

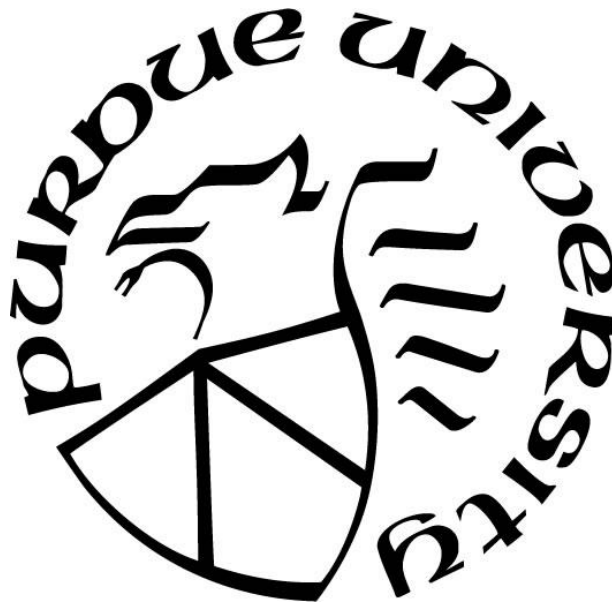
**HARMONIC RESURGENCE: RECLAIMING THE GODINO TWINS’  
JOURNEY THROUGH HIP HOP**

by  
**Melvin Earl Villaver, Jr.**

**A Dissertation**

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**THE PURDUE UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL**  
**STATEMENT OF COMMITTEE APPROVAL**

**Dr. Rayvon Fouché, Chair**

School of Interdisciplinary Studies

**Dr. Monica M. Trieu**

School of Interdisciplinary Studies

**Dr. Bill V. Mullen**

School of Interdisciplinary Studies

**Dr. Dada Docot**

Department of Anthropology

**Approved by:**

Dr. Shannon McMullen

*Dedicated to all Filipinos across the diaspora.*

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## ABSTRACT

*Harmonic Resurgence: Reclaiming the Godino Twins' Journey through Hip Hop* is a groundbreaking dissertation that combines Hip Hop music and critical fabulation to amplify the story of the Godino twins, conjoined Filipino musicians who led an all-Filipino jazz band in the United States from 1929 to 1936. This interdisciplinary project challenges the systematic erasure of marginalized histories from archives, confront historical omissions, and celebrate the invaluable contributions of Filipino Americans to American music. By exploring themes of race, cultural exchange, disability, and the transformative power of music in shaping identity and society, the dissertation engages in critical conversations and strives for justice, equity, and inclusivity in the cultural landscape.

The dissertation consists of a Hip Hop concept mixtape and a comprehensive literary component. The mixtape creatively expresses the Godino twins' journey and magnifies their significance, while the literary component provides a theoretical foundation and explores relevant fields such as Asian American and Filipino Racialization, Filipino Americans performing Black Music, and Disability Studies and Performance. These chapters intertwine academic inquiry with artistic expression, challenging dominant narratives and fostering a more inclusive understanding of American music history.

Through the fusion of Hip Hop music and critical fabulation, the project disrupts the prevailing narrative of erasure and creates a space that recognizes and celebrates marginalized stories. It addresses the historical omission of the Godino twins and highlights the broader erasure of Filipino American history. By acknowledging the resilience and talent of Filipino musicians, the dissertation contributes to decolonization efforts and promote a more comprehensive representation of diverse narratives within American music history.

Drawing on the enduring nature of the blues tradition and the interplay between Filipino and African-American musical traditions, the dissertation explores connections between the Godino twins' story and contemporary musical forms. It emphasizes responsible engagement and collaboration while honoring the contributions and struggles of African-descended communities. The project envisions a future where marginalized voices are amplified, cultural contributions are deeply appreciated, and a more inclusive cultural environment is fostered.

In conclusion, "Harmonic Resurgence: Reclaiming the Godino Twins' Journey through Hip Hop" offers a transformative exploration of the Godino twins' story, challenging erasure, celebrating Filipino contributions, and contributing to decolonization, justice, and equity. By combining Hip Hop music and critical fabulation, this dissertation presents a powerful narrative that disrupts traditional historical narratives, amplifies marginalized voices, and envisions a more inclusive representation of American music history.

## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

In this dissertation, the captivating story of the Godino twins, conjoined Filipino musicians who led an all-Filipino jazz band touring the United States from 1929 to 1936, is brought to life through a unique fusion of Hip Hop music and critical fabulation. The project has a dual purpose: to amplify the Godino twins' significant contribution to American music history and to challenge the systematic erasure of marginalized histories from archives. By shedding light on the complex and multifaceted history of Filipino Americans and celebrating their invaluable contributions to American music, this dissertation engages in ongoing conversations surrounding race, cultural exchange, disability, and the transformative power of music in shaping identity and society. Through an interdisciplinary approach, it strives to decolonize the narrative, confront historical omissions, and create a space where marginalized stories, such as that of the Godino twins, find recognition and celebration within the broader landscape of American music history. This project represents a dedication to justice, equity, and inclusivity, aiming to challenge dominant narratives, promote comprehensive understanding, and foster a more inclusive cultural environment.

The central research question that guides this dissertation is: How can the combination of Hip Hop music and critical fabulation be used to amplify the story of the Godino twins, conjoined Filipino musicians who led an all-Filipino jazz band touring the United States from 1929 to 1936, and challenge the systematic erasure of marginalized histories from archives while contributing to decolonization, justice, and equity?

This research project wields the transformative power of Hip Hop and the principle of critical fabulation to construct a conceptually driven mixtape — a curated collection of songs typically employed by Hip Hop artists for the free expression of themes or narratives, independent of commercial constraints. This creatively sequenced assortment of audio tracks narrates the



journey of the Godino twins, offering a unique perspective to examine their contributions to American music history. Being a critical part of Hip Hop culture, mixtapes give artists creative control and serve as potent vehicles for narrative exploration and social commentary, establishing an ideal platform for challenging historical omissions and erasure. By conjoining a mixtape with literary analysis, not only are Filipino artists' cultural contributions amplified, but Hip Hop's inherent capacity to engage in social justice discourse is also highlighted. Ultimately, this interdisciplinary approach aids decolonization efforts, propels the pursuit of justice, and advocates for the equitable representation of marginalized histories.

The Godino twins, born in Samar in 1908, experienced a life marked by exploitative exhibition and the transnational upheaval of their identities. As children, they were forcibly taken to the infamous Coney Island Freak Show, where their conjoined bodies became a spectacle for public consumption. Their constant exhibition subjected them to a life of exploitation, with their uniqueness commodified for the entertainment of audiences. This unrelenting exposure to the gaze of others shaped their experiences and perpetuated the objectification of their bodies throughout their lives.

However, their narrative also encompasses a transnational dimension that underscores the power dynamics at play. Separated from their parents in the Philippines, the twins were transported to the United States, forcibly uprooted from their homeland and thrust into an unfamiliar environment. This transnational displacement reflected the larger forces of colonialism and cultural exchange during that time. Their journey symbolizes the complex dynamics of empire, where bodies were moved across borders to satisfy the desires of those who sought to profit from the display of exotic "otherness."

Amidst these exploitative and transnational aesthetics, the narrative takes a transformative turn. A custody battle emerged between their biological father and Teodoro Yangco, a prominent Filipino shipping magnate, businessman, and politician who served as the Resident Commissioner of the Philippines to the United States. Yangco eventually adopted the twins and embarked on a mission to reshape their lives. He provided them with formal education, training in music, and support for their rebranding from circus children to distinguished jazz musicians. Yangco serves as a powerful figure in the twins' lives.

The Godino twins' story encapsulates the complexities of power, identity, and exploitation within a transnational context. It serves as a stark reminder of the ways in which marginalized individuals were subjected to commodification and objectification for the sake of entertainment. Simultaneously, their narrative exposes the far-reaching influence of transnational forces, where bodies were moved across borders to satisfy the curiosities and desires of dominant cultures. By exploring the exploitative and transnational aesthetics embedded within their story, this dissertation sheds light on the broader implications of such dynamics and foster a deeper understanding of the Godino twins' remarkable journey as conjoined Filipino musicians in early 20th-century America.

During my undergraduate studies at the University of Southern California, I was mentored by Dr. Shana L. Redmond, a prominent figure in Black Music Studies. It was at USC that my interest in Filipino American music history began to flourish. Exploring the Entertainment Music Industry Archive (EMIA) in the university library, I discovered sources documenting the experiences of Filipino musicians in America from the late 19th to early 20th centuries. It was during this exploration that I first encountered the Godino twins.

Upon entering my graduate studies at Purdue University, I realized that Purdue University Libraries lacked a subscription to the EMIA. Intrigued by the Godino twins as a potential long-term research topic, I saw this as an ideal opportunity for a comprehensive study. Approaching Purdue University Libraries, I received their support, and they assisted me in obtaining a temporary 30-day trial license to access the EMIA database.

In the summer of 2019, I dedicated a two-week period to meticulously downloading articles pertaining to the Godino twins from the EMIA database. Equipped with a free-trial license, I undertook a targeted keyword search using terms like "Godino" and "Filipino" within the EMIA database, focusing specifically on the period from 1898 to 1946. This timeframe was selected because it spanned the era of American territorial rule over the Philippines. This search yielded an abundance of print news journal articles that mentioned the Godino twins exclusively, as well as information on other Filipino musicians performing in America. These articles offered invaluable insights into the Filipino contributions to American music history. The extensive collection of articles available within the EMIA database has significantly enriched my research on the Godino twins, enabling me to delve deeper into their story and gain a comprehensive understanding of their experiences during a crucial period in both Philippine and American history.

While these articles captured the essence of the twins' performances through glowing reviews, secondary sources, and scholarly discourse exhibited a noticeable absence of references to the Godino twins. The lack of recognition in academic scholarship and the music industry's oversight underscored the pervasive issue of erasure endured by Filipino musicians. This revelation propelled my pursuit of a Ph.D. in American Studies at Purdue University, driven by the determination to liberate their tale from obscurity and grant it the acknowledgment it deserves.

As a Filipino American musician, I have questioned the lack of representation and recognition of artists of Asian descent within American popular culture, which prompted a deep curiosity about the contributions of Filipinos to American music history. I wanted to know if there were musicians who may have looked like me or sounded like me that were about to break through and get over with popular audiences one hundred years ago.

This dissertation asserts the profound significance of the Godino twins' lives and their remarkable contributions to American popular music. It argues that Filipino musicians played a vital role in shaping the twentieth century's musical landscape, particularly in jazz's development. Yet, despite their talent, Filipino artists faced formidable obstacles to recognition and mainstream success, often confined to performing in segregated venues or within Filipino communities. This systemic marginalization reflects a larger pattern of overlooking Filipino American history.

