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The identity of the Pilipino is rife with contradictions because of the complex history of the Philippines. Spanish colonization, U.S. imperialism, and Japanese occupation have shaped how Pilipinos define their personhood and culture. As Pilipino Americans, they often encounter an identity crisis about their ethnic identity—especially if they emigrated from the Philippines at a young age (Revilla 96). In this paper, I will investigate whether or not Pilipino American students at the University of Florida create a sense of a homeland through their reimagined memories of the Philippines and if these memories contribute to increased self-worth. As I am studying their oral narratives, I hope to uncover their process of home making in these memories. What similarities and differences manifest when Pilipino American youth recount the stories of their families? Do first-generation Pilipino Americans differ from second-generation Pilipino Americans in their recreation of their homeland in the Philippines? The endeavor of home making renegotiates borders and continually redefines culture.

Theories of Home and Pilipino Youth

In her book, *Uprootings and Regroundings*, Sara Ahmed complicates our understanding of migration and settlement by explaining that physical settlement does not imply a static sense of home (1). Meanwhile, migration does not guarantee an utter shift in one’s racial identity. Ahmed presents an alternative where migrating and home making are not restricted to different,
seemingly oppositional categories. Instead, she urges us to reimagine these modes as uprootings and regroundings because these terms can encompass “a plurality of experiences, histories, and constituencies, and of the workings of institutional structures” (Ahmed 2). Ahmed explains that uprootings and regroundings exist as multiple processes involving emotional and cultural change. Regroundings of identity and culture can subvert and bolster hegemonic understandings of home and belonging. The act of transplanting one’s life into another land has the ability “to reform and re-animate our perceptions of home, without then assuming home is fixed prior to the experiences of migration (Ahmed 8).” The intricacies of uprootings and regroundings lie in the complex relationship between migration and home. The process of home making or what Ahmed calls “homing” involves “the idea of home: the idea of a place (or places) in the past, and of this place in the future (9). Ahmed speaks on the power of reimagining home from past histories to inform how we envision the future; homing relies on recovering and reclaiming names, objects, and narratives that have been lost because of colonization.

The definition of home and the Pilipino American’s relationship with a physical space or community becomes a political act that allows for modes of resistance against Western hegemonic structures. Yen Le Espiritu writes about the racial, political, and class implications of creating home. “Because home making is most often a way of establishing difference and a means of jostling for power, homes are as much about inclusions and open doors as they are about exclusions and closed borders” (Espiritu 2). Espiritu aptly observes that creating spaces of home can enforce the formation of stringent binaries and hierarchies. On a personal level, family members inhabit different positions of power. Meanwhile, on a national level, the nation-state excludes Pilipinos from making a home for themselves through discriminatory labor and cultural
practices. Espiritu also claims that Pilipino Americans who have never been to the Philippines can return to their homeland through their imagination instead of physical transportation.

Espiritu explores how Pilipinos are transnational subjects that are distinctly shaped by their physical location. Espiritu presents a critique of Arjun Appadurai’s concept of deterritorialization, meaning that immigrants are transnational subjects; therefore, immigrants in a globalized world are not bound by borders or geography. In response, Espiritu emphasizes the significance of local physical spaces. “As such, the strategies that immigrants use to fashion themselves in the world are not all a matter of choice but are profoundly influenced by who or what the immigrants can be in the physical spaces—the local contexts—in which they find themselves” (Espiritu 12). Pilipinos forge the mean-making of their traditional customs and memories in their own localities and communities.

Espiritu’s argument that Pilipino Americans can revisit the Philippines through their imagination builds upon Diane Wolf’s study on the Pilipino transnational struggle of keeping family secrets. Wolf coins the term “emotional transnationalism” to describe the positionality of specifically second-generation Pilipino American youth. “Emotional transnationalism situates them between different generational and locational points of references—their parents’, sometimes also their grandparents’, and their own—both the real and the imagined” (Wolf 459). Family is considered a main component of being Pilipino for Pilipino American youth. “However, the most prevalent responses (from almost half the sample) consisted of strong, spontaneous emotional statements about family as the center of what it means to be Filipino” (Wolf 461). With the family as an important value for Pilipino Americans, they sustain a connection to the Philippines through their feelings, ideological beliefs, and cultural practices.
Espiritu creates her own term called “symbolic transnationalism” where Pilipino Americans who have not been to the Philippines can enact their own process of home making which parallels Wolf’s theory. Through “symbolic transnationalism,” Pilipino immigrant parents fulfill the role of being gatekeepers of cultural memory (11). Furthermore, Pilipino immigrant parents can exploit their position as authorities of Pilipino culture. According to Espiritu, Pilipino parents can instill conservative values into their children and falsely claim that these values are traditional Pilipino values. If their children disobey, they could feel like that they have betrayed their own culture.

Pilipino American youth benefit from symbolic transnationalism, yet their process of home making is hindered by cultural amnesia from the many levels of oppression they face. Espiritu demonstrates the complexity of the Philippines as a neocolony, for U.S. economic and cultural imperialism persists even today. “[For Filipinos] their formation as a racialized minority does not begin in the United States but rather in the homeland already affected by U.S. economic, social, and cultural influences” (Espiritu 6). Therefore, Pilipino migrants must grapple with the intergenerational trauma and confusion about their personal history that comes from centuries of colonization. Leny Mendoza Strobel, a professor in Multicultural Studies at Sonoma State University, addresses her own miseducation on being Pilipina because of learning history written through a Western, colonialist lens. Strobel states, “And so without memories, I forgot who I was. I became a good colonial child. I became well-mannered, genteel, civilized” (15). In Strobel’s confession of submitting to colonial constructs, she discovers her own tendency to shame herself into silence when people from the U.S. offensively challenge her on the history of her own homeland in the Philippines.
Cultural amnesia harms children of Pilipino immigrants because they struggle to connect with Pilipino culture. Ultimately, they become ignorant about their family’s trials and ancestral roots. Theo Gonzalves speaks on the relationship Pilipino American youth have with Pilipino culture. “The silence concerning culture creates this hunger. You can find a sense of that hunger from not being able to see it within dominant culture or just being in the home,” states Gonzalves (Tiongson 118). Pilipino Americans inhabit a vulnerable positionality because they are constantly searching for home.

