many of those test are language-focused. In fact, if we remove the two arithmetic tests, the history and literature test and the science test from the list, we are left with the famous Otis and Thorndike tests and five separate language related tests.

There is no direct writing assessment listed in Figure 3.2, but there were three direct writing assessments referenced in the report, which I will discuss in this section. Of the tests listed above, literacy is not tested in any way that we would consider a valid way to make decisions about students' facility with it. Instead is a list of traits related to literacy: reading comprehension (sentence and paragraph), knowledge of language, and dictation and spelling. These reading and knowledge of language tests consisted of multiple choice questions. The dictation and spelling test asked students to transcribe spoken English. Given common understandings about the history of writing assessment, we might expect that these indirect assessments to comprise the whole of how they measured literacy and writing, especially given the importance of English language to school success. The dictation and spelling test is especially interesting because a similar test was part of the national civil service exam, suggesting clerical work in the civil service as a goal of English language education. We might remember Pennycook's discussion of English education in India in which English education was reserved for local elites to participate in colonial government. The main difference here is that English education is not only universal, but compulsory, a result of a particular version of the "white man's burden" informed by American exceptionalism. What the two colonial language policies share in common is a perceived need to legislate student needs without consulting the wishes of Filipinos for their own education.

As I mentioned previously, in addition to the list of tests above, the Monroe Report briefly mentions three direct writing assessments. The first of the two direct writing assessments was meant "to provide a measure of the ability of Filipinos to do constructive writing in English" (Board of Educational, 1925, p. 170). In order to provide this measure, they "collected several thousand compositions written by school children" (p. 170). Because of the heavy workload involved carrying out the assessment, it "was recognized as necessary" to have

“the compositions scored by trained Americans who were not members of the staff of the Bureau of Education” (p. 170); however, the report says, “Since no one else was at hand to do it, the members of the Commission are unable to report their own measurement of the ability of Filipinos to express ideas in English” (p. 170). So they collected papers with the purpose of carrying out a direct assessment—and perhaps most importantly, an assessment of texts produced in response to a specific writing context—but because of a lack of trained American raters, the committee placed the papers in storage for future review when the time and desired raters would be available.

Whether or not these materials were ever put to use is unclear. We might ask why it was deemed necessary that the raters be American, but the report never addresses this question. One clue can be found in the other two direct writing assessments discussed in the report, and another clue can be found by recalling the chain of reifications identified by Horner and Trimbur above which associates language with nationality, or by recalling Shohamy’s history of language policy which aligns the classification of language—and especially “correct usage”—with nationality. An additional clue can be found in the local language practices, as discussed in the second of the following two direct writing assessments—the 1921 civil service exam and a collection of letters written by Filipino school administrators.

In order to provide some sort of direct data for writing, the Board reprints a table of the passing rates of a 1921 civil service exam, taken from a 1921 article in a now defunct newspaper called *The Philippines Free Press* (the archives of which are unavailable), and written by Field, the chief examiner of the Bureau of Civil Service (Monroe, 1922). The data from this study are summed in Figure 3.3.

Second Grade and Promotional First Grade exams are general exams applicants to certain positions would take in addition to job-specific exams. There were three “grades” of exams with third testing for entry-level jobs and first testing for the most “advanced” jobs. The “promotional” first grade exam likely indicates an exam for someone seeking a promotion out of a “second grade” job and into a “first grade” job.

The Monroe report provides the following commentary on the high failure rate (99% of the 566 examined in English composition, 97% of the 172 examined in thesis writing, by contrasting the results with results for arithmetic, spelling, penmanship and other tests that are not specified:

Summing these all up [Field] shows that the greatest difficulty lies in English composition and letter writing [. . .] In sharp contrast to these results in language are those in arithmetic,

spelling, penmanship, etc. The percentage of failure in arithmetic [. . .] are: 41, 55, 58, 85, 65, 63. In spelling they are 77, 22, 35, 54. For penmanship, 6, 7. These percentages of failure correspond very well to those of results of taking the examinations of the United States Civil Service Examination. (1922, p. 171).