Growing up in Los Angeles, a city closely connected to the entertainment industry, provided me proximity to Hollywood and its music scene. In my teens and early twenties, I eagerly pursued the dream of securing a record deal and making my mark as a musician. However, I often encountered disappointment as label executives turned me away, citing their reluctance to navigate the challenges of marketing an Asian artist. These experiences further heightened my awareness of the glaring absence of representation and opportunities for artists of Asian descent within the American music industry. This personal journey, coupled with my ongoing fascination with the contributions of Filipinos to American music, has sparked a profound curiosity within me. I yearn to uncover the hidden narratives and overlooked accomplishments of Filipino musicians who, like me, aspire to break barriers and achieve recognition for their artistry. This burning curiosity and desire to shed light on the untold stories form the driving force behind the thesis of my dissertation,

propelling me to explore and celebrate the diverse and invaluable musical legacies of Filipino artists in American music history.

The omission of the Godino twins from archives reveals the erasure of Filipino American history within the broader American cultural landscape. It serves as a poignant reminder of the challenges marginalized communities face. While I have been fortunate to uncover articles and photographs documenting their extraordinary journey, the lack of any video and sound recordings has posed a significant obstacle in fully capturing their musical performances and experiences. This scarcity reflects a broader pattern of neglect and oversight that has undermined the rich tapestry of Asian American Studies and the recognition of Filipino artists' vital contributions to American music. It reinforces the urgent need to reclaim and amplify these untold stories, weaving them back into the fabric of American music history, where they rightfully belong.

The mixtape featured in this dissertation pays tribute to the Godino twins and serves as an innovative musical canvas, infused with traditions found in Black women's speculative fiction. This art form allows their voices to reverberate into the present, creating a space for listeners to tune into their resonance. Despite apparent stylistic disparities between Hip Hop—the medium of this dissertation—and jazz—the twins' musical terrain—the mixtape effectively bridges this temporal divide. It amplifies the twins' voices, harmoniously connecting their era to our contemporary moment.

The narrative of the Godino twins — conjoined Filipino musicians navigating in the Black Americans sonic spheres of the blues, vaudeville, and jazz — is a compelling story that enriches Asian American Studies. It amplifies the importance of diverse narratives and reinforces the invaluable contributions of Filipino musicians to American music history. Simultaneously, it

asserts their rightful place within mainstream narratives and emphasizes the need to appreciate marginalized histories.

Transitioning into a broader discussion, this dissertation actively confronts the long-standing narrative of erasure and neglect within American popular music history. By elevating the Godino twins' story through a Hip Hop mixtape, the project foregrounds the often overlooked experiences of Filipino musicians. These efforts contribute to a more inclusive understanding of American music history, promoting a wider appreciation of Filipino artists' cultural contributions. Within this dissertation, the narrative imbalance favoring white artists in American popular culture, which has historically marginalized artists of color, is critically addressed, thus creating space for a more diverse representation in the realm of mainstream popular culture.

Building on these efforts to redefine narratives, scholarly works such as Dylan Rodriguez's essay "Not Classifiable as Orientals or Caucasians or Negroes" investigate deeper into the complex terrain of Filipino racial identity. Situated within the context of the US colonial project in the Philippines, Rodriguez significantly enhances our comprehension of marginalized Filipino musicians, including the Godino twins, in American popular culture. His exploration into Filipino subjectivity uncovers the multi-layered implications of casualty, complicity, and enduring colonial dominance, challenging conventional depictions of Filipinos as mere innocent victims. Through this lens, Rodriguez's insights enrich the discourse, shedding light on the profound impact of historical power dynamics on the cultural expression of Filipino artists (Rodriguez).

Rodriguez further looks into the racial-colonial inscriptions imposed on Filipinos during US colonial rule, highlighting the disqualifications and racial paternalism perpetuated by both American and Filipino actors involved in colonial statecraft. His investigation of the origins and coherence of Filipino racial ontology within the framework of a racial nation-state in modern

civilization serves as a crucial point of departure from normative categories. Instead of settling for predefined identities, Rodriguez employs the term "Filipino" as a troubled placeholder, emphasizing the intersecting structures of colonial, national, and biopolitical power (Rodriguez).

Rodriguez's critique of traditional archives is particularly significant, suggesting that they often present a skewed narrative, especially concerning marginalized groups like Filipinos. He implies that these archives may inadequately capture the full range of experiences under colonial rule, thus calling for reinterpretation and supplementation to achieve a more nuanced understanding (Rodriguez).

Within the context of my dissertation project on the Godino twins, Rodriguez's insights prove invaluable. By utilizing critical fabulation and Hip Hop as narrative devices, my work reinterprets and reclaims the twins' story, challenging the constraints of existing archives. This approach aligns with Rodriguez's advocacy for a comprehensive understanding of Filipino subjectivity, thereby reflecting a more authentic depiction of the twins' experiences as Filipino musicians in American popular culture and the wider array of American music history. This dissertation project ultimately seeks to disrupt fixed identity categories and engage in a dialogue acknowledging the complexities of Filipino racial ontology within the US colonial project.

Likewise, Marlon E. Fuentes' film, *Bontoc Eulogy*, offers a profound perspective on the experiences of Filipinos and their representation within the historical archive. The film examines into Fuentes' personal connection to his Filipino heritage, focusing on the story of the 1,100 Filipino natives who were exhibited as a "living exhibit" at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair (Blumentritt). *Bontoc Eulogy* exposes the cultural arrogance and exploitation that accompanied the Fair's celebration of progress, shedding light on the dehumanizing treatment endured by indigenous peoples from around the world.

In *Bontoc Eulogy*, Fuentes centers his narrative around the journey of Markod, a Bontoc Igorot warrior who was brought to St. Louis in 1904 and never returned home. Employing meticulous research utilizing historical data from esteemed institutions such as the Library of Congress and the National Archives, as well as archival footage and artistic recreations, Fuentes dexterously weaves together the story of the missing Markod with his own introspections regarding his ancestral "grandfather" and addresses themes of history, family, memory, and cultural loss.

Both Rodriguez and Fuentes' works reveal the importance of reclaiming and reimagining Filipino narratives within the historical archive. They emphasize the need to confront the erasure and marginalization of Filipino experiences and challenge prevailing discourses that perpetuate colonial structures. These insights inform my dissertation project on the Godino twins, utilizing Hip Hop and critical fabulation. Just as Fuentes reexamines and recontextualizes the story of Markod, my project offers a platform for the Godino twins' narrative to be revitalized and celebrated within the broader landscape of American music history. By incorporating critical approaches and creative methodologies, I can disrupt existing narratives, amplify marginalized voices, and contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of Filipino heritage and cultural contributions.

Recently, a cultural shift has occurred in recognizing Filipinos in mainstream American popular culture and music, highlighting their contributions to the diverse American sonic landscape. Artists such as H.E.R., Chad Hugo, Guapdad 4000, and Bruno Mars have emerged as successful American popular musicians who embrace their Filipino heritage. They have made notable contributions to the music industry, challenging previous narratives of exclusion, and nurturing a sense of pride within the Filipino community. One notable artist, H.E.R., also known as Gabriella Wilson, openly acknowledges her Filipino roots and emphasizes the profound



influence of her heritage on her identity and music. Her success symbolizes intersectionality, as she bridges her Filipino, Black American, and woman identities within the mainstream music industry.

The colonial history of the Philippines plays a fundamental role in shaping the experiences and perceptions of Filipino musicians in America. During American rule over the Philippines, power dynamics were established, creating opportunities for cultural exchange at Filipino port sites, especially in Manila, where interactions between Black Americans in the military and Filipinos were commonplace. This shared musical heritage served as a foundation for Filipino musicians in America, influencing and shaping their artistry in profound ways. The influences from both Filipino and Black American musical traditions contribute to the rich history of Filipino musicians' contributions to American music, representing a fusion of cultural experiences and perspectives.

This cultural shift and historical context contextualize the significance of the Godino twins' narrative and the exploration of Filipino musicians' contributions in American music history. It highlights the ongoing evolution of Filipino representation in the music industry and the complex dynamics that have shaped their experiences. By acknowledging these influences and narratives, it becomes evident that the Godino twins' journey and the broader history of Filipino musicians are deeply interconnected with the larger cultural and social fabric of America.

A closer look at the lives of the Godino twins reveals a complex intertwining of triumphs and struggles. Despite being conjoined twins of Filipino descent in an era marred by segregation and discrimination, they found remarkable acceptance and resonance with their audiences. However, the twins' extraordinary abilities to walk, run, and even drive cars did not negate the challenges they faced concerning societal perception and the complexities of living with a physical

disability. Their personal narratives offer a poignant reminder of the diverse human experiences that shape the fabric of our shared musical history.

The Godino twins' journey as conjoined Filipino musicians navigating the jazz and blues terrain of early 20th-century America carries profound implications. Their experiences highlight the historical struggles faced by marginalized communities, including the commodification and objectification of their bodies. Furthermore, their transnational displacement and eventual adoption by Teodoro Yangco, a prominent Filipino figure, reflect the broader power dynamics of colonialism and cultural exchange during that era. The twins' narrative serves as a poignant reminder of the challenges marginalized individuals faced in claiming agency and asserting their cultural contributions within a racially stratified society.

While the choice to use a Hip Hop mixtape as a medium to convey the story of the Godino twins may initially seem disconnected from their jazz and blues background, it is essential to recognize Hip Hop as the latest iteration of the Black music tradition. Like jazz and blues in their respective eras, Hip Hop represents a significant vernacular in Black American music today. By bridging the temporal gap, the mixtape infuses the narrative of the Godino twins into the contemporary music scene, reaffirming their enduring legacy. It serves as a medium to disrupt traditional boundaries, challenge dominant narratives, and promote a more inclusive understanding of American music history.

A.D. Carson, a highly regarded Hip Hop scholar and artist, has made substantial contributions to the field of Hip Hop Studies through his groundbreaking dissertation work at Clemson University titled, *Owning My Masters: The Rhetorics of Rhymes & Revolutions*. Carson's research focuses on the intersections of Hip Hop, identity, and activism, providing valuable insights into the transformative power of Hip Hop as a means of cultural expression and social

critique. His dissertation serves as a significant reference point for my own project on the Godino twins, as it explores similar themes and methodologies. By drawing upon Carson's scholarship, I incorporate the insights and approaches he has pioneered to amplify the story of the Godino twins, challenge the erasure of marginalized histories, and foster social change through the fusion of Hip Hop music and critical fabulation. Carson's work serves as an inspiration and validation for the interdisciplinary nature of my research, emphasizing the importance of incorporating artistic and cultural elements into academic inquiry (Carson).

Carson's focus on ownership and autonomy within the Hip Hop industry aligns with the narrative of the Godino twins. As artists from marginalized backgrounds, the twins faced the challenges of an industry that frequently ostracizes people of color, limiting their chances for acknowledgment and achievement. Carson's exploration of his own empowerment and control within the Hip Hop sphere directly addresses the twins' experiences of seeking personal identity and agency. Like Carson, I employ Hip Hop as a means to express these narratives through the music on the mixtape.