Pilipino Americans struggle to find home because of their postcolonial identity. Zeus Leonardo and Cherly Matias delve into the liminal space Pilipino Americans inhabit caught between a colonial mentality and a postcolonial mentality. Leonardo and Matias argue that “Within the postcolonial condition, the Filipino diaspora has lived with the resulting ambiguity and ambivalence with respect to notions of homeland, national identity, and cultural essence” (Leonardo & Matias 45). However, the postcolonial condition of Pilipino Americans can be an empowering aspect of Pilipino ethnic identity. Leonardo and Matias assert that Pilipinos can envision new futurities because of their unique positionality as migrants in the aftermath of colonialism (44). “In short, Filipinos around the world have been educated as exiles, and this exilic condition is productive and not merely repressive” (Leonardo & Matias 45). I agree that Pilipino American youth embody an exilic identity because many of them have never visited the Philippines. Or they do not remember growing up in the Philippines. Leonardo and Matias argue that the colonial project of the Philippines did not succeed; therefore, Pilipinos’ self-concept exists outside of the reach of U.S. empire.

Pilipino American youth must navigate this postcolonial condition using the oral narratives of their family history. Strobel investigates the function of oral histories in Pilipino
American youth. “As a residually oral culture, the Filipino American community retains its oral consciousness” (123). Through her study, Strobel discovers how her participants realize their need to connect their personal life with their family history. For instance, Ruth, a second-generation Pilipina interviewee, expresses “that she felt angry and betrayed for not knowing about her father’s past” (Strobel 100). The oral consciousness of Pilipino Americans produces an opportunity for Pilipino American youth to engage in their own “home making.”

Oral interviews give insight into a communal identity for Pilipino Americans which is why I have chosen to analyze their oral narratives. Richard Cándida Smith delineates the analytical strategies of oral history interviews by building upon Luisa Passerini’s seminal research on oral histories of Italian working-class people under fascism. Smith claims that interviews aid in understanding how personal experiences, collective memory, and large historical contexts contribute to the recording of popular consciousness (712). Interviews function as a means of studying how historical events are internalized and recounted in an individual manner. Oral narratives compose of various sources like jokes, testimonies, speeches etc. Passerini argues that “Silences and other ruptures point to aspects of experience not fully mediated by group interpretation of past events” (Smith 713). To understand Pilipino oral history as a way of unearthing ethnic memory, one must critically assess the construction of the stories Pilipino Americans retell of their family or their experiences in the Philippines. Strobel noticed in her study of the process of decolonization that many of her young participants revealed their anger and grief at their ignorance of their family history. “The acknowledgement of these emotions signifies the emergence from the culture of silence” (Strobel 100). Thus, I will also explore the silences that arise when Pilipino American youth share their family’s stories. I will
treat these silences as possible gaps of knowledge for Pilipino American youth; their silences may also point to shame or past trauma.

In her research, Strobel interviewed Pilipino Americans and based her questions on Paulo Friere’s model of study in the *Pedagogy of Hope*. These interviews were dialogues between the researcher and the interviewees with greater empowerment and community engagement as the main goals of the study. I have followed Strobel’s model to create an inclusive environment for my participants as they explore their process of self-authorship.

Within the process of recounting these stories, Pilipino American youth develop a sense of empathy in their family’s survival. Strobel claims that Pilipino ethnic memory can act as a counter-narrative to Western discourse on the Philippines. “In the case of Filipino American ethnic memory, this counter-narrative is in the form of new texts which makes America’s forgotten imperial past in the Philippines visible and central” (Strobel 63). Ethnic memory rewrites the history of defeat that normally characterizes Pilipino history. If oral narratives can deliver ethnic memory, then Pilipino American youth have the power to reimagine the Philippines as a “home” of their own through orality. Linda Revilla, the Pilipina American scholar who coined the phrase of Pilipinos “facing an identity crisis,” underscores the importance of ethnic identity. “Ethnic identity is important because it affects the maintenance and expression of traditional culture, helps individuals enhance their self-concept and self-esteem, and enables individuals to have a sense of belonging to an ethnic group” (Revilla 96).

Pilipino American youth experience an upbringing that prioritizes the well-being of the family as a whole over the individual which shapes their self-concept. Reynaldo I. Monzon studies the factors that affect the collective self-esteem of Pilipino American college students. Monzon hypothesized that collective self-esteem for Pilipino American youth is related to
campus climate and family environment. “Students in the CC (community college) sample reported family environments that were less expressive, less intellectually oriented, less recreationally oriented, yet higher in organization” (Monzon 294). In these family structures, there was a rigid hierarchy where the parents were seen as the authority figures. Monzon discovered that Pilipino American students in California community colleges tended to have lower collective self-esteem compared to Pilipino Americans attending California state universities. Pilipino Americans attending state universities came from families who had professional careers. In Monzon’s study, their family environments proved to have more intellectually engaging conversations. Monzon states, “…because collective self-esteem is related to perceived family intellectual orientation, it could be that intellectual discussions within the home are reflective of a group process” (295). Monzon conjectures that intellectual conversations contribute to collective self-esteem for Pilipino American youth and require a group process.

For Pilipino youth, they may struggle to formulate their own sense of ethnic identity because of the conflicting stories or family secrets their immigrant parents tell them. Diane Wolf examines the mental and emotional health of Pilipino youth relating to their reactions to the images their parents and grandparents project about the U.S. Wolf concludes that for second-generation Pilipino American youth they must steer themselves through and between their parents’ understanding of being Pilipino. The hybrid identity of the Pilipino American comprises of contradictory cultural norms and discourses which are informed by their nostalgia for “home” and how they define Pilipino-ness (475). These contradictory cultural norms entailed the expectation for Pilipino American youth to act as repositories for their family’s secrets without presenting an effective outlet for them to express themselves freely. Wolf found that Pilipino
American youth felt conflicted because their parents expected them to confide in them when they felt depressed or had other mental health issues (468). However, the children would often encounter punishment or shame when sharing their problems with their parents. These children must confront their parents’ experiences, the colonialist education system in the Philippines, and the tenuous policies surrounding U.S. immigration. “This is joined by their parents’ images of what it is/was like in the Philippines, some of which is reconstituted through selective memories” (Wolf 475). I am interested by these “reconstituted memories” and how they function when Pilipino American youth are creating a reconstruction of “home.” Analyzing the oral narratives of Pilipino American youth can also begin a process of decolonization for the interviewees.

I find Ahmed’s theory on uprootings and regroundings useful because it encapsulates the experiences of Pilipino American youth who must face the unsettling reality of being separated from the Philippines. Pilipino American youth undergo a constant process of uprootings and regroundings because they reimagine the Philippines as a homeland through learning their family histories. As transnational subjects, their idea of home is not tied to a physical location; rather, home is always shifting. Regroundings signify reclaiming traditional practices or establishing new cultural practices to create a sense of home; regroundings manifest in different forms which include Pilipino masses, Pilipino sports teams, Pilipino student organizations, and more.