JUNIOR TEACHERS EXAMINATION			
	Number examined	Number failed	Per cent failing
English composition..	566	565	99
TEACHERS EXAMINATION			
Thesis .....	172	168	97
CLERICAL EXAMINATION			
Letter writing .....	169	164	97
SENIOR STENOGRAPHER			
Letter writing .....	33	27	82
SECOND GRADE			
Letter writing .....	135	132	98
PROMOTIONAL FIRST GRADE			
Letter writing .....	59	58	98

*Figure 3.3. Pass/Fail rates for the writing section of the 1921 Philippine Civil Service Exam.*

In short, the composition, the thesis, and the letter writing portions of the civil service exam listed in the table demonstrated a much higher rate of failure among Filipino test takers versus the rate of failure among U.S. test takers, while other measures, such as those not listed in the table for arithmetic, spelling and penmanship, showed similar rates of failure.

The Monroe Report never discusses the testing methods or evaluation criteria for the Philippine Civil Service exam, and information on the 1921 test is unavailable, but the testing manuals for the exams from 1901–1912 reveals a heavy emphasis on error. For example, the 1901 instructions for raters state: “In rating the letter its errors in form and address, spelling, capitalization, punctuation, syntax, style, and its adherence to subject will be considered” (Monroe, 1925, p. 27). Notice that “adherence to subject” is the only trait not related to correctness. The instructions for the 1912 thesis exam are exactly the same. The Monroe Report’s discussion of the 1921 tests is worth quoting at length:

We have here a long time measure of the composition work of the schools. Is it valid? Are the schools failing so completely to produce young people who can express themselves clearly and correctly in English? Or are the standards of the Bureau of Civil Service so rigid that the failure to pass its examination is not a fair index of lack of ability in composition? To answer the latter question the Commission collected from the Bureau of Civil Service examples of papers that were rated as (a) excellent; (b) just not passing; (c) poorest. (1925, p. 72)

It is interesting that the discussion of direct assessment of writing opens by raising the question of validity, they never address the question that they themselves raise. Rather, their discussion of the papers that they collected in order to answer the question skips directly to discussion of standards:

Careful study of these papers leads us to believe that the standards in English composition maintained by the Bureau are not too high. The qualities of writing demanded by the Bureau seem to us to represent a fair requirement to expect of high-school graduates.

We have no complete assurance, of course, that the standards of earlier years were comparable to those of today. We are told, however, by the present officials that in order to secure enough successful candidates to fill vacant positions, they have been somewhat relaxed. If, therefore, the earlier ratings were more rigorous than could be justified the percentage of



successful candidates perhaps should have been somewhat higher than it actually was.

The evidence seems to be clear, therefore, that the present organization of English composition in the elementary and secondary schools is not producing young people who can express themselves in writing clearly and correctly. (Board of Educational, 1925, p. 72)

There is clearly an assumption of alignment here: the English language education in the colony is a means of training Filipinos for certain kinds of bureaucratic work. The commission believes that the “composition work of the schools” is not achieving this goal, based on the high rate of failure on the civil service exam. Furthermore, the commission believes that the imperial standards for passing a test should “represent a fair requirement” for high school graduates. Significantly, almost ten years after the Jones Act which set in motion the eventual independence of the Philippines, the question of whether or not a monolingual education is in the best interests of the Filipino people is not even raised in discussion of this failure rate. The question is raised briefly in the report, and is discussed in the next section of this chapter. And it is in that discussion where we find the most interesting parallels with much discussion of the purpose of composition and our responsibilities regarding the teaching and assessment of language standards in composition today, especially with regard to international students.

While we should be careful about how we interpret the commission's use of the words “clearly” and “correctly” in their evaluation of the civil service exam data, I do think the use of these words suggests that their ideas about “good” writing are informed by a current-traditional ideal. The discussion continues:

The fact has already been pointed out [ . . . ] that Filipino students do have marked ability to recognize correctness and incorrectness in the form of written language. The composition course of study has been designed to bring about that result. Scores of class exercises were observed by members of the Commission. They were dominated by attention to the formal details of language structure. The result is that the graduates of these grades *know* what is right and wrong in language usage but have little skill in expressing ideas in writing. In the elementary grades the attention of teachers is centered on technical grammar. To develop knowledge of form appears to be the chief aim. Oral work in the classroom consists of formal mechanical question-and-answer concerning usage.