Carson's innovative approach to research, incorporating Hip Hop as both a subject of study and a methodology, aligns with the interdisciplinary nature of my own dissertation project. By employing critical fabulation and utilizing Hip Hop music as a narrative device, my research challenges historical omissions, confront power dynamics, and create a space where the Godino twins' story finds recognition and celebration. Carson's scholarship serves as a source of inspiration and validation for this approach, emphasizing the importance of incorporating artistic and cultural elements into academic research.

In conclusion, the captivating story of the Godino twins and the groundbreaking dissertation work of A.D. Carson demonstrate the transformative power of Hip Hop scholarship in

amplifying marginalized narratives within American music history. By challenging traditional boundaries, promoting inclusive understandings, and empowering marginalized communities, both the Godino twins and Carson's work disrupt dominant narratives and foster social change. Through an interdisciplinary approach that incorporates critical fabulation and Hip Hop music, these research endeavors contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of American music history while highlighting the enduring legacies of marginalized artists. By intertwining the historical and theoretical dimensions of the Godino twins' journey with the artistic expression found in the Hip Hop mixtape, this dissertation offers a comprehensive understanding of their cultural significance and broader implications for the representation of Filipino musicians. The inclusion of the Hip Hop mixtape not only serves as a means to pay homage to the Godino twins but also adds a unique dimension to the exploration. It allows for a creative and immersive experience that bridges the gap between past and present, highlighting the transformative power of music in shaping identity and society.

Through this interdisciplinary approach, the dissertation contributes to ongoing conversations surrounding race, cultural exchange, disability, and the transformative power of music. By amplifying the voices of the Godino twins and shedding light on the contributions of Filipino musicians, this project challenges dominant narratives, promotes inclusivity, and strives to foster a more comprehensive and deeper understanding of American music history. It is an effort that ensures the recognition and appreciation that the Godino twins and other Filipino musicians deserve within the broader narrative of American music history, ultimately enriching our collective cultural heritage.

### **1.1 A Note on Method: The Conjoined Methods of Hip Hop and critical fabulation**

In her insightful essay, "Venus in Two Acts," Saidiya Hartman explores the potential for transcending the limitations of the archive through speculative arguments and the employment of the subjunctive mood. Hartman creates an implausible narrative based on archival research, designed to spotlight the impossibility of its telling. By invoking the conditional temporality of "what could have been," she illuminates the obscured and entangled aspects of history and social science, thus challenging conventional historical narratives (Hartman 11).

My goal to recount the Godino twins' story and produce Hip Hop music reflective of their journey deeply resonates with Hartman's concept of "critical fabulation." Like Hartman, I value the power of reorganizing narrative elements and viewing events from diverse perspectives to disrupt traditional historical perceptions and reveal the overlooked lives of marginalized individuals. I highlight diverse voices by challenging the fictionality of historical sources and hierarchical discourses and confronting archival erasures and omissions.

However, I acknowledge the inherent limitations in relying on archival materials. The absence of video and sound recordings, especially regarding the Godino twins, hinders a comprehensive depiction of their musical performances and experiences. While Hartman recognizes the irreparable violence and untold stories, I similarly understand the silences and gaps in the historical record. Yet, through storytelling, we can engage with the subaltern and dispossessed, providing counter-histories that challenge prevailing research methodologies and thought processes.

Hartman's thorough exploration of representing marginalized individuals' lives, especially within the context of slavery, aligns profoundly with my dissertation project on the Godino twins. Like Hartman, I grapple with the archive's inherent limitations, exploring historical record's gaps and omissions that have led to the erasure of the Godino twins from mainstream music history.

While recognizing representation's constraints, I firmly believe in narrative's transformative power. Through narrative, we can address the present, interpret the past, and envision a future where marginalized voices are heard and celebrated. I have chosen Hip Hop as a conduit for conveying this powerful message.

To give voice to the Godino twins and their forgotten music, I have adopted a combined method of critical fabulation and Hip Hop storytelling. This approach has allowed me to fill the historical record's gaps and create a narrative speculating about the twins' lives and music. Drawing from my experiences as a Filipino American musician and informed by the archival gaps, I have created a Hip Hop concept mixtape inspired by the Godino twins' story, in which I composed, recorded, performed, rapped, sung, mixed, edited, and played instruments. This mixtape functions as both a creative work and a medium for disseminating the Godino twins' intriguing narrative to a broader audience.

The research methodology known as "critical fabulation" has been strongly embodied by the work of scholars such as Saidiya Hartman and Tiya Miles for its capacity to revive marginalized narratives. By imaginatively reconstructing these tales, they challenge mainstream narratives, illuminating the obscure histories of Black and Indigenous women, thereby exposing society's most vulnerable members' experiences (Dintino). This methodological approach has proven particularly advantageous in fields such as Musicology and History, where traditional methodologies often fall short in capturing the intricacies of musical experiences. Employing critical fabulation allows for a more nuanced exploration of these stories, unearthing dimensions that might be overlooked by more conventional techniques.

Critical fabulation also has robust utility in advocacy and activism, allowing obscured histories to resurface and providing a platform for new viewpoints and voices. An exemplary

application of this methodology is seen in Hartman's *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments*, which paints a vivid portrait of young Black women's lives in Philadelphia and New York during the early 20th century. Hartman deftly uses critical fabulation to bridge historical gaps, merging archival research and creative speculation to envision these women's experiences and interior worlds. Through this fusion of historical fragments and imaginative constructions, Hartman provides a persuasive counter-narrative that disrupts mainstream historical narratives and centers the experiences of marginalized women (Hartman).

This methodology also informs Tiya Miles' scholarship, notably in her book *The House on Diamond Hill*, a historical investigation of a plantation house in Louisiana and the lives of the enslaved individuals therein. Utilizing archival research, oral histories, and imaginative reconstruction, Miles applies critical fabulation to fill in the historical voids and vivify the narratives of the silenced enslaved population. By embracing this methodology, Miles interrogates traditional historiographical approaches that privilege so-called "objective" and "factual" accounts of history, instead advocating for a more inclusive and empathetic understanding that recognizes the voices and lived experiences of Black and Indigenous individuals (Miles).

When immersing myself in the scholarly works of Hartman and Miles and exploring critical fabulation's subtleties, I was captivated by how resonant this methodology is in Toni Morrison's artistry. Her celebrated novel *Jazz* provides a compelling demonstration of how critical fabulation can be leveraged within artistic mediums, most notably creative writing. Employing a non-linear narrative that weaves together multiple perspectives and timelines, Morrison investigates into the complexities of African American identity and the profound legacies of slavery and migration. Morrison's novel aligns with Hartman and Miles' scholarship, confronting traditional historical narratives, and bridging gaps in the historical record. However, through

critical fabulation, Morrison moves beyond traditional historiography to probe into the emotional lives and thoughts of Black Americans through speculative fiction.

This innovative methodology is not only confined to scholarly writing but extends its influence into artistic expression. A prime example is Morrison's *Jazz*, inspired by a moving photograph she discovered in *The Harlem Book of the Dead* by James Van Der Zee. This haunting image, a tragic tale of a young woman murdered by her older, married lover, stirred Morrison. She leveraged the expressive vernaculars of Black American music, specifically the soulful elements of blues and jazz, to articulate these emotional vignettes within her narrative.

Thus, critical fabulation serves as an invaluable tool in academia and beyond, offering fresh perspectives on our understanding of marginalized experiences and influencing diverse forms of artistic expression. Through its use, we can challenge traditional narratives, illuminating the past in more inclusive ways.

Drawing on a photograph as the "seed of a plot" (Morrison xvi), Morrison imagines a vivid world populated by characters steeped in love, sacrifice, and tragedy. By employing critical fabulation, she fuses historical gaps with tangible artifacts to craft a narrative rich in historical grounding and emotional resonance. Morrison vividly captures the zeitgeist, exploring the cultural and social forces at play and painting a vivid picture of her characters' response to love and loss.

Through critical fabulation, Morrison vivifies the young woman from the photograph, exploring the wider social and historical circumstances that precipitate her tragic fate. Drawing from her Midwest upbringing and detailed research on the Great Migration and the Harlem Renaissance, she reconstructs her characters' world, shedding light on the triumphs and struggles of African Americans (Parker).



In a similar vein to Toni Morrison, I engage in a parallel mission of reconstructing the lives of the Godino twins through a combination of photographs, articles, and extensive research. Inspired by Morrison's adept use of critical fabulation, I strive to present an in-depth portrayal of the twins' existence, resonating with contemporary audiences. Just as Morrison skillfully expands upon a single image to construct a multi-layered narrative, I too recognize the transformative power of storytelling in interpreting our world and its inhabitants.

Morrison's work, particularly in her novel *Jazz*, serves as a prime example of how critical fabulation can be employed across various domains, including scholarship, creative writing, and other artistic mediums. By interweaving historical events and personal experiences, artists are able to craft narratives that challenge prevailing assumptions and deepen our understanding of the human experience. Following in Morrison's footsteps, I seek to illuminate the Godino twins' lives in a way that goes beyond surface-level observations, offering a rich and textured exploration of their journey within the confines of the Hip Hop industry.

The tradition of critical fabulation is also entrenched in Hip Hop, with the works of Saidiya Hartman, Tiya Miles, and Toni Morrison's connecting this nexus. Just as these scholars employ critical fabulation to reinterpret marginalized histories, Hip Hop artists use music to create transformative potential for their communities. Kendrick Lamar's critically acclaimed album, *DAMN.*, stands as a testament to critical fabulation in Hip Hop. Lamar integrates storytelling, myth, and metaphor to proclaim his experiences as a Black man in America, addressing broader societal concerns of race, power, and violence (Carmichael).

Lamar's mastery of critical fabulation is apparent in *DAMN.* through his adept use of voice and persona. The mixtape features Lamar embodying various voices and characters, each symbolizing distinct aspects of his journey. In the track "DNA.," he convincingly assumes the

persona of a street-savvy young adult from Compton, California, while in "FEAR.," he artfully portrays an anxious child. By adopting these personas, Lamar deeply explores his emotions and experiences, adding complex layers to his music and giving voice to a broader community grappling with similar challenges.

Lamar's multifaceted roles amplify the voices and experiences of those who share his struggles, making his music a collective expression of resilience and shared understanding. Similarly, I employ a comparable technique in creating my Hip Hop mixtape on the Godino twins. Using my voice, I portray different voices and characters, including Lucio and Simplicio Godino. Their interplay and dialogue can be heard throughout the mixtape, seamlessly woven into the verses and music. This approach adds depth and interiority to the narrative, allowing my analysis of the Godino twins' story to connect with listeners because despite the archive's lack, through the mixtape, *Harmonic Resurgence*, you may now hear them.

Drawing inspiration from Lamar's adept use of voice and persona, my mixtape on the Godino twins embraces the power of storytelling and the ability to convey multifaceted perspectives. It serves as a platform for their voices to be heard, their struggles to be understood, and their legacy to be celebrated. Just as Lamar's music has resonated with audiences worldwide, Through this mixtape, I create a collective experience that fosters empathy, appreciation, and a deeper understanding of the Godino twins' remarkable journey.