I undertake Wolf’s concept of “emotional transnationalism” as a way of understanding how home making occurs for Pilipino American youth. Espiritu constructs home making as a process where Pilipino immigrants maintain emotional and cultural connections to the Philippines. I address how first-generation and second-generation Pilipino American youth participate in home making while exploring how this desire for home making is motivated by
reclaiming Pilipino history in the face of internal colonization—a condition that perpetuates cultural amnesia and shame around one’s “Pilipino-ness.”

Monzon’s study highlights the relationship between collective self-esteem, family environment, and campus climate (294). I utilize Monzon’s theory as a method for examining the self-esteem of my participants when they share their oral histories. If collective self-esteem is linked to fostering intellectually oriented conversations with family, then oral histories from parents could positively impact Pilipino American youth. I believe there is a correlation between professional family members being more willing to share stories about their lives in the Philippines with their children. Monzon’s findings suggest that socioeconomic factors influence the collective self-esteem of Pilipino American youth. The parents who had middle- or upper-class backgrounds proved to be more expressive with their children. Recounting the memories of their parents and grandparents about their lives in the Philippines could reestablish a greater sense of the collective self for Pilipino American youth.

My oral interviews serve to bolster Strobel’s investigation of orality in Pilipino culture since Pilipino and Pilipino American oral histories can reveal everyday aspects of culture. Therefore, Pilipino American youth can use orality to question their condition of exile and deepen their sense of belonging to the Philippines as their homeland. Leonardo and Matias dialogue about the significance of the exilic identity of the Pilipino American. This exilic condition encourages the sharing of oral histories and becomes a fruitful way in establishing home through oral narratives. Pilipino parents and grandparents can share their own experiences in the Philippines when they speak. Pilipino American youth can further remake the stories told to them by their parents or grandparents. These oral narratives are forms of cultural production.
The very act of listening binds Pilipino American youth with their parents and grandparents into a greater collective self.

Some interviewees may have undergone assimilation and do not express a connection to the specific region where their family lives. Possibly, U.S.-born Pilipino American youth may find more belonging in Pilipino American culture instead of Pilipino culture. If Pilipino American youth do not know how to speak their family’s dialect, will their reconstruction of the Philippines be limited to their parents’ nostalgia? One outcome could be that some Pilipino American youths reimagine the Philippines through the depictions of their motherland in the cultural programming done by ethnic student organizations. Gonzalves troubles the supposed unifying power of cultural programming. “Cultural performances often take us directly into our most difficult and painful experiences—between “home” and “homeland,” across generations, and even within ethnic and national groups that we occasionally assume to be welcoming” (17). These cultural performances could act as a means for Pilipino American youth to create their own sense of belonging if they lack the knowledge of their own family history.

Pilipino American youth can belong both to their imagined reconstruction of the Philippines and their own local physical community. Pilipino Americans at UF are presented spaces through the UF Filipino Student Association (UFFSA) the only ethnic student organization for Pilipinos at UF. Pilipino American students at UF are confined to the resources they have been given by the institution of the university. UFFSA presents itself as a “home away from home” which is the rhetoric often used for ethnic student organizations. This student organization highly influences Pilipino American youth and creates hierarchies that determine what should be deemed as “Pilipino American youth culture.” UFFSA claims to provide a space where Pilipino American youth can carve their own sense of the Philippines as a home in the
local context of UF, so second-generation Pilipino American youth may find a sense of belonging in UFFSA if there is a dearth of shared oral histories in their families.

Although oral narratives are susceptible to misremembering, Pilipino American youth can begin to build a strong understanding of their family’s resilience in the face of structural colonial violence. I believe that as Pilipino American youth engage in the tradition of oral storytelling they tap into their own reservoir of collective indigenous consciousness. The oral histories shared by their relatives do not take the form of linear narratives because these stories must be stitched together from the fractured pieces of stories retold by family members. The act of emotional transnationalism through oral storytelling is one wrapped in layers of trauma, miseducation, and erasure. However, in doing so, Pilipino Americans can feel rewarded with a rich sense of home in the Philippines.

**Analysis of Oral Interviews**

I conducted 14 oral interviews with Pilipino American students at the University of Florida. My aim is to analyze their oral histories and determine if Pilipino American youth create a sense of “home” through reconstructed memories of the Philippines. Their oral histories also included the participants’ memories of when they visited the Philippines. My research attempted to examine whether or not these oral histories have the power to increase a sense of self-worth for Pilipino American youth. There were seven participants who identified as men and seven participants who identified as women. Of the fourteen, seven were born in the Philippines and immigrated to the U.S as first-generation students; meanwhile, seven were U.S.-born which would identify them as second-generation. The interview questions focused on their family’s immigration story, their motivation for immigrating, and if they remember any stories from their
family about the Philippines—politics, family lineage, and their parents’ upbringing. At the end of the interviews, I asked the participants to formulate their own definition of Pilipino American culture, so they drew conceptualizations about the Philippines and how they understood home.

I examined the value of family history as a key component to home making. While participants remembered the familial oral histories they were told, some began to divulge the lack of sharing of family narratives. This lack stemmed from past traumatic events ranging from estranged relationships to actual violence and psychological violence from military service. Silences marked these traumatic events as unspeakable, leaving Pilipino American youth in confusion and dismay. I noticed that second-generation Pilipino Americans often turned to the Filipino Student Association at UF to fill their need for a sense of belonging. For those whose parents openly shared their experiences of political involvement, these participants felt a greater attachment to the Philippines, and their self-worth improved because they could reimagine their parents as politically active citizens. I briefly investigated the significance of the immigration process in home making to analyze how the process of uprooting and regrounding can influence how participants define home.

I have learned from the interviews that oral histories about family function as a form of home making for Pilipino American youth. Several participants recount their family trips to the Philippines and express their joy in discovering their own family history. Marissa is a first-generation Pilipina born in Manila, Philippines in 1993 where she spent 5 years of her childhood. Her mother hails from the province of Abra in Ilocos Norte, and her father is from Isabela in Luzon. Eventually, her family moved to Brunei until 2004 because her mother was searching for job openings as a nurse in the U.S. Their main motivation in emigrating was for better economic opportunities. When they arrived in the U.S. in 2004, their family settled in Tallahassee, FL.
During our interview, Marissa remembered when her family visited the hometown of her mother listened to her grandmother converse with the current owners.

So my grandmother was like, “Yeah, the school wasn't here before, it was just land. We had farms and cows and chickens.” And I'm like, “What is happening?” So like you can, you know, it's basically like if you go to New York, you can feel the history and that's what I like about the Philippines it's like you're connected to family members.