Very little practice in using English correctly is given. (Board of Educational, 1925, p. 172-173)

We can only guess at what they mean by “the qualities of writing demanded by the Bureau,” but the description of classroom instruction is notable. Though it is not clear how instruction “centered on technical grammar” or developing “knowledge of form” is differentiated from the preferred classroom practice of “practice in using English correctly,” it appears that whichever classroom method is deployed, the desired outcome is related to some concept of correctness. This makes sense given the assumed alignment between high school graduation and performance on the writing portions of the civil service exam which placed such a heavy emphasis on error. We might be reminded of Hamp-Lyons’ description of the current-traditional classrooms she sees internationally as a result of the success of the internationalization of early twentieth century American testing methods. Alongside the seemingly progressive observation that students need practice in using a language in order to understand a language, is the current-traditional notion that successful writing depends on error-free English prose, a standard defined by a racist colonial government.

Especially telling is their analysis of the final direct assessment of writing discussed in the report, which consists of “a very large number of letters written by Filipino *principals* and *supervisors*” (Board of Educational, 1925, p. 173, emphasis in original). It is important to consider the perceived need to assess the English language writing of principals and supervisors. What are these administrators’ letters’ relationship to curriculum and learning? In its 700 pages, the report doesn’t tell us in any useful detail, but it is clear that the commission values and assumes a top-down, centralized system in which leaders and administrators should *necessarily* have reached the end of the chain of reifications identified by Horner and Trimbur. The commission’s commentary on these letters is a particularly good example of the chain of reifications: “There can be little doubt that these letters represent better-than-average usage of English among Filipino teachers [ . . . ] These are *typical examples of Filipinized English* now current in the schools. Teachers, principals, and supervisors can neither write nor speak English smoothly and correctly. In the majority of cases they have moderately good vocabularies but little control over them in discourse” (Board of Educational, 1925, p. 173, emphasis mine). The examples of what the commission considers typical examples of Filipinized English are as follows: “lack of mastery of prepositions [ . . . ] Errors in tense [ . . . ] Gender and case [and] Inability to combine various forms correctly, pronouns, prepositions, tense, desire to avoid use of first-person pronouns, etc.” (Board of Educational, 1925, p. 174), among other examples, all of which devalue Philippine uses of English.



Perhaps we shouldn't be surprised, as scholarship on World Englishes is still a long way off in the distant, *postcolonial* future. There is rich scholarship on Philippine Englishes, and it would be beyond the scope of this article to review it. What is important to point out is the commission's recognition of a local and recognizably stable form of English in use by Filipino school administrators, yet it is assumed that this relatively stable use of English is a pattern of errors rather than a developing English. If we follow Pennycook and Canagarajah's example, we might remember Bahri's claim that postcolonial scholarship should always look at "power and resistance as multiply located." We can then read the use of "Filipinized English" in these letters as an exercise of power or resistance against a hegemonic language policy. After all, these school administrators presumably passed the thesis writing exam that placed so much emphasis on syntax and style and had such a high failure rate. Who were the audiences for these letters that the commission later collected? In what context were they written and about what? All of these are basic rhetorical questions that inform current writing assessment. However, writing at the height of current-traditional rhetorical education, in a system that assumed a standard monolingual English, these questions were not even considered. In fact, the commission's report seems to conflate a not explicitly stated idea of good writing with "correct" usage to the point where the discussion of a direct writing assessment—in this case the collection and reading of letters—can contain the following statement:

A radical modification of the language program of the training schools must be made which will provide constant practice in correct writing under supervision. This supervision must include daily practice in the critical evaluation of written English. Constant practice in writing is one of the crucial needs in the training of teachers. (Board of Educational, 1925, p. 174)

What is telling about these three sentences, in addition to the obsession with "correct" usage, is the slippage from the specificity of English language instruction through writing in the first two sentences to the more general "practice in writing" in the final sentence. And again, there is a lack of specifics in describing what this practice would look like and how they imagine it to be different from existing classroom practices. It is similarly telling, even when the language of instruction is, by law, exclusively that of the ruling colonial power, that a process-oriented idea, "practice in writing," in service of correctness is not seen as problematic.