In 2018, Kendrick Lamar rewrote history by earning the Pulitzer Prize for Music for his mixtape, *DAMN.*, as the first non-classical, non-jazz artist. This milestone not only acknowledges Lamar's extraordinary talent, but also underlines the cultural influence and artistic worth of Hip Hop (Pareles and Woolfe). His groundbreaking mixtape, *DAMN.*, redefines Hip Hop's potential,

proving its aptitude to approach intricate social, cultural, historical, and political themes in a compelling, interdisciplinary fashion.

*DAMN.* serves as a crucial motivation for this dissertation project. My creative work, *Harmonic Resurgence*, and *DAMN.*, both utilize innovative methodologies to construct narratives that defy traditional structures. Emulating Lamar, I employ critical fabulation and other inventive methods to contest conventional narrative systems and emphasize voices and experiences typically erased from history.

Moreover, before *DAMN.*, Kendrick Lamar's critically acclaimed 2015 album, *To Pimp a Butterfly*, also demonstrates his adept use of critical fabulation in Hip Hop. Lamar cleverly intersperses Tupac Shakur's voice through interludes, creatively recontextualizing Tupac's words within a modern framework (Lamar, *To Pimp a Butterfly*). Tupac's interviews and speeches are seamlessly integrated throughout the outro, "Mortal Man," creating a dynamic dialogue between the past and present. This not only pays tribute to Tupac's significant influence on Lamar and the genre, but also repositions Tupac's messages to address the current social and political climate.

Tupac Shakur, renowned for his thoughtful and politically engaged artistry, openly confronted social injustices. Lamar continues Tupac's legacy by using his music as a platform to discuss systemic racism, police brutality, and inequality. By sampling Tupac's voice, Lamar bravely challenges prevailing narratives that seek to minimize or misrepresent the radical messages embedded within Tupac's body of work. Inspired by the sampling techniques in Kendrick Lamar's *To Pimp a Butterfly*, my Hip Hop mixtape dedicated to the Godino twins adopts a similar approach. By carefully selecting and recontextualizing samples from indigenous and contemporary Filipino music, as well as blues, soul, and jazz from America, my mixtape constructs a layered and textured

sonic landscape that immerses listeners in the multifaceted journey of the Godino twins, amplifying their voices and showcasing their resilience as musicians.

Through critical fabulation in Hip Hop, artists can transform musical history, connecting past and present to unveil new narratives. This process, made immersive by sampling, enables audiences to navigate intricate histories and cultural intersections, as exemplified by the Godino twins and other Filipino musicians. Critical fabulation, a method employed both in academia by scholars like Tiya Miles, Saidiya Hartman, and Toni Morrison, and in music by artists like Kendrick Lamar, has been instrumental in revealing obscured histories and marginalized narratives. My mixtape, *Harmonic Resurgence*, dedicated to the Godino twins, uses sampling, an essential Hip Hop technique, to mirror critical fabulation. By selecting and recontextualizing older records, Hip Hop artists can reimagine and reconstruct musical history, much like scholars Saidiya Hartman and Tiya Miles who use critical fabulation to fill historical gaps and amplify marginalized voices.

In conclusion, this dissertation serves as a unique conjoining of critical fabulation and Hip Hop, aiming to unearth the untold story of the Godino twins. This intersectional study highlights their influential yet overshadowed presence in Asian American Studies, Disability Studies, and Music History, and provides an insightful exploration of Filipino American cultural identity. Utilizing Hip Hop's distinct soundscape and the creative tools of critical fabulation, the project seeks to breathe life into the forgotten music of the twins and thoroughly comprehend the social and historical milieu surrounding their artistry. By interweaving these erased narratives and muted voices into modern dialogues, this research emphasizes the transformative potency of critical fabulation and the pivotal role of music in chronicling Filipino contributions to the broader narrative of American music history.

## **1.2 A Note on Blues Epistemology**

American music is Black music. My dissertation project not only explores the captivating story of the Godino twins and their contributions to American music history but also situates itself within the framework of Blues Epistemology. Blues Epistemology encompasses understanding knowledge production, cultural expression, and historical inquiry through the lens of the blues—a distinctly African-American musical tradition rooted in the experiences of struggle, resilience, and survival.

Blues Epistemology recognizes that the blues is more than just a musical genre; it is a way of knowing, understanding, and navigating the world. It acknowledges the profound significance of African-descended musical traditions in shaping American culture. It highlights the transformative power of music as a tool for social critique, self-expression, and cultural memory.

In the context of my dissertation, the Blues Epistemology framework acknowledges the Godino twins' engagement with jazz, which emerged from the blues tradition, and their role as perpetuators and performers of the sound of the African diaspora in America. Despite the Godinos not being African-Americans, they exist as Asian/Filipino conjoined men who participated in America's racial segregation during that era. This project engages with the broader discourse of cultural exchange, identity formation, and social justice by recognizing the historical and cultural significance of the blues tradition and the interplay between Filipinos and African-descended people in music.

Furthermore, this dissertation project acknowledges the delicate balance between cultural appropriation and appreciation within the framework of Blues Epistemology. It emphasizes the importance of honoring and paying homage to the Black musicians and history that influenced Filipino artists while advocating for responsible engagement and collaboration. By approaching the music of African-descended people with care and respect, Filipino musicians can authentically

contribute to the perpetuation and evolution of the blues tradition, pushing the culture forward while acknowledging the foundations, contributions, and struggles of African-descended communities.

In addition to the Blues Epistemology framework, my dissertation project also incorporates the creation of a Hip Hop concept mixtape inspired by the Godino twins. Hip Hop, as a culture, is firmly rooted in the blues tradition. Both musical forms emerged from Black communities and are powerful vehicles for social commentary and personal expression. Hip Hop, like the blues, reflects the experiences of struggle, resilience, and cultural memory. By incorporating Hip Hop into my project, I explore further the connections between the Godino twins' story and the broader African-American musical traditions that influenced and shaped their journey.

In the 1920s, the Godino twins made notable contributions to the jazz scene, showcasing their talent and participating in the vibrant cultural movement of that era. However, the influence of Filipinos in the realm of music did not stop there. In the 1990s, Filipinos continued to leave their mark on the cultural landscape, this time within the realm of Hip Hop.

The history of Filipinos contributing to and shaping Hip Hop in the 1990s is well-documented in the groundbreaking documentary *Beats, Rhymes, and Resistance: Pilipinos and Hip Hop in Los Angeles (The Definitive Version)* by Dawn Mabalon, Lakan de Leon, and Jonathan Ramos. Originally conceived and filmed in 1997, this documentary aimed to capture the presence of Filipinos in the Los Angeles Hip Hop scene during that time.

During this period, Filipinos had yet to receive full recognition for their roles as b-boys/girls, DJs, graffiti artists, and emcees. However, as time progressed, Filipinos started gaining well-deserved recognition for their artistic skills and contributions (Mabalon, et al.). It is crucial

to reflect on the pioneers who helped lay the foundation for the subsequent generations of Filipino artists.

By using Hip Hop as a creative medium, I pay homage to the Godino twins' legacy while engaging with contemporary musical forms that have evolved from the blues tradition. Hip Hop, with its sampling techniques, poetic lyricism, and social consciousness, allows me to narrate their story in a manner that resonates with present-day audiences. Through this, I highlight the enduring relevance of the Godino twins' contributions and showcase the transformative power of the blues in shaping American music.

In summary, the Blues Epistemology framework within this dissertation project recognizes the powerful impact of African-descended musical traditions, particularly the blues, on the formation of American popular music. It acknowledges the Godino twins' involvement in perpetuating this tradition, despite their own racial and ethnic identity and explores the nuances of cultural exchange and appropriation within this context. By situating the project within the framework of Blues Epistemology and incorporating Hip Hop as a creative medium, it seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the intersections between Filipino and African-American musical cultures, the evolution of musical genres, and their broader implications for knowledge production, cultural expression, and historical inquiry.

### **1.3 Negotiating Identity and Decolonization: An Exploration of the Godino Twins' Legacy and Filipinx-American Narratives**

In my dissertation project, I focus on the Godino twins, illuminating the complexities of Filipinx-American identity and the importance of decolonization within the narratives and artistic pursuits of Filipino Americans. As a musician and scholar of Filipino American descent, my work is deeply rooted in the history and collective experiences of the entire Filipino American

community. It explores how our identities have been shaped by colonization, migration, and exploitation. In this project, I deliberately use the term "Filipino" to encompass the diverse and intricate histories and experiences within our community, understanding that language is constantly evolving and subject to ongoing evaluation and redefinition.

While some colleagues advocate for the use of "Filipinx" as a gender-neutral alternative to the gendered term "Filipino," it is important to recognize that this term is not universally embraced in all Filipino Studies and Filipino American Studies scholarship. By choosing "Filipino," I do not dismiss or erase the experiences of individuals who identify as non-binary or gender non-conforming. Instead, it reflects my personal decision as an artist and scholar.

I deeply value the contributions of marginalized communities, particularly queer and trans Black and Filipinx individuals, who have played an invaluable role in shaping and guiding my work. Their mentorship and guidance have enriched my understanding and appreciation of the intersections of race, gender, and sexuality within my scholarship and music. Without the labor and love of these communities, my work as a scholar and Hip Hop musician would not be possible.

As a Filipino American artist, I am mindful of my position and the impact of my work on other marginalized communities. I want to emphasize that my use of the term "Filipino" is not meant to harm or exclude anyone identifying as Filipinx. Regardless of how you may individually identify in terms of gender or sexuality, I hope that you can see yourself represented in this work and view it as a tribute to all identities within the Filipino diaspora. Through the lens of critical fabulation and Hip Hop, I contribute to broader discussions on decolonization, cross-racial solidarity, gender and sexuality, and cultural exchange.

The Godino twins embody the resilience and artistic prowess of the Filipino community, and my intention is to honor their legacy while also centering the experiences and voices of



marginalized communities. It is essential to acknowledge that language can be deeply personal and evoke strong sentiments. I have given careful consideration to the use of "Filipino" or "Filipinx" in this text. Ultimately, I have chosen "Filipino" as it aligns with the existing scholarship that informs my research. However, it is crucial to approach language with sensitivity and mindfulness for the experiences and identities of those around us. We must recognize and appreciate the labor and love of marginalized communities that shape and guide our work.

## **1.4 Chapter Outline and Summaries**

### **1.4.1 Introduction**

This chapter introduces the literary component of the dissertation, staging the historical and theoretical foundations that drive the project. It lays the theoretical foundations that drive the three interconnected chapters, and explores the significance of reclaiming and reimagining Filipino narratives within the historical archive. Drawing insights from Dylan Rodriguez's analysis of Filipino racial ontology and Marlon E. Fuentes' film *Bontoc Eulogy*, the introduction sheds light on the enduring effects of colonial dominance and the need to challenge erasure and prevailing discourses. The Godino twins, conjoined Filipino musicians, serve as a lens to examine Filipino contributions to American music history and challenge their marginalization. By employing critical approaches and creative methodologies, this dissertation disrupts existing narratives, amplify marginalized voices, and foster a comprehensive understanding of Filipino heritage and cultural contributions. The chapter also acknowledges the cultural shift recognizing Filipino artists in mainstream American popular culture, exemplified by musicians like H.E.R., Chad Hugo, Guapdad 4000, and Bruno Mars, who proudly embrace their Filipino heritage and make notable contributions to the American sonic landscape.