Marissa reimagined the Philippines as her homeland through her grandmother’s memories about their neighborhood and livestock. When Marissa recounted this story, she spoke with awe at discovering her family’s origins. Marissa could envision what her ancestral home looked like, forging an intimate bond with her family history. Her self-worth is increased because she has recovered precious oral histories that prove to her that the Philippines is her home. During her stay, she also enjoyed being immersed in the town’s culture where her mother’s dialect was being spoken. “And what's also really cool is that when we went to the church there, you know, they have a different dialect. Ilocano is my Mom's dialect there, so all the masses were in that,” said Marissa. She was able to interact with the living history of her family by hearing her mother’s dialect being spoken. Attending the Catholic masses in Ilocano legitimized her mother’s native tongue for Marissa because she could connect with the religious community in her mother’s region. Ilocano was not regularly spoken in her household, so hearing Ilocano was monumental. Some of the oral histories were rooted in beliefs of the supernatural which further solidified Marissa’s sense of belonging in the Philippines.
Because they're very religious, like the idea of spirits, like the old generation, like old spirits from before your ancestors or something. And they say things like that. So they're very spiritual. They're like, “You know, sometimes when I sit here I can feel like old family members or something.”

Marissa struggled to articulate her overwhelming feeling of “home” in the Philippines despite never visiting there. Through her family’s superstitions, Marissa reconstituted these supernatural beliefs to include her own subjectivity as a Pilipina American reclaiming her homeland. Her answer encompassed her journey in claiming the Philippines as her home where she linked the religiosity of the Philippines to her feeling more spiritually connected to her ancestors. She interacted with her indigenous consciousness when she expressed her belief in feeling the “old spirits” of family members. Marissa recognized that her personhood is related to a greater network of interconnectedness with her ancestors; thus, her self-worth becomes stronger because she can feel the importance from coming from a lineage of precolonial ancestors.

Similarly, Mary-Anne classified family as an important value in being Pilipino. Mary-Anne, a first-generation Pilipina American, was born in Quezon City, Philippines in 2000. Her mother grew up in Fairview while her father grew up in Quezon City. After pursuing a nursing degree, her mother emigrated to the U.S. later joined by her grandparents and older sister. Later, Mary-Anne and her father followed suit. In the Philippines, her father worked as a vice president of a bank, but now, he is employed by the Coca Cola company. Although Mary-Anne does not remember much about growing up in the Philippines, she explains that she is self-aware enough
to understand the importance of connecting with Pilipino culture. Her emphasis on adhering to value of respect for elders demonstrates that she considered the Philippines as her homeland.

Filipinos are very family-oriented, and you can see how big families are. Like when I went to my family reunion in the Philippines, there were like 200 of us. Literally. Even if you're not a first cousin or like a sibling they still treat you as one, which is nice. And everyone just has a reason to come together… It’s weird in the U.S. to see American families. Like they hate each other sometimes… Just, yeah, respect and family are the two biggest values that I find in Filipinos.

Kinship and respect concretize home for Mary-Anne while she emphasizes how different Pilipino culture is in American culture. Mary-Anne compares Pilipino families to American families to reveal the importance of honoring her elders as a Pilipina America. Mary-Anne experiences a similar feeling to Marissa because she mentions that her blood relation to her extended family did not matter; her family embraced her despite the fact that she cannot speak Tagalog well. When Mary-Anne remembered her family’s warm welcome, she showed a sense of pride and self-worth since she felt like she belonged. Mary-Anne experiences a wealth of affection for her family. She observes that Pilipino families are very close-knit since they can find any reason to host a party and reunite as a family. If she has children, Mary-Anne is determined to instill the importance of respecting elders and being able to socialize with them. I argue that Mary-Anne understood the power of oral histories because she emphasizes the need to have conversations with older family members.
Oral histories complicate home making because they can reveal past traumas, yet they can begin the dismantling of a culture of silence and lead to better self-worth. Bernadette, a first-generation Pilipina American, was born in Cebu, Philippines in 1996. Her mother grew up in Cavite near the capitol Manila; her father grew up in Balamban which is in the Visayas region. Her mother emigrated to St. Petersburg, FL as a nurse while her father worked as an industrial engineer. Bernadette noticed that her parents are more open to sharing the stories of their family history compared to when she was younger. These stories are peppered with silences and gaps of knowledge. Her father recounts the story of her grandfather’s noble work in protecting and serving the poor as a lawyer. “During the Marcos’ regime, my grandpa was a lawyer and advocated a lot for the poor in the Philippines. And he would fight for cases in exchange for fruits. He didn’t accept any payment. So that’s one thing I thought was really cool” (Personal interview). Bernadette traces her family history through her father’s stories and conveys her shock and pride in being related to a charitable lawyer. Her Pilipino American identity is informed by the acts of service his grandfather practiced. Reimagining her grandfather’s generosity increases her self-worth because she bore witness to the sacrifices her family has endured beyond her parents’ generation. She admits that she is only now hearing about her father’s tense relationship with his father:

“So that’s one thing I thought was really cool. Also, he mentioned how their relationship—even though my grandpa was a great man—it was a fairly estranged relationship. My dad even opened up to me about mental health issues he’s had there. So it’s like crazy that you know we don’t really talk about mental health there. But it’s still very prominent.”
Bernadette’s process of home making does not solely focus on idealizing her grandfather as a man who protected poor vulnerable communities during martial law; this undertaking includes knowing about the silences within her family. Bernadette crafts her own idea of the Philippines through these silences and recognizes stigma surrounding mental health for Pilipinos. On her maternal side, Bernadette recently learned about her uncle’s drug addiction; her mother’s family feels a sense of shame and rarely mentions her uncle. Thus, the value of keeping family issues private only perpetuates family secrecy. Bernadette’s formation of a (re)constructed home is a home where generational silences have harmed the personal relationships in her family. These silences reveal her parents’ attempt to shield Bernadette from these family conflicts hoping that her idea of home is not sullied by the family secrets they have kept hidden. Reconstituting memories from her parents do not necessarily strengthen her self-worth. Reimagining her family’s oral histories makes her question the consequences of claiming the Philippines as her home. This reclamation comes with addressing the painful past of estranged relationships and struggles with addiction.

Stories of trauma appear in several interviews and define the way participants practiced home making. Estela also reveals the traumatic past of her family when she talks about her family’s immigration story and their motivations for leaving. Estela, a second-generation Pilipina American, was born in Belleville, Illinois in 1999. Her father is a colonel in the U.S. Air Force, and her mother worked as a registered nurse until they stayed in Stuttgart, Germany for three years. Both of her parents were born in Manila and emigrated at a young age. Her mother was only 3 years old, and her father was 5 years old. The trauma experienced by her paternal family has hindered Estela from gleaning more detailed information about her family’s past life in the
Philippines from her family. Estela admits that she did not learn about this story until prompted by a school assignment on family history.