We might further question what they mean by "supervision" and who the

commission imagines the supervisors to be. It is probably worth noting Constantino's discussion of the 1916 Jones Act which ceded much governmental control of the Philippines over to Filipinos: "Although the government services were Filipinized, although the Filipinos were being prepared for self-government, the department of education was never entrusted to any Filipino" (2002, p. 179). This ceding of control of government services *except for* education over to Filipinos serves as an interesting illustration of Go's characterization of the colonial administrators who saw themselves on a social justice mission. And, again, though we have legitimate reason to be skeptical of the sincerity of these colonial administrators' claims to eventual Filipino self-government—especially in the early days of occupation when the United States saw fit to fight a bloody war that would turn out to be longer and more deadly than the Spanish American War (depicted in mainstream histories as the "main" war). The claim nonetheless clearly influenced actual policy, and these policies could only be carried out by an administration that either ignored the high death toll illustrated in Figure 3.1 or felt that the death toll was justified in the name of a noble cause.

We might remember Monroe's discussion of the wars that resulted in U.S. colonialism in the Philippines, in which appeals to a universal humanity justify the entire colonial mission going back to the war itself. Given my discussion, it might seem odd that I characterize the colonial mission as social justice. But I think that Monroe is sincere in his belief in the rightness of U.S. colonialism for the Filipino people, however grossly misguided. Remember Go's characterization of the early colonialists who were sure of the inherent racial inferiority of non-white peoples. Though at the time, they may have been seen as relatively progressive in their belief that this inferiority was not essential, but could instead be overcome, this inferiority also meant that they were perceived as unable to determine their own national destinies without the strong, paternal guidance of white men. Nowhere is Monroe's sincerity more apparent in the Monroe Report's discussion of what it calls "the language problem," discussed in the next section.

## THE LANGUAGE PROBLEM

How does this look at the history of literacy education in the Philippines, through the Monroe Report, speak to writing assessment today? There are moments where the commission HAS an opportunity to make gestures toward the educational needs of local students, but in each case falls back on the racist inside/outside binary endemic to colonial regimes. In doing so, they abdicate responsibility for decision making with regard to language. For example, in a section of the report entitled "The Language Problem," the commission takes up

the question of how to establish a nationalized curriculum in such a linguistically diverse environment. Because it had long been decided that English Only would be the answer to this question, the commission does not spend much space debating the issue. They do, however, comment that “there is no absolutely satisfactory solution” (Board of Educational, 1925, p. 26) to the problem, since “No one of the possible alternatives could be adopted against which serious and unanswerable objections could not be brought” (p. 26). And not only does the commission recognize that English Only is far from ideal (in practice if not in theory) they caution readers against taking the results of the testing at face value because of the difficulty faced by teachers and students who are asked to labor in a language entirely different from what they speak outside of school: “At no time in the school career of the Filipino child does he encounter the single task of studying in his mother tongue [. . .] their efforts are being combated constantly by the pervasive influence of the dialect with which they are surrounded in all of their out-of-school hours” (pp. 39-40). Here, we see glimpses of Paul Monroe’s appeals to universal humanity in ways that reveal inherent contradictions in inside/outside, center/periphery dichotomies in colonial social justice projects. On the one hand, the report is aware that the language of instruction places barriers to access for both students and teachers, but on the other, the problematic language practices are those occurring outside of school. The community languages are seen as taking up arms against English rather than the other way around. English is the center, the inside while community languages are assaulting from the outside.