In summary, this chapter sets the stage for unraveling the complex narratives surrounding the Godino twins and their impact on American music history. It underscores the importance of reclaiming marginalized histories, confronting colonial structures, and celebrating the resilience and talent of Filipino musicians. Through an interdisciplinary approach, the dissertation seeks to challenge prevailing discourses, amplify voices, and reclaim the rightful place of the Godino twins and Filipino artists within the broader narrative of American music.

#### **1.4.2 Chapter 1: Navigating Racialization and Cultural Production: The Experiences of Asian Americans, Filipinos, and the Godino Twins**

The focal point of Chapter 1 centers on the experiences of Asian Americans, particularly Filipinos, as they navigate racialization and cultural production, with a particular emphasis on the Godino twins as exemplars of these experiences. It explores how Asian Americans are positioned within the American racial hierarchy through interactions with Black and white Americans, emphasizing both the valorization and ostracism of Asian Americans. The chapter examines the racialization of Filipinos, highlighting the Philippine Exposition at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair as a key event that commodified Filipinos as exotic and savage beings. It also exposes the cultural significance of Filipino music and the control exerted over their expression, as well as the racist backlash faced by Filipino migrants in California. By challenging the Black-white binary and understanding the intersections of Filipino racialization, colonization, and labor exploitation, the chapter deconstructs institutional white supremacy and foster Third World solidarity.

#### **1.4.3 Chapter 2: Intersections of Sound and Solidarity: Exploring the Historical Exchange between Filipino and Black American Musicians**

Moving forward, the second chapter explores the profound historical exchange between Filipino and Black American musicians, shedding light on the intricate dynamics of cultural

exchange, resistance, and profound musical innovation. This enduring collaboration, rooted in the resistance against Western and Eurocentric colonial ideologies, transcends time and space, bringing together diverse communities through the unifying force of music. We delve into the influence of Spanish and American imperialism on Filipino cultural production, the concept of 'disobedient listening' as a form of resistance, the significance of port cities as hubs for musical exchange, and the intersections of African American and Asian American musics. Notable figures such as the Godino Twins, Sugar Pie DeSanto, and H.E.R. exemplify the richness and resilience of this shared history, amplifying the voices of their communities and challenging dominant narratives. By recognizing the transformative impact of Afro-Filipino collaborations and the enduring legacy of cultural resistance, we celebrate the diverse concord of voices and contributions within the realm of American music, fostering a more inclusive and harmonious world united by the universal language of music.

#### **1.4.4 Chapter 3: Conjoined Musicians: The Godino Twins and the Intersection of Disability, Visual Culture, and Identity**

This chapter is a foray of the experiences of the Godino twins, conjoined Filipino musicians, as they navigate the world of performance within the context of disability and visual culture. It explores the historical significance of freak shows, revealing their role in shaping Western ideologies of normality and deformity and perpetuating ableist beliefs. The twins' constant labeling as freaks and their othering in marketing and reception highlight the enduring fascination with the freak show and its implications for race, disability, and performance. Drawing from Disability Studies scholarship, the chapter examines the concept of the Godinos' bodymind, challenging the separation of body and mind and asserting their Filipino identity. It also explores the intersection of disability and race, critiquing the Western focus on finding a cure and emphasizing the value of

diverse experiences. Through their story, the chapter celebrates the radiant presence of individuals with disabilities in the world of art and calls for a critical reevaluation of ableist and racist ideologies. The Godino twins disrupt prevailing narratives and demand recognition of the diverse talents and contributions that individuals of all abilities bring to the forefront.

#### **1.4.5 Conclusion**

In this dissertation, the forgotten history of the Godino twins, conjoined Filipino musicians, is explored through the lens of critical fabulation and Hip Hop, weaving together their story with the broader narrative of Filipino American experiences. The project navigates through the intricate dynamics of racialization and cultural production, deconstructs the racial hierarchy, and highlights the profound impact of Filipino and Black American musical exchanges, all set against the backdrop of colonialism, ableism, and societal biases. The accompanying Hip Hop mixtape, *Harmonic Resurgence*, serves as a soundscape that revives the Godino twins' music, merging the past with the present and giving voice to the silenced narratives within Asian American Studies, Disability Studies, and Music History. This exploration fosters an understanding of Filipino heritage and cultural contributions, challenges the dominant discourses, and celebrates the resilience and artistic prowess of the Filipino community. The Godino twins' journey, intertwined with the creation of *Harmonic Resurgence*, disrupts prevailing narratives, demands recognition of diverse talents and contributions, and underscores the transformative potential of critical fabulation and music in reimagining the broader framework of American music history.

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## CHAPTER 2. NAVIGATING RACIALIZATION AND CULTURAL PRODUCTION: THE EXPERIENCES OF ASIAN AMERICANS, FILIPINOS, AND THE GODINO TWINS

### 2.1 A Mother's Love: A critical fabulation

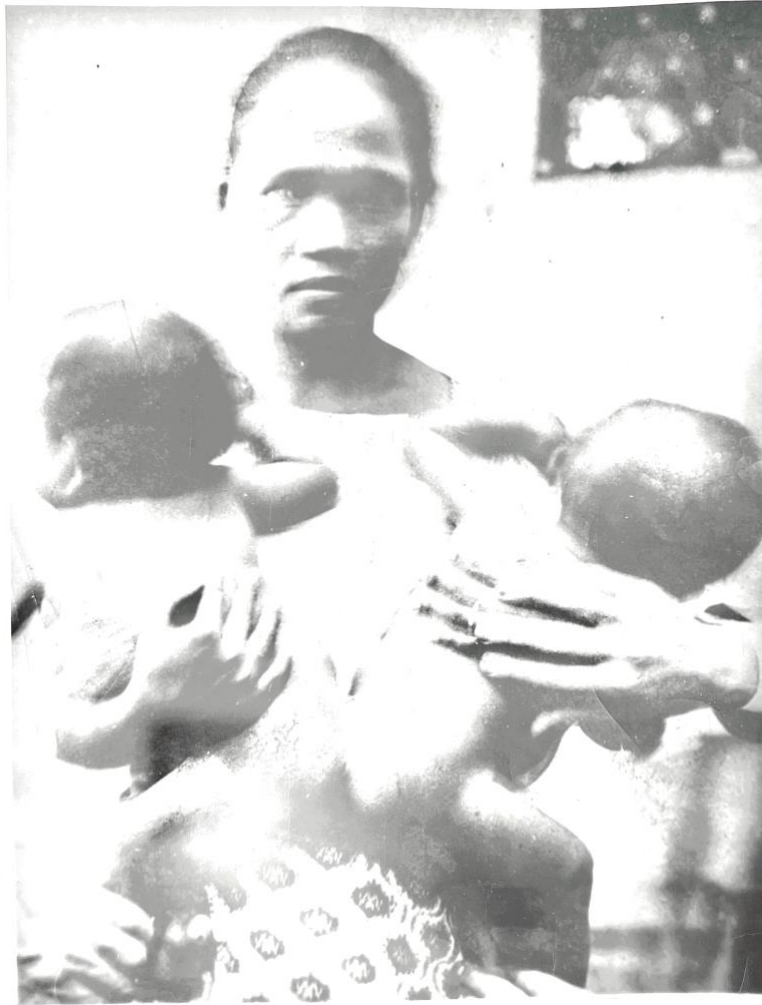


Figure 1: The inaugural photograph capturing the Godino Twins, held by their mother in Samar, Philippines. Lucio (left) and Simplicio (right), born in 1908, grace this momentous image. Acquired by Melvin Earl Villaver Jr., private collection through purchase from Historic Images Outlet.

I stood there, my heart pounding with awe, love, and uncertainty. Time seemed suspended as I cradled my newborn twins, their conjoined bodies fused at the lower back. The weight of their

presence filled me with wonder and fear, knowing their intertwined existence would shape their lives and mine.

Samar, our island home in the Philippines, which had recently come under the dominion of the United States of America, enveloped us in its vibrant beauty. The colorful flora and the symphony of nature served as a backdrop to this sacred moment. The sun's rays lovingly caressed their delicate skin, casting a radiant glow upon their interconnected bodies, resembling a mesmerizing work of art.

Looking down at their precious faces, innocent eyes gazing at me, I felt an indescribable surge of love. They were my miracles, testament to creation's marvels and enigmatic forces. God does not make mistakes. Their connection, the physical bond bringing them into the world, amazed me in its deliberate intention. But within my maternal heart, uncertainty brewed. It was the knowledge of limited opportunities beyond our island, whispers of a distant land where dreams bloomed and potential thrived.

The imagining of their futures weighed on me heavily, clouding my mind like a dense fog. Should I, their mother, choose to separate them or even from them? These thoughts tore at my soul, filling my eyes with tears.

Across the vast ocean, a land of boundless possibilities beckoned. The United States of America, portrayed as a realm of freedom, opportunity, and unexplored frontiers, called out to them. It carried with it the perceived promise of a better life, liberated from the constraints imposed by our homeland.

Since their birth, Western educated doctors attempted to convince me to separate them. Yet, the idea of surgically severing their unbreakable bond tore at my very core. How could a mother willingly subject her children to such an ordeal? The choice was formidable, too much to

bear alone. They were my flesh and blood, intertwined in body and spirit. To separate them would tear a piece of my soul away. And furthermore, the world that insisted on tearing them from me would have to pry them from my arms.

Being a Filipino woman living under the colonial rule of the United States of America in 1908, I couldn't help but ponder the intricate implications of race for my beloved twins. In this photograph, their unmistakable Filipino identities were etched into their features, ingrained in their very essence. In a world shaped by power dynamics and racial hierarchies, I found myself unable to evade the persistent question of how their identities as colonial subjects would shape their narrative.

The United States, our colonial rulers, held the reins of power and imposed their cultural norms upon us. The dominant American society had its own preconceived notions about people of different races, including Filipinos like us. Would the world see my children through a lens colored by stereotypes and prejudices? Would their journey be influenced by the racialized gaze that often diminished the worth and potential of non-white individuals?

In the depths of my heart, I yearned for my twins to be seen as more than just the exotic "other," as more than mere curiosities. I dreamed of a world that would recognize their talents, their resilience, and their inherent worth, regardless of the color of their skin or the origins of their heritage. But the realities of the world we lived in forced me to confront the harsh truth that their Filipino identities might pose challenges on their path to success.