I had like a paper on it once on her immigration experience, but basically, the biggest catalyst for them was kind of rough because—I did this paper in ninth grade. She was traveling to the city. She was with my Lolo, and she's pregnant with my dad at the time. They were traveling in a jeep and then they got stopped by, I don't know what you call them. They were maybe like rebels? Yeah, they stopped them, and they took everything they had. And then held them at gunpoint and walked them into the woods. And then, they waited for four hours in the woods with guns held at them, and then the army had to come. And they were in the middle of gunfire, and they almost got hit. It was a really crazy experience. It's something that I never knew about until I did the paper.

Estela expresses that her grandparents rarely talk about their time in the Philippines. The trauma-related silence surrounding the motivations for her family immigrating limits the scope of Estela’s ability to reimagine the Philippines as a homeland. The extent of her knowledge includes stories of her maternal grandparents financially struggling when they settled in Chicago. Her mother remembered that she did not see her parents for a few years since they were working multiple jobs to purchase a house in the U.S. Estela also shared that her grandmother would sell Pilipino food in the streets as a side business. Beyond these stories, Estela does not know much about her family history; she does not consider the Philippines as her homeland. Her main connection to Pilipino culture is through the traditional food her grandmother cooks. She may not consider the Philippines her home, but she does feel a sense of comfort and belonging.
through her grandmother’s recipes. Since her parents emigrated as children, they assimilated quicker than the parents of other second-generation participants. Thus, Estela identifies more with Pilipino American youth culture. Instead, Estela built a sense of home in UF Filipino Student Association where she has fostered ties to the organization and Pilipino American youth culture.

Estela finds a sense of belonging in an ethnic student organization where she relies on a support system of other Pilipino American youth. Estela states, “I think FSA, that organization I know changed my life for the better. I like my kuya, Angelo. He made a family. They're like my favorites.” When Estela was answering the question about where she finds belonging on campus, she began to cry which demonstrates the impact of home making on her. When she recounted her journey in FSA, she addressed her friends as if they were family. “They became like my best friends. So there's like 16 people in my family, so it's huge, but I love it,” said Estela. She remembered the various bonding activities like taking photoshoots or celebrating Christmas together. FSA allowed Estela to establish close friendships with other Pilipino American youth. In their mission statement, FSA states that their organization aims to build a sense of pamilya or “family.” Clearly, her self-worth has increased because FSA has given her a sense of community like the other interviewees intimate kinship signifies home.

Ted follows a similar trajectory as Estela because he does not initiate his process of home making through his family’s oral histories. Ted, a second-generation Pilipino American, was born in Miami Beach, Florida in 1996. His mother grew up in Ilocos, and his father came from Cebu. His mother works as a nurse practitioner in the Veteran’s hospital in Miami while his dad works as a registered nurse. The oral histories of Ted’s family contained stories about living under martial law during the Marcos regime. However, his mother discouraged his family from
asking a lot of questions about his father’s past as a soldier in the military creating ambiguity around his father’s family history. Ted remembered that the stories from his father mainly comprised of humorous anecdotes.

Sometimes, he’ll tell a couple stories about drinking with his unit and stuff. Probably, drinking a little more than he should and getting away with stuff he shouldn't have. But a lot of it, I think he tries to suppress it. He's kind of really stubborn…he doesn't often talk [because] a lot of it is dark times. So my mom, will also try to like steer away topics about his military times.

Ted admitted that his father probably represses most of his memories from serving in the military because of the unknown trauma his father may have faced. Ted’s mother also perpetuated the silence around this family history by deflecting the conversation away from discussing military times. He distances himself from his parents’ political views when talking about martial law under the Marcos regime since they have taken a controversial pro-Marcos stance in regards to the implementation of martial law at the time. Ted emphasized that his parents believe that the government needed to control the distrust of the people, but he refrained from giving his own opinion on the Marcos regime. As a consequence, Ted does not have a particular political stance. His family’s pro-Marcos affiliation and complex family history prevents Ted from creating sense of home in the Philippines. Ted does not claim the Philippines as his homeland because his father has not been forthcoming about his family history. The lack of vulnerable open conversations about his parents’ struggles inhibits Ted from feeling a strong attachment to the Philippines.
Although home making did not occur in his family home, it can be found in the rich Pilipino community in Miami. There was a large ethnic enclave of Filipinos where he lived, and they would regularly celebrate Simbang Gabi masses. Ted’s involvement in practicing with the Pilipino church choir and playing for the Pilipino basketball league substituted as ways to find a sense of belonging. His curiosity about the Philippines was satisfied by these Pilipino American traditional customs. Being already familiar with connecting with other Pilipino American youth, Ted felt more belonging when he became active in FSA than with listening to his family’s oral histories.

Yeah, I feel very like proud to be Filipino. There’s just such a huge community of Filipinos in AASU; it’s like you don’t feel like a minority. If you joined with everyone, you feel like you know everyone. I feel like the first reason that that kept me in FSA is like I felt that closeness, like home. “Homey-ness”...hanging out with them just felt like home the way people would open their doors. Like you could hang out [and] cook food together.

Ted sentiment of finding home in FSA is not uncommon because these student organizations intentionally foster a family dynamic. For instance, FSA hosts an “Ate, Kuya, Ading” week which pairs freshmen with older members like they are siblings. “They’re like very Americanized Filipinos. And so I felt like I could relate to them a lot more,” said Ted. He could connect to the Pilipino American youth culture of FSA through activities like dancing. Ted joined their largest dance competition, Def Talent Jam, where loved having a community centered around dance. Dancing acted as a form of home making for Ted that expanded beyond
the Pilipino American organization. Ted emphasized that the dance community included non-Pilipinos and non-Asians. His self-worth increased when he found a sense of belonging dancing urban and traditional dances—like Idaw, a dance that mimicks old hunting rituals. Overall, his involvement in FSA affirmed his Pilipino American identity and created a stronger sense of home compared to just listening to his parents’ oral histories.

For some participants, they shared oral histories about their family’s political involvement in the Philippines which inspired them. With Brian, his knowledge about his family history is imbued with political resistance when his father shares his experiences of living under the Marcos’ regime. Brian, a second-generation Pilipino American, was born in Fort Lauderdale, FL in 1999. His father works in an IT department, and his mother is a registered nurse. His father was born in Davao del Norte while his mother grew up in Manila.

Yeah, my dad said he was very passionate about politics when he was in college. He was really into the People's Power revolution and EDSA, and I was like, “Oh, you have any pictures? Like, no because I would have gotten shot.” And I was like, “Yeah, okay, that makes sense.”

