

The Halo Halo ('Mix Mix') Generation: Identity Negotiation in the Narratives of Third-Generation Filipinas on Guam

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Abstract

This paper explores the identity formation of third-generation Filipinas on Guam, whom I term the Halo Halo generation, through (1) my own narratives of autoethnography, and poems by two prolific Guam slam poets: (2) Verna Zafra, whose work interrogates Western conceptions of feminism and laments the loss of her culture, and (3) John "Metaforce" Sarmiento, whose work uses Filipina tropes and characters to capture the attitudes of the young, contemporary generation. Translated literally, halo halo means to 'mix mix' in Filipino language and is thus a metaphor for the "mixing" that occurs in the identity negotiation of the third generation of Filipinas on Guam. Through these narratives, I intend to take reading beyond the generic boundaries of the literary text and instead include a wide range of activities that involve the interpretation of signs, adjudication of meanings, and the construction of reality, as described by Dimock (1991). I utilize narrative theory, described by Herman (2009), as a method to evaluate the fluidity of Filipina identity on Guam through the written and spoken lived experiences of Filipinos, and to give voice and shape, validation and explanation to current theories of immigrant identity negotiation. I evaluate the fluidity of Filipina identity on Guam through the written and spoken lived experiences of these young poets and myself, and I incorporate these theories into the Halo Halo theoretical metaphor I have devised. Like the smooth, fluid halo halo dessert, the Halo Halo generation's positioning is, in the words of Hall (1989), not a fixed, "once-and-for-all," but a point of identification or suture made within the discourses of history and culture. Situated between a variety of different and often competing generational, ideological, and moral reference points, including those of their parents, their grandparents, and their own real and imagined perspectives about their multiple homelands (Levitt 2009), young Filipinas on Guam are defined by the difficulties and tensions of such a position. Not a physical place, this space of their creation is one where the on-going processes of meaning-making occurs: making meaning of the colliding social identities of Filipino, Guamanian, and American; understanding how cultures comprise the sense of self and womanhood; and comprehending how identity and context mutually influence each other. I argue that despite, and maybe even because of, these tensions, this is an empowering space. Though they are part of the second-largest ethnic group on Guam, there is currently no published study of third-generation Filipina narratives on Guam. This research is thus pivotal in beginning to analyze the literary production of this group and to build a collective literature.

Keywords: *Filipinas, Guam, identity, migration, narrative*