Would they be denied opportunities? Would doors be closed to them simply because they hailed from a colonized land? Would they have to fight twice as hard to be recognized for their talents? These questions weighed heavily on my mind, filling me with a mixture of anxiety and



determination. I knew that the road ahead would be strewn with obstacles, but I refused to let those obstacles define my children's destinies.

In the midst of my speculation, however, a flicker of hope emerged. While they were in my womb and as newborn infants, I sang to them. The power of music, I imagined and believed, had the potential to transcend the limitations imposed by race and challenge the preconceived notions of the world around them. Through the universal language of music, I imagined possibilities where they could touch the hearts of others, creating connections that spanned racial boundaries.

I clung to the belief that their Filipino identities, far from being a hindrance, would become a source of strength and authenticity. They carried within them the richness of our shared heritage, the stories of our ancestors, and the resilient spirit of our people. And perhaps, just perhaps, their very existence would challenge the narrow perceptions of the world, forcing it to confront the complexities of race and identity.

As I gazed at the photographer taking our pictures, I couldn't help but hope that the twins' Filipino identities would shape their narrative in a way that defied expectations. I dreamed of a future where they would be celebrated not in spite of their heritage but because of it. I longed for a world that recognized the beauty and contributions of diverse cultures, a world where my children could proudly embrace their Filipino roots and thrive.

In that frozen moment captured by the lens of time, I held onto the belief that their Filipino identities would be a catalyst for change, an opportunity to challenge the status quo, and a means to redefine their own narrative. And as a mother, I vowed to nurture their sense of self, instilling in them a deep pride in their heritage, and equipping them with the strength to navigate the complexities of race with resilience and grace.

Little did I know, once away from me, their path would be marred by unimaginable hardships. Fate's cruel twists led them to be traded and exhibited in dehumanizing attractions.

Little did I know, their journey would ultimately lead them to become successful jazz musicians in America. Their art bridging cultures and touching many souls. The hardships and separation would weave into resilience and triumph.

Little did I know, their journey would take yet another unforeseen turn. As time went on, my beloved twins fell ill, and according to American doctors and the opinions of Western medicine, surgical separation became the only option.

My heart ached as I imagined the horrors they faced, their Filipino identities reduced to curiosities, their pride trampled upon. Their essence, shared heritage, and connection to our homeland tarnished and mocked. In despair, guilt consumed me. If I knew their perils, I would have fought even harder to keep them close, shielding them from exploitation. The truth is, their father and I fought as hard as we possibly could for them.

It's almost as if my feelings for them were also conjoined. Because in addition to heartache and guilt, I also felt so happy for them. From a distance, I watched with tears of joy as they graced stages, captivating audiences with their extraordinary talent. Their music transcended borders and boundaries, weaving a harmonious symphony that echoed far beyond the shores of our homeland. They became stars, not only in the eyes of the world but also in my heart.

The pride that swelled within me was immeasurable. I knew, deep within my soul, that from the moment they were born unto me that they were destined for greatness. Despite the hardships they had endured, they had emerged as beacons of hope and inspiration, proving that one's past does not define their future.

As I contemplate the captured moment in this photograph, I am overwhelmed by a bittersweet blend of innocence and wonder that enveloped us all. Little did we know that beneath the surface, a sinister tale unfolded—the Godino twins, stolen as children by cunning circus promoters, embarked on a journey marked by unimaginable hardships. Our hearts were filled with hope for their better lives, for the chance to witness their growth and happiness. However, the dark turns their path would take were unforeseen. In our arduous struggle to reclaim them, the American court system, tragically, dealt us a devastating blow. Despite my husband's tenacious fight, custody slipped through our fingers, falling into the hands of Yangco, forever etching the pain of loss upon our souls.

I longed to rewrite their story, to spare them agony. But time's choices become the threads weaving our lives.

Now, as I deeply reflect from the ancestral realm while enjoying our photograph with you, a profound sense of loss still engulfs me. I yearn to hold them close, to shield them from the horrors that await. Their journey, fraught with trials, will forge them into remarkable individuals. Yet, it bears the burden of scars inflicted upon them by a world that views them as mere objects. In this narrative of love, sacrifice, and the persistent spirit of immigrant determination, we confront the injustices and reclaim our identities. Their victories and tribulations dismantle the structures that commodify lives, never allowing their scars to be forgotten.

In this monochromatic photograph, my expression spoke volumes. Grayscale mirrored the contrast between desires and sacrifices. It froze the turmoil within me. This frozen moment encapsulates our converged lives. It holds struggles of a Filipino mother, torn between love's depths and demanded sacrifices. The sepia hues carry echoes of past generations, hopes and dreams of transnational mothers wrestling with life-altering choices.

Through this tale, fueled by love, resilience, and sacrifice, we weave threads of Filipino heritage, racialization, and music's transformative power. It testifies to those who chart uncharted paths, carving destinies amidst life's challenges. Together, we embark on the profound journey of Lucio and Simplicio Godino. May their story be celebrated for generations to come.

Mark my words: the Godino twins will rise, echoing their voices, reclaiming their heritage, and rewriting their narrative. Though pain and horrors haunt me, their spirit cannot be extinguished. They carry the resilience of their Filipino roots, ancestors' melodies, and my (a mother's) love.

## 2.2 Child's Play: A critical fabulation



Figure 2. Childhood Innocence: Simplicio (driver) and Lucio, the Godino Twins, enjoy a playful moment together. Photo sourced from 'The Unusual Life and Times Of The Godino Twins' by Myles A. Garcia.

Wow brother! Look at us, frozen in time like an ancient relic, we see ourselves as we once were—innocent, youthful, and bound together by our unique unbreakable bond. Dressed in

tailored suits, our tiny frames adorned with striped ties, we sit astride a quad cycle. It is our four-wheeled bicycle, but it is so much more than that. It is a vessel of release, a symbol of the new life we had been granted.

The brick building behind us stands tall and sturdy, our childhood home provided by our adoptive father, Teodoro Yangco. The courts had ruled in his favor, granting him custody over us, and he whisked us away from the harsh world of circus freak shows to a land far from our birthplace—the grand city of Washington, D.C. Yangco, a Filipino politician and businessman, served the United States government as the Resident Commissioner of the Philippines. It was in this unfamiliar land that our second chance at life would unfold with privilege and esteem.

How did we even get to Yangco? The memories of our birth mother and father are hazy, faded fragments of a time long gone. We were mere infants when we were torn away from them, plucked from the warmth of our home in Samar by a white man who saw nothing more than an opportunity for profit. The details are shrouded in darkness, but the truth remains: we were victims of a twisted form of trafficking, a commodity in the hands of exploitation.

Arriving in the United States, our innocent eyes were met with a harsh reality. We became pawns in a spectacle that stripped us of our humanity. The Coney Island Freak Show, a grotesque display of human oddities, became our stage. For years, we were paraded before the curious eyes of spectators, reduced to mere curiosities to be gawked at and jeered.

In the depths of our confinement, when hope seemed all but lost, Teodoro Yangco emerged like a guiding light in the darkness. He saw beyond the surface, beyond the labels imposed upon us, and recognized the worth of our souls. Yangco, a man of Filipino heritage himself, felt the tug of compassion and kinship. He saw the humanity in us. With dogged determination, he set out to change our lives. Yangco aimed to adopt us as his own. Our biological father, fighting against the

injustices that had befallen us, asked for custody to bring us back to the Philippines, to our rightful home. But Yangco, armed with his position, power, and influence, maneuvered skillfully through the intricate web of bureaucracy to ensure our stay in the United States.

Say what you want about him, he provided us with a home, a haven where the scars of our past could slowly fade. That brick building captured in the photograph, a tangible symbol of the refuge he had built for us, became a sanctuary where childhood laughter and innocence resurfaced. It was within those walls that we discovered a sense of belonging, protected by the sheltering embrace of a man who became our adopted father. Despite the legal battles and the hardships endured, Yangco's commitment to our well-being ensured that we remained in the United States, a land that had become our newfound home. His actions spoke volumes of his belief in our potential, in our ability to transcend the labels forced upon us by society.

Though the path he chose might have been controversial, we cannot deny the impact his presence had on our lives. Through his love, guidance, and support, we were given an opportunity to reclaim our identities, to redefine ourselves beyond the narrow confines of the freak show stage. Teodoro Yangco fed us, educated us, trained us in sports and music, and set us on a path toward musical stardom. He saw our worth, our potential, and fought tooth and nail to ensure that we were not condemned to a life in the freak show. For that, we will forever be grateful.

In the end, we emerged as survivors, creators, and advocates for our own destiny. Our journey was shaped by the hardships we faced, the discrimination we endured, and the love that ultimately set us free. We became the living embodiment of a people determined to forge their own path, leaving an indelible mark on Filipino American history.

Oh, how we relished in those precious moments captured in this photograph. A far cry from the dangers and foul smells of the circus tents! The sun kissed our faces, our smiles radiating with

the purest joy. We rode together, side by side, on that modified bicycle, its four wheels carrying us towards unexplored territories. In that moment, we were free from the prying eyes, the jeers, and the derogatory labels that had plagued us in our past lives in the circus.

In those years spent as exhibits in the Coney Island Freak Show and other circus freak events, we had become accustomed to being seen through the distorting lens of exhibition. We were marketed as "creatures," "monkeys," and even "the missing link." It pierced our hearts, eroding our self-esteem, leaving scars that time could not erase. But in the depths of that dehumanizing experience, we discovered a resilience, a fire that burned within our souls.

We realized that our shared identity as Filipino, something that was often overshadowed and ignored, held immense power. We were not just "freaks"; we were proud bearers of our heritage. Our Filipino roots became a shield against the onslaught of dehumanization, a rallying cry that echoed through the corridors of our young hearts. We embraced our ethnicity, refusing to be reduced to mere oddities. Even our connection to Yangco is rooted in our Filipinoness. No, we were not freaks. We were Filipino, and that was something to be celebrated.

But being Filipino in a predominantly white America during the early 20th century presented a myriad of challenges and complexities. As colonial subjects of the United States, our very existence was situated at the intersection of imperialism and racial discrimination. In the eyes of many, we were exotic curiosities, strange beings from a distant land, our features and customs marking us as inherently different.

In the face of the puzzled looks and unfamiliarity that greeted us wherever we went, we held steadfast to our roots. Our language, rich with the cadence of Tagalog and the melodic harmonies of our native songs, echoed through our conversations. Our customs, steeped in

centuries of tradition and infused with the vibrant spirit of the Philippines, guided our actions. We refused to let our heritage be erased or diminished by the dominant culture.

Yet, this refusal came at a price. The subtle hostility we encountered served as a constant reminder that we were not fully accepted. We were subjected to the painful sting of racial discrimination, treated as perpetual foreigners in the land that had become our home. Our dreams were often overshadowed by the physical limitations imposed upon us, simply because of our ethnicity and physical form.

But we were not deterred. With unyielding determination, we forged our own path. We carved out spaces where our voices could be heard, where our talents could shine despite the barriers that wanted to confine us. We defied the expectations imposed upon us and shattered the narrow confines of the roles society had assigned. We were not mere spectacles to be gawked at; we were creators, artists, and musicians with stories to tell.