Brian expresses his pride for his father’s political involvement to the extent that he seeks physical visual documentation of his father protesting. His question asking his father if he has any photographs of him protesting signifies the yearning of Pilipino American youth to understand their politicized identity to be able to claim the Philippines as a homeland. Brian feels empowered because he knows that his father was politically involved. Home is usually rendered as an apolitical place. I argue that Brian’s discovery of his father’s political activism strengthens
his connection to the Philippines because he can imagine his father as an agentic citizen. Most of the participants did not know about their parents’ political involvement which left them disinterested. According to Maria Root, she states that for Pilipino Americans the “…symbolic home is nurtured by family stories and historical accounts that document the tragic, heroic, and ordinary ancestors who make our lives possible now” (xiii). Brian’s home making is transformed by the stories of his father advocating against the corrupt Marcos administration. His pride and self-worth is increased because of his family’s activism in the Philippines. He reimagines a Philippines that can organize protests and hold politicians accountable. Brian also possesses an awareness that some of his father’s oral histories are embellished. Therefore, Brian’s symbolic home is molded by the inaccurate hyperbolic accounts of his ancestors as well. For instance, Brian remembers the outrageous story his father would tell about how his Chinese grandfather fled from Communist China to the Philippines.

I need to put like a disclaimer ready. I need to qualify my dad also exaggerated stories a lot. Like I remember it was like, well, “How did your grandpa, your grandpa get from China to the Philippines?” that he told me he jumped off a Chinese junk ship and swam to the Philippines. I believed it like in middle school, and I told one of my friends, he's like, “That's impossible!”

Brian can recognize the absurdity of his father’s story, yet although not factually correct, the oral narrative of his grandfather’s immigration story reveals to Brian the history of displacement in his family. The stories of Brian’s family are not always inaccurate, but they capture the emotional landscape of turmoil and resistance that his family felt. Brian’s awareness
of the multiple oral histories of his paternal side allows him to reimagine the Philippines as his home.

Clarissa is another second-generation Pilipina American who learns about her father’s political leanings during the Marcos regime. Clarissa, a second-generation Pilipina American, was born in Queens, New York in 1997. Her mother works as a nurse, and her father is a licensed practical nurse. Both of her parents were born in Aklan, Philippines. After being born, Clarissa and her family moved to Ocala, FL. Her notion of family history is recognizing that being Pilipino is a politicized identity.

It's interesting. It's just, I think that's what my dad stressed about it because he was in the People's Movement. And I think I just always remember he stressed that the priests were there, like the bishops came out and yeah, and I can see why that'd be such a big deal since it's so inundated with Catholicism. So to have like the churches backing it would make such a difference (Personal interview).

For Clarissa, religion fuses with the political identity of being Pilipino because Clarissa emphasizes how her father would elaborate on the importance of the Catholic churches joining the anti-Marcos movement. Her father’s oral histories transform her identity formation because she values her Catholic faith as an essential part of being Pilipina American. Clarissa’s father teaches her that human rights exists at the forefront of being a Pilipino Catholic since the Pilipino priests would not tolerate the Marcos dictatorship. Clarissa explains that her Pilipina American identity is an amalgamation of Catholicism, American culture, and Pilipino family history.
I love like the idiosyncrasies of my family and how that's formed my identity is just, that's why I feel very family-oriented. I feel a sense of duty and obligation. But then at the same time my American side makes me feel a need to be more vocal, socially aware, independent. So, but also my Catholic side feels this need to always be modest and humble, and it's like a combination of all those. So to me that's how I would define my Pilipino identity.

Clarissa addresses her liminal identity where she carries a sense of responsibility for taking care of her family. She sees her American identity and her Pilipina identity complement each other. Clarissa distinguishes that her notion of Pilipino culture is different from other Pilipino American youth. For her, she labels singing karaoke and attending large party gatherings as mainstream Pilipino American culture. Home making is present when she watches her father making the sign of the cross to bless their food or when she is asked to call her extended family members. Since Clarissa does not find belonging in Pilipino American youth culture, home is defined in the terms of honoring one’s family. She feels her self-worth increase when she respects her family and practices Catholicism. Embracing her family’s tumultuous family history aids her in carving her own identity as a Pilipina American. Clarissa’s identity formation proves that second-generation Pilipino American youth also redefine their sense of belonging to the Philippines. Clarissa does reveal an increased feeling of self-worth when she shares her father’s memories of protesting with Catholic priests. Clarissa may not fully identify with the Philippines as her home. Instead, she ties home to the customs her family practices and to her hybridized identity as a Pilipina American. She shows her love and pride in learning about her family history and for being Catholic.
Silences can indicate the erasure of Pilipino indigenous consciousness and weaken the connection to the Philippines as a homeland. Unlike most of the participants, Devin can trace his genealogy and has several vivid memories of his childhood in the Philippines. His reconstruction of home is also deeply informed by his queer identity. Devin, a first-generation Pilipino American, was born in 1997 in Baguio City. His mother grew up in Luzon, and his father grew up in the Visayas region. Initially, his parents both worked at the local power plant until his mother entered nursing school. Once she became a registered nurse, she met a recruiter who helped his mother find a job in the U.S. While he explained his lineage, he paused and stuttered when retelling the interracial relationships in his family.

I also know that I'm not a hundred percent Filipino. I’m one 32nds Spanish because of colonialism. I believe it was my grandmother's grandfather from my mom's side. My grandmother's grandfather was a Spanish colonizer. I was like, I don't know if she was, um, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. But, um, because of that, I believe my family's Catholic because of those influences before we were a part of a tribe.

Devin reveals his indigenous ancestry, but he does not know what his family’s tribe was called. He understands that interracial relationships during Spanish colonization often come from a violent past of sexual abuse. Thus, he struggles to name the reason why he has Spanish ancestry. He tacitly insinuates that biopolitical violence was possibly inflicted on his family. His knowledge of their tribal customs and traditions has been erased since his ancestors had to convert to Catholicism after this relationship. His sense of home is one of pain and silence because of these lost oral histories about tribal life. However, Devin concludes that he does not
consider the Philippines as his home although he distinctly remembers bits of his childhood and his family’s immigration story.

That's a question I've actually asked myself. Yeah. Because yes, I was born there, and I moved when I was seven. And ever since I have moved to America and have unfortunately say “assimilated” to American culture but with my roots within the Filipino community. I want to say that the Philippines probably isn't my home anymore. And that is something that's really tragic for me to say because it's where my history is from. That is where my blood is from… That means a lot to me… But I didn't really learn or don't really remember a lot and I'd like to get back to those roots. But I unfortunately can't say it's my home at the moment.