Though they recognize the legitimacy of arguments against English Only education, they nonetheless describe what they see as a need for a common language “for intercourse in business, professional, intellectual, political, and cultural affairs” (Board of Educational, 1925, p. 26) which would serve as “a medium of communication between all the educated members of the dialect groups, a source from which to draw the culture materials of a common world civilization and a means of communication with the world at large” (p. 26). On this point, we might be reminded of the current internationalization discourse which justifies and/or critiques (depending on one’s ideological alignment) international English writing education in terms of global capitalism. There is a great deal of concern throughout the report over a perceived lack of “culture materials” by which the commission seems to mean literary works that can be assembled into a national canon, without which, “there is no possibility of building up a stable group or a national culture” (p. 26). So English Only is meant to provide two services to the Filipino people: first, a means for building an educated class who can serve as a unifying ruling class, and second, a sense of national identity. Interestingly, though the commission recognizes the possi-

bility that such a system may create a situation in which “the local dialects of the peasants and the culture language of the educated [be] so great [. . .] that the members of one class [. . .] cannot understand those of the other” (p. 26), there is no indication that they find such a situation necessarily problematic, so long as this educated ruling class exists as both a unifying force among “dialect groups” as well as cultural, economic and social leaders. Their anxiety about the language problem seems contradictory. On the one hand, they worry about providing access to education; however, they also worry about the creation of an elite class which the education system should take a role in creating through English language education. There are probably many reading this volume who can recognize parallel anxieties existing side-by-side within their own English departments and universities, and especially with regard to the role of writing instruction and assessment. Is the role of composition to gate-keep or provide access? If the latter, what role should language instruction play for non-white users of English? And what role should writing assessment play in making that determination?

## **TRANSNATIONALISM AND THE ARCHIVES OF RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION AND WRITING ASSESSMENT**

It is in these anxieties about the future of Filipino students and their relationship to languages of community and school that we begin to find parallels with current composition and assessment discourse. The Board of Education’s stubbornness in assuming a monolingual construct despite the recognition of local language practices should raise questions about the ways that we deploy monolingual writing constructs in our own assessments. In the case of the Monroe Report, standardization is not the problem, but the educational context is. We should certainly critique the use of standardized assessments in U.S. colonial Philippines, and likewise we should critique their assumption of a monolingual writing construct and blind faith in standardized assessments. Though the commission locates the problem in a different place than we would today (within the community rather than the school or larger power structures), they nonetheless recognize the tension between the lived language experiences of Filipino students outside of school and the educational expectations placed upon them. This recognition is certainly related to the perceived social justice mission of American colonialism. And it is significant that in the commission’s discussion of English Only education they both recognize the possibility that the policy may not be the best for Filipino students’ learning, but accept that it is nonetheless the mission they have been given. It is further significant that English is unquestionably identified as necessary in the name of “business, professional, in-

tellectual, political, and cultural affairs.” This statement resonates most with why we struggle with students’ own languages forty years after the Students’ Right.

By the time the Board of Education conducted their survey and carried out the assessment I discussed above, the national education system had already been operating for over twenty years as an English Only school system. English had long been established as the official language of government, and the prestige language of business and culture. What is important for us to recognize is the ways that our discourse about language in composition and writing assessment resonates with a white supremacist educational administration which saw a deadly war of conquest as in the best interest of the colonized. The dilemma we face in regard to language and demands made on students outside of our classrooms is real. The status of English in the global economy is real, and as a result, U.S. composition and psychometric testing have power. As such, important recent work on validity and localization in writing assessment, though valuable, cannot be a retreat into ourselves. Work in this collection is a move in the right direction. When we make decisions about language—and we must make decisions about it—we have to look beyond our local contexts, disciplinary boundaries and familiar histories that ask us to not pay attention to the colonialist ways of thinking embedded in even progressive notions about language use. We need to think, for example, beyond notions of assessment that rely on predetermined language standards, or upon validity models that ask what we value, but fail to ask if we *should* value those things. Beyond assessment models that do not directly involve all stakeholders, including students and other users of language. Finally, our assessments have to account for the ways that traditional methods of score interpretation reify colonialist assumptions about language users that are part of the very history of our assessment and teaching practices.

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