Through our music, we became empowered. Jazz became our language of resistance, a medium through which we could express the depths of our experiences, our joys, and our sorrows. In the rhythms and melodies, we wove together the threads of our dual identities—Filipino and American—celebrating the beauty of both cultures and defying the limitations imposed by a world that confined us to the margins.

It was through our unswerving determination and the unconquerable spirit of countless other Filipinos in America that we began to leave an indelible mark on this land. We defied stereotypes, shattered misconceptions, and demanded recognition of our contributions. Though the road was arduous and the obstacles immense, we pressed forward, fueled by the belief that our stories mattered and that our voices deserved to be heard.



As we look back upon those formative years, we recognize the importance of our struggle and the significance of our collective journey. We were pioneers, blazing trails for future generations, and leaving an indelible mark on the evolving narrative of Filipino Americans in the United States.

In this photograph, our innocent smiles mask the complexities of our young hearts. We ride that quad cycle, our shared laughter echoing through the yard, just having fun. We recognize the pain of our past and the challenges we faced as young boys navigating a world that saw us as anomalies. Yet, we also acknowledge the strength and resilience that emerged from those adversities. We were more than the sum of our circumstances. We were Lucio and Simplicio, two young Filipino boys, united by blood and fate, whose spirits soared higher than the limitations imposed upon us.

### **2.3 Chapter Overview**

This chapter on the Godino twins speaks directly to their story by analyzing the racialization of Asian Americans, particularly Filipinos, and its connections to cultural production, including music. The chapter explores the ways in which Asian Americans, including the Godino twins, are racially positioned in relation to and through interactions with Black and white Americans. It expands upon the concepts of relative valorization and civic ostracism, highlighting how Asian Americans are both valorized and ostracized within the racial hierarchy. This analysis provides a framework for understanding the Godino twins' experiences as they navigate their racial identity and artistic expression. Furthermore, the chapter examines the specific racialization of Filipinos, taking into account their historical experiences of colonization, labor exploitation, and cultural resistance.

One key event that demonstrates the racialization and imperialist history of Filipinos is the Philippine Exposition at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair. This event showcased Filipinos as literal human attractions, portraying them as tribal savages and exotic beings in the eyes of working-class white Americans. The exhibition solidified the tribal archetypes associated with Filipinos and contributed to their degrading representation in the American imagination. Lucy Mae San Pablo Burns' book, *Puro Arte: Filipinos on the Stages of Empire*, examines this exhibition and its role in shaping the larger imaginary of U.S. empire. The savage Filipino body was commodified and consumed for profit, perpetuating racist and orientalist stereotypes.

Furthermore, the chapter explores the cultural significance of Filipino music and its connections to American imperial power. The Philippine Constabulary band, renowned for its musicianship and showmanship, gained popularity in the early 20th century. However, even their musical expression faced control and racial restrictions, as evidenced by General Rafael Crane's instructions that the band must not play jazz. The reference to Paul Whiteman, a white American bandleader known for assimilating jazz music, highlights the white supremacist control over Filipinos' cultural expression. The band's resistance to conforming to orchestral sheet music suggests a potential rebellion against the confines of racial boundaries.

The chapter also examines the historical context of Filipino migration to the U.S., particularly to central California farm fields, and the racist backlash they faced. The Watsonville Anti-Filipino Riot of 1930, in which a Filipino laborer named Fermin Tobera was murdered, exemplifies the white working-class resentment towards Filipino progress in American society. Anti-Filipino legislation and organizations like the Asiatic Exclusion League aimed to exclude Filipinos and protect white workers. These instances of violence and discrimination demonstrate the racial hierarchies and differential racialization experienced by Filipinos in the U.S.

In conclusion, this second chapter of my dissertation project focuses on the racialization and experiences of Asian Americans, particularly Filipinos, as they navigate cultural production and negotiate their racial identity. Drawing on theories of racial triangulation, the analysis of the Godino twins' story challenges the conventional Black-white binary and explores the positioning of different racial groups in relation to one another. This chapter examines the theoretical connections between Filipino racialization, the historical experiences of colonization and labor exploitation, and how these factors shape the artistic expression of the Godino twins. By understanding the complexities of Filipino racialization and its intersections with other racial and ethnic groups, we can deconstruct institutional white supremacy and work towards fostering collective Third World solidarity. Through this lens, we can appropriately honor the life and music of the Godino twins, recognizing the significance of their story within the broader context of racial dynamics and cultural production.

## **2.4 The Racialization of Asian Americans**

Asian Americans have frequently been positioned in relation to other Third World minorities as a means to divert attention from a comprehensive examination of systemic racism. Recent times have witnessed conflicts between African Americans and Asian Americans, such as the scrutiny of apparent anti-Blackness within Asian American communities. Notably, the case of Tou Thao, a former Minneapolis police officer of Hmong descent who stood with his back turned during George Floyd's murder by Derek Chauvin, exemplifies this conflict (Ramirez). However, solidarity between Black and Asian communities has also been demonstrated, particularly in joint protests against anti-Asian hate crimes and the Black Lives Matter movement during the COVID-19 pandemic (Moon). The contemporary American landscape is charged with racial tensions, representing the latest iteration in the nation's enduring struggle with race.

In her work on the *Racial Triangulation of Asian Americans*, Claire Jean Kim argues that Asian Americans have been racialized in relation to and through interactions with Black and white Americans. Kim proposes a framework of "racial positions" to move beyond a black and white binary in racial categorization. According to Kim, Asian Americans have been racially triangulated against both Blacks and whites within this framework for over a century (Kim 107). This intervention allows for education, awareness, and accountability among Asian Americans in dismantling the prevailing white supremacy in society.

The racial triangulation of Asian Americans occurs through two processes: relative valorization and civic ostracism (Kim 115). Relative valorization takes place when a dominant group, such as white Americans, assigns value to and constructs the identity of one subordinate group in relation to another. In this context, Kim explores the relationships between whites, Asians, and Black people in America. Asians are positioned against Black people, as Asians are seen as assimilating to mainstream white American culture while Black people continue to face struggles in achieving similar success. The narrative of a meritocratic society comes into play, with white Americans valorizing Asian Americans while attributing fault to Black Americans for their perceived failures. Despite the disproven nature of this narrative, it has contributed to tensions and conflicts between Black and Asian communities.

Asian Americans have long been valorized through the model minority myth, perpetuating contentious relationships between Asian Americans (as the "good" minority) and Black Americans (among other ethnic minorities) who are deemed "deficient" (Kasinitz). Racial triangulation theory posits that Asian Americans occupy distinct group positions in relation to Black and white people across various dimensions, resulting in their unique racialized experiences. Both the Model Minority Myth and Racial Triangulation Theory suggest that mainstream Western and American

media favor Asians over Black people due to assumptions that Asians value education and meritocracy, while Black people supposedly do not. This perception of Asian Americans as the "model" minority communicates a false hierarchy, reinforcing the notion that Asians are superior (Kasinitz). Furthermore, racial triangulation theory contends that unlike Black Americans, Asian Americans are perceived as perpetual foreigners incapable of fully assimilating into mainstream culture, leading to their civic ostracism.

Conversely, civic ostracism refers to the construction of Asian Americans by the dominant group as perpetual foreigners, often associated with disease and incapable of assimilating to the status of "white" on racial and cultural grounds. The dominant group strategically fuels tensions between different minority groups to serve their own interests. The ongoing culture of contention between the Asian American experience and the experiences of Black people and other Third World minorities prevents the dominant group from accepting accountability and responsibility for the historical impact of white supremacy on people of color. Kim recognizes the high stakes involved in this matter and calls for Asian Americans to understand their racial position to avoid unwittingly upholding white supremacy through ignorance and silence on matters of racial triangulation. (Kim 121).

The events of the American political uprisings in 2020 and 2021 have served as a stark reminder that race continues to play a significant role in our society. Within dominant American society, there are prevalent attitudes that foster fear or contempt towards Black people, and to a lesser extent, Asian people (Viola 513). However, it is important to recognize that the fundamental divide does not lie between whites and non-whites, but rather between Black people and non-Black people. This divide is a manifestation of the institutionalization of white supremacy through our social categorizations. Terms such as "person of color," "minority," and "Third World people"

assign a lower value according to Western and American standards. These terms not only obscure the pervasive nature of anti-Blackness but also create divisions among non-white ethnic minorities, hindering the potential for collective Third World solidarity and identity. The racial order in the West is structured by anti-Blackness and white supremacy, driven by the pursuit of whiteness and the desire to never be Black. Asian Americans experience the privilege of not being Black, but also the subordination of not being white. Although legislative attempts to exclude Asian bodies, such as the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, have been harmful, it is important to acknowledge that these structures were not as deeply ingrained or pervasive as the long-standing history of anti-Black racism (At America's Gates 52). In essence, while anti-Black and anti-Asian racism share similarities, they are distinct in their manifestations. Scholar Alana Block invites us to consider the "illegibility" of reading Filipino relationalities in relation to Blackness, as the Filipino body is rendered incoherent through the contradictions of America as both a democratic nation-state and an imperial power (Block 249).

According to Daryl Maeda, Asian Americans have been racialized in three distinct ways: as subjects of capitalism and imperialism, within legislative frameworks, and through social discrimination (Maeda 20). These various forms of racialization speak to the malleability of the Asian identity and serve as evidence that race is a socially constructed concept. Asian Americans have consistently been portrayed both as the model minority and as disease-ridden foreigners incapable of assimilation, simultaneously posing a threat to civil and economic order (Saxton 11). The fact that race can be interpreted onto the Asian body in both valorizing and ostracizing ways demonstrates the significance of Kim's scholarship on racial triangulation, which challenges static notions of race widely perceived in Western society. Kim argues that Asian Americans are simultaneously admired and loathed by American society, and the nature of their racialization

varies depending on the circumstances. How can Asian Americans embody both the model minority and the unassailable alien at the same time? Readings of race onto the Asian body change as the circumstances change.

In conclusion, this chapter examines into the intricate dynamics of race in American society, shedding light on the complex interplay of power dynamics, social categorizations, and historical legacies. Through the exploration of Asian American racialization and the compelling story of the Godino twins, the project reveals the enduring impact of white supremacy and the urgent need for solidarity among marginalized communities. By engaging with scholarship on racial triangulation, including the works of Claire Jean Kim, Alana Block, and Daryl Maeda, a deeper understanding of the dynamics behind race and power is fostered. The project seeks to challenge and dismantle the structures that perpetuate divisions regarding Asian identity in America, hindering collective liberation and justice for all people. By uncovering and amplifying the stories of the Godino twins, who have been marginalized within dominant narratives in history, the project contributes to transformative change, creating a society that embraces collective solidarity, dismantles oppressive systems, and recognizes the intrinsic worth and dignity of all individuals.