Devin understood the larger political implications of calling the Philippines his home indicated by the angst and sorrow in his answer. The Philippines signifies a homeland he has lost because he realizes that his family no longer preserves their indigenous cultural knowledge. Colonization has wreaked a psychological violence on Devin because it has erased his tribal culture. His connection to the Philippines as a homeland becomes more diluted after his family’s emigration. He noticed that he has become more Americanized after leaving, but he does recognize that he still belongs to a greater Pilipino community not bound by borders because of his transnational identity. Devin recognizes his assimilation with the years he has spent in the U.S., yet he still claims the Philippines as a place where his blood-related kin live. Devin’s process of home making does not necessarily root itself in the U.S. His definition of home lies in the personal relationships he has fostered with other students.
When I think of home I think of, I like to think of the people who accept me for who I am as a person. Yeah, unconditional love and support. Bonds through connected hardships. And I'm going to say it’s just, oh, camaraderie, a sense of camaraderie. Yeah. With a sense of common purpose.

Devin does not reference a physical location or even an ethnic student organization as places of home for him. He defines home as an emotional connection to the people who support him. His friends are marginalized people who have experienced similar struggles of anti-Asian sentiment, queerphobia, ableism etc.

I am connected and I am loved and I'm accepted by people who has been or go through the same hardships… what they’ve gone through whether if it is within, um, the Asian American Lens, the Asian Lens, LGBTQ Lens, Mental Health Lens. They've all, they've always been transparent and accepting.

He does not specify Pilipino or Pilipino American spaces which reveals that boundaries are constructed when deciding what is “home.” Devin confessed to being distant from the Pilipino American student community at UF. He found more acceptance in other Asian American student organizations like the Vietnamese Student Organization and Chinese American Student Association. In FSA, they did not create a very welcoming environment for queer Pilipino Americans. Culturally, Pilipinos uphold cisgender normative values and shun queer people because of their Catholic backgrou. Devin’s queer identity defies the traditional view of what
defines home for Pilipino Americans. He does not feel at home in spaces that accept heterosexuality as the norm. By ignoring and not fully respecting queer Pilipino Americans, FSA proves to be an exclusive site inhabited by a privileged few.

For some participants, they considered the Philippines as their home while they found belonging in FSA. Miguel expressed this sentiment which runs counter to Devin’s understanding of home making. He differs from Devin because he does consider the Philippines as his homeland while recognizing that he was born in the U.S. Miguel is a second-generation Pilipino American who was born in Naperville, Illinois in 2001. Both of his parents work as registered nurses. His mother was born in Columbia, Laguna, and his father was born in Santa Rosa, Laguna. After a year in Illinois, their family relocated to Clearwater, FL where Miguel has lived most of his life. He animatedly talks about how often his family mentions the Philippines. His parents’ stories and observations have given Miguel a connection to the Philippines through oral history.

Always. Yeah. I think it was always really prevalent, in our lives, because I mean, not only being like first gen like kids, but my parents mentioning they like to compare the Philippines to the U.S. a lot. It was like, “Oh, that's not how we do it in the Philippines. Or we do it like this in the Philippines.” Like I grew up thinking like that… Even though I don't, I've never grown up in the Philippines. And they always like to tell stories about how hard it was, not only to come to America, but how hard it was being apart from their family. So I think, yeah, I felt that same kind of struggle and pain, even though I never grew up with that same family.
His parents’ comparisons about U.S. and the Philippines gave him a frame of reference on how it is to live in the Philippines. For instance, he mentioned that the education system differs because in the Philippines his parents had to pay for their tuition-based education. Miguel identifies as somewhat of a cultural authority on Pilipino culture. He understands on a visceral emotional level the transnational struggles of his family. Miguel proves that geographical distance does not hinder the process of home making. Miguel embodies overlapping identities according to Espiritu’s assertion that Pilipino Americans have a multiplicity in their identities. He explains his struggle to own his “Pilipinoness” since he straddled different spheres in the local Pilipino community and in local community theatre. Miguel stated, “Actually my parents avoided that actually. Like the crowd mentality. They didn't want, they didn't want me to be ‘the Filipino.’ They wanted me to be like Miguel Roxas. They wanted me to be an individual. So they kind of held me back from going all into Filipino culture.” Miguel must negotiate his personality when he navigates predominately White spaces, but he still considers the Philippines as his homeland.

Miguel establishes the Philippines as his home through his usage of Tagalog when he speaks about his mother’s trials as a working-class woman. He learned Tagalog through his grandmother who raised him while his parents were working.

So my parents talked a lot about working work, work, work, work, work. So my mom was in the *palengke* (outdoor market) when she was little from three years old selling like rags and all of that, like, you know, like *karioka* (street food) like everything that they had in their *tindahan* (store).
Miguel’s seamless transition into Tagalog and back to English signifies his symbolic transnationalism because he is (re)narrativizing the memories of his parents in his own version of “Taglish.” Speaking Tagalog is a way for Miguel to encapsulate the process of how he has created a sense of home through listening to the oral histories of his parents. Miguel locates his positionality as a second-generation Pilipino American who considers the Philippines as his homeland by naming and retelling the story of his mother’s tireless work in Taglish.

The immigration process plays a role in home making because it determines which oral histories are remembered and which are forgotten. Angelo, a first-generation Pilipino American, stressed the clarity of his memories until now about his family’s immigration experience. Angelo was born in Cebu City in 1998. His parents both lived in Cebu until his mother left in 2006 to find a job in the U.S. as a registered nurse. His father was an engineer in the Philippines, and then, he became a medical technician in the U.S. One of their main motivations to emigrate was to provide a healthier environment for his younger brother who suffered from severe asthma. He vividly remembered his whole immigration journey to the U.S. despite his young age.

I remember that was a significant part of my life. If someone ever asked me that question I would legit tell them how it was. So I remember going to the immigration office, getting the interview maybe like three or four hours. I remember having to go to Manila, go to the US embassy and then just waiting there outside for only a 10-minute interview with, “Yes, are you healthy? Why do you want to go to America?” “Because my mom’s there so we want to be with her.” That was it. I was like, “I waited five hours for this!?” And it’s whatever. I’m glad to remember that when that process ended, how like how happy
my parents were. Cause like it's fine. Like, you know, the dream was achieved personally.

Angelo explains his frustration—even as a child—at the bureaucracy surrounding the immigration process. Angelo’s retelling of his family’s leaving fits into the narrative that immigrants often unconsciously follow and reproduce. He alludes to the trope of the “American Dream” as the goal his family finally accomplished. “The history of U.S. colonialism and the contemporary saturation of U.S. media in the Philippines made the United States appear to be a source of prestige, power, money—a more exciting and expanded world when compared to the Philippines” (Espiritu 44). Angelo understands that the U.S. represents success for his family in the Philippines. His description of his immigration process recounts how his family was uprooted and transplanted. This uprooting forces Angelo to find a sense of belonging through the myth of the “American Dream.” His reconstruction of the Philippines as home is distorted when he finds solace in the myth of American exceptionalism.

Angelo remembered that he immediately felt homesick for the Philippines when they landed in Miami. He retold how they went to McDonald’s for his first meal, but he felt a sense of loss because he could not eat at Jollibee—a popular Filipino fast food restaurant—ever again. Angelo noticed that his parents recognize the U.S. as their new and better home, but he detected the loneliness that arises from uprooting one’s family.

Like you miss the familiarity of like being back home…And so it'd be, it's cause like you're here, it really is so quiet, much more like pleasing to the ears but also like you
miss how loud and everyone just like, hey like go play outside of their houses. Like how everyone was so active. You also miss that part. So that was the first day.

Angelo stressed the emotional burden of leaving home but wanting to prove to his extended family that he does feel excited about living in the U.S. Angelo missed his close knit family where they would spend time with each other. Angelo found belonging in spaces for Pilipino immigrants and Pilipino American youth. “You're immersed in that environment, it's just like as if you never left the Philippines because essentially, they honestly become like my family away from my family back home,” said Angelo. Unlike other first-generation Pilipino Americans, Angelo enjoyed partaking in the Pilipino community events. Furthermore, he is active as an officer for FSA which he believes that his leadership position promotes Pilipino cultural practices. Angelo recognized the Philippines as his home through his reconstituted memories of immigrating and ethnic student programming. He believed that Pilipino Americans have a duty to teach other Pilipino American youth about what life experiences they have had in the Philippines.

Angelo can speak both Tagalog and Bisaya which are the dialects of his parents. As a first-generation Pilipino America, he can navigate both spaces of the reimagined homeland of his family’s memories and the reconstructed motherland created by FSA. In Espiritu’s study, she discovers that the participants who lived in both the Philippines and the U.S. for a substantial amount of time had a firmer grasp of their culture (198). For first-generation Pilipino Americans, “[their] self-presentation challenges the conceptualization of identity as bipolar and linear and insists on the merit of syncretic and hybridized identities and cultures (Espiritu 198). Angelo embodies the ease of incorporating a “postcolonial hybridity” that Leonardo and Matias have
coined. His “postcolonial hybridity” expands his reconstructions of home to include a more fluid sense of Pilipino culture.

Conclusion

I discovered that shared oral histories did contribute to building a sense of home for Pilipino American youth and boosted their self-worth. Marissa and Mary-Anne reconstituted memories of home from their family trips where they felt welcomed as close relatives. For these participants, home was reconstructed as site for discovering deep familial roots in the Philippines. Meanwhile, Brian and Clarissa reimagined home in the Philippines as a space to exercise civic engagement through the shared histories of their parents’ political activism. Hearing oral histories of their parents’ actively resisting state violence empowered them to see the Philippines as a place of possibility and hope. These participants associated home with warm feelings of acceptance, love, and transformation.

However, there were oral histories where the participants felt discouraged in finding a sense of a homeland in the Philippines. Estela and Ted did not feel or desire to claim the Philippines as their home because the oral histories they heard were filled with generational silences. These silences came from their families experiencing trauma and violence which were reasons why they emigrated to the U.S. seeking safety. In Estela’s family, her grandparents endured being held hostage by rebels which left them scarred from ever wanting to stay in the Philippines. Estela understood the importance of preserving family histories, yet she felt more drawn to finding a sense of home through more less politically charged traditions like preparing traditional meals. Ted did not feel compelled to reconstitute his parents’ memories to strengthen his connection with the Philippines because he was taught not to ask probing questions about
their family’s past. His father witnessed violence as a soldier in the military under Marcos, so Ted reimagines the Philippines as a place of political strife and irreconcilable violence.

For several first-generation Pilipino Americans, their understanding of home was complicated because they were aware of the colonial violence in the Philippines, but they also recognized how formative their childhoods were in the hometowns. Bernadette and Devin were able to hold multiple conflicting feelings of grief, guilt, nostalgia, and joy. Bernadette recently learned that her father had an estranged relationship with his father which led to him feeling lonely and depressed. On the other hand, she remembers how elated she felt growing up in the Philippines watching her father repair cars which eventually inspired her to pursue engineering as a career. Devin understood that his family has lost their indigenous history because of Spanish colonization and the dominance of Catholicism, yet he has pleasant memories of dancing “Sayaw sa Banco” and other traditional dances as a child. He remembered his family’s ancestral plot of land and the abundance of crops they grew. I argue that first-generation Pilipino Americans possess the power to find a sense of homeland in the Philippines while also critically thinking about the political implications of seeking home.

If Pilipino Americans did not discover home in the Philippines, they found home making in FSA and its cultural programming. Estela and Ted encountered secondhand trauma from their family’s struggles in the Philippines. In their shift away from seeing the Philippines as a homeland, they discovered a comfort in belonging to a Pilipino American student community. They felt like they could relate more to the Pilipino American experience by reimagining the Philippines as a home through cultural events that served traditional food and showcased folk dances. These cultural practices were more accessible for them and required less digging through a painful past.
Miguel and Angelo acted as anomalies because they were the two participants who found a sense of belonging from their shared oral histories and FSA. Despite being second-generation, Miguel bridged the generational gap with his parents because of the strong presence of his grandmother who taught him Tagalog. Miguel’s parents often talked about their lives in the Philippines on a daily basis which easily facilitated a connection for Miguel to claim the Philippines as his homeland. Meanwhile, Angelo is a first-generation Pilipino American who could share and enjoy his childhood memories in the Philippines while also connecting with the Pilipino American youth. Angelo viewed his role as a first-generation Pilipino American as responsibility to educate and engage second-generation Pilipino Americans about the Philippines. He relished in teaching the general body of FSA about speaking Tagalog and Bisaya. Angelo’s family also participates in the local Pilipino community events which may have influenced Angelo at an early age where he learned to codeswitch from being a first-generation Pilipino American and being a Pilipino American connected to American culture.

Home making differs for first-generation and second-generation Pilipino American youth. I discovered that sharing oral histories is only one way to practice emotional transnationalism, and sometimes, oral histories can frighten second-generation Pilipino Americans because they do not want their families to retraumatize themselves by exposing their painful past. My research confirms that Pilipino American youth have grappled, accepted, and challenged their postcolonial condition to create their own sense of home.
Works Cited