## **2.5 Theorizing Filipino Racialization**

Drawing on Claire Jean Kim's theory of racial triangulation, the experiences of Filipinos in American history reveal a complex dynamic of both valorization and ostracization. Filipinos have been valorized for their assimilation to American culture in the latter part of the twentieth century (Labador 2). However, they have also endured historical ostracization, often being labeled as America's "little brown brother" and depicted as savage by American and Western society (Lasco 379). Throughout their history, Filipinos have faced discrimination and racial violence, from Spanish colonization to their incorporation into the United States following the Spanish-

American War in 1898. This period of American imperial expansion, referred to as the "Third Asiatic Invasion" by Rick Baldoz, witnessed a significant influx of Filipino migration to the United States (Baldoz 22). As Filipinos fall under the umbrella of Asian American racial categorization, their experiences contribute to the evolving discourse on Kim's theories of racial triangulation.

Martin Manalansan's book, *Global Divas*, offers an intriguing perspective on Filipino racialization through an ethnographic examination of the lives of Filipino gay men in New York City. One notable aspect explored in Chapter 5 of Manalansan's work is the performance troupe named Kambal sa Lusog, which staged cross-dressing reinterpretations of Catholic rituals, specifically the Santacruzán ritual. This public cultural event challenges questions of colonial and postcolonial power, highlighting the significance of immigration, queer diaspora, and the legacies of colonization. Filipino gay men engage in performative acts to disrupt their position as colonized subjects of Spain and America, navigating the tensions between assimilation and resistance (Manalansan 15).

Furthermore, Erika Lee's book, *The Making of Asian America*, examines the racialization of Filipinos and other Asian Americans as coolie laborers on plantations in the Americas during the mid-nineteenth century. As chattel slavery was abolished, white plantation owners sought cheap labor to replace African Americans, leading to the recruitment of Asian laborers, including Filipinos, from countries such as China and India. Lee argues that Asian coolies and African slaves occupied a similar social tier, reinforcing the intersection of race and class in the United States (The Making of Asian America 52). The experiences of Filipino laborers on plantations were characterized by subordination, exploitation, and Eurocentric dehumanization (Lassiter et al.). Lee emphasizes that Chinese coolies were essentially enslaved, despite the absence of the formal designation (The Making of Asian America 53).



The plantation, where African and Asian descended people shared their subordination within Western American society, became a site of resistance against the Spanish imperial order. Scholars such as Erika Lee, Vijay Prashad, and Lisa Yun have extensively written about the alliances and radical politics forged between Chinese freedom fighters and African descended plantation workers during the Spanish occupation of Cuba in the 1800s (Ho 43). Lisa Yun's book, "The Coolie Speaks: Chinese Indentured Laborers and African Slaves in Cuba," offers a comprehensive study that examines the written and verbal testimonies of thousands of coolie laborers, shedding light on their experiences (Yun 17).

Asians in the Americas have long been relegated to second-class citizenship, a reality evidenced by their historical presence as laborers in the fields under white plantation owners. Filipinos, in particular, have a longstanding history of working in America's fields, dating back to the Manila Galleon era when Spain occupied the Philippines and initiated the trafficking of Filipinos to the Western world. Erika Lee's research traces Filipino migration to and from the Americas as early as the 1500s, highlighting Manila's influential role in facilitating the transport of Asians to the Americas for labor (The Making of Asian America 56). The Philippines played a pivotal role as a hub through which ships carrying indentured servants flowed, leading to the widespread proliferation of coolie labor and underscoring the archipelago's impact on early globalization efforts.

Michael Menor Salgarolo's article, "Journeys to St. Malo: A History of Filipino Louisiana," articulates the connections between Manila and New Orleans, shedding light on St. Malo, a Filipino fishing village located just outside New Orleans. It was here that Filipino sailors, fleeing oppressive contracts and abuse on Spanish ships, formed one of the first Filipino American settlements in the United States. Salgarolo emphasizes that although the nineteenth-century

Filipino seamen did not suffer the same brutalization as African slaves, both groups belonged to the underclass working sector, subject to living and working conditions founded on a white supremacist racial order (Salgarolo 91). This historical documentation of St. Malo's story is particularly influential to this study as it highlights the parallel experiences of Filipino laborers in America alongside the African slave trade. It emphasizes the shared struggles and injustices endured by both groups, culminating in a cross-cultural exchange manifested through music.

The political history of Filipino laborers on plantations extends into the twentieth century, exemplified by the Delano Grape Strike of 1965. While mainstream history often overlooks the role of Filipinos in the United Farm Workers' Movement, Melissa Aroy's documentary film, *Delano Manongs: Forgotten Heroes of the United Farm Workers Movement*, provides a comprehensive account of the grape strike, shedding light on the erasure of Filipino contributions to this influential labor protest. During the strike, Filipino farm laborers demonstrated immense courage in fighting for a living wage (Aroy, Delano Manongs). Larry Itliong, the original leader of the United Farm Workers, advocated for Filipino workers not to cross the picket lines until their demands were met. It was during the strike that an alliance between Larry Itliong and Cesar Chavez formed, uniting Filipino and Mexican workers against their common oppressors ("Cesar Chavez Movie Sparks Memories of Fil-Am Labor Leaders"). The historical marginalization of Filipinos as second-class citizens is evident through their identification as field laborers within America's working class (Fujita-Rony).

Violence, labor, and cultural production, particularly music, serve as significant markers of political connections between Filipinos and African Americans (Markkula). A comparative analysis of racial attitudes towards Filipinos and African Americans by white Americans undeniably reveals disparate histories. However, a comparative study of African American and

Asian American history opens up potential discourses of solidarity between these two groups. Both groups share histories as colonial subjects of the United States, as well as broader Europe and the West, marked by similar experiences of violence and perseverance. Drawing on Vijay Prashad's theories of Afro-Asian political connections presented in his seminal text, *Everybody Was Kung Fu Fighting: Afro-Asian Connections and the Myth of Cultural Purity*, the shared struggle between African Americans and Asian Americans, specifically Filipinos, exemplifies what Prashad terms "polycultural solidarity" (Prashad 9). Polyculturalism challenges the static view of disparate histories propagated by the West and instead focuses on the ways in which diverse groups of people have mutually influenced each other and united in solidarity over time.

Prashad's notion of polyculturalism, akin to Kim's theory of racial triangulation, prompts us to move beyond the Black-white binary. However, if we were to consider a Black-white paradigm, where would Filipinos fit in America's racial categorization hierarchy, as they are neither Black nor white? Traditionally, Filipinos have been deemed "savage" by the American imperial project due to their dark skin, indigenous roots, and the American conquest for their land and resources. This level of othering establishes a connection between indigeneity and Blackness (Gandhi 6). It is important to note that I am cautious not to conflate Filipino identity with Black American identity. However, I argue that violence, labor, and performance serve as sites where Filipino identity and Black American identity intersect. Delgado and Stefancic raise thought-provoking questions in *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*, asking us to think about race in America in the following ways:

“Does American racial thought contain an implicit Black-white binary, an unstated dichotomy in which society comes divided into two groups, whites and Blacks, so that non-Black minority groups, such as Filipinos or Puerto Ricans, enter the equation only insofar as they are able to depict themselves and their problems by analogy to Blacks?” (Harris, Delgado and Stefancic, 14)

The complex and dynamic history of Filipinos in the United States demonstrates both their valorization and ostracization. Building upon Claire Jean Kim's theory of racial triangulation, I argue that examining the racial histories of Filipino Americans as a triangulation helps us challenge the Black-white binary. I specifically concentrate on the racialization and nuances of positionality experienced by the Godino twins and other Filipino Americans, delving into their stories, music, and lived experiences, within the broader framework of Kim's theory that encompasses Asian Americans as a whole. Through the study of Filipino racialization in America, we can understand that American society is not simply limited to a Black-white binary, urging us to think beyond that framework. Filipinos as Asian Americans are racially triangulated, and this understanding sheds light on how Filipino assimilation to American culture perpetuates the status quo of white dominance. In essence, a binary of Black and white alone fails to fully capture the full picture of race in America.

Laura Pulido's text, *Black, Brown, Yellow & Left: Radical Activism in Los Angeles* introduces the concepts of "racial hierarchies" and "differential racialization" to examine race and culture in metropolitan cities like Los Angeles. Racial hierarchies are defined as the existence of multiple racially subordinated populations occupying various social positions (Pulido 4). Pulido argues that differential racialization refers to the distinct ways in which different groups are racialized (Pulido 24). Both concepts highlight the specific arrangement of racial meanings attached to different racial and ethnic groups, impacting their class position, racial standing, and demarcation as distinct groups. Pulido's theories of racial hierarchies and differential racialization, similar to Kim's theory of racial triangulation, challenge the Black-white paradigm by acknowledging the histories and experiences of other non-Black ethnic groups and racial identities.

Racial hierarchies and differential racialization help us understand the positioning of racial and ethnic groups in relation to each other, rather than against each other.

Pulido draws on claims by Anthony Marx to argue that the subordination of nonwhites has facilitated the perpetuation of the Black-white paradigm (Pulido 25). The consolidation of wealthy and marginalized poor whites based solely on race in America has profoundly affected the process of Asian American racialization. The categorization of whiteness places all nonwhite ethnic minorities at the bottom of the social hierarchy. Pulido emphasizes that racial hierarchies are not static; they respond to geographic and historical factors. To illustrate this, Pulido examines the experiences of Asian Americans in California during the late 1800s and early 1900s, coinciding with the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and other statutes that barred Asian migration to America, revealing the disapproval towards Asian Americans (At America's Gates 123). Pulido asserts that Asian Americans were the most despised racial and ethnic group in the state, facing bans on immigration, lynching, massacres, economic exclusion, residential and marital segregation, and denial of citizenship (Pulido 47).

Pulido further argues that while Asian Americans faced racial violence in California, the national racial hierarchy was primarily organized along a black-white paradigm. The influence of national racial narratives is evident in the fact that many discriminatory tactics used against Asian Americans were originally employed against Black people in the years preceding Asian migration of the late 1800s and early 1900s (Pulido 26). From riots and public lynchings to murders, Filipinos have been subjected to racial violence due to their skin color and migrant status.

In her insightful article titled "Filipino Bodies, Lynching, and the Language of Empire," Nerissa S. Balce conducts a comprehensive analysis of Filipino racial violence and discrimination by examining a range of diverse sources. Through a comparative exploration of Carlos Bulosan's

memoir "America is in The Heart," the protofeminist works by Black women writers from the mid-nineteenth century, writings by W.E.B. DuBois, Rudyard Kipling's poem "The White Man's Burden," and editorial cartoons portraying native Filipinos as "savage black bodies" (Balce 47), Balce sheds light on the emergence of the concept of "Filipino" within popular discourses surrounding Filipino savagery, the rise of lynching in the Southern United States, and the advent of U.S. imperial policies in the Pacific.

Balce argues convincingly that the influence of U.S. empire led to the racialization of Filipinos as savage Black bodies, a narrative that persisted and continued to impact the lives of Filipino migrant workers well into the 1920s, 1930s, and beyond. It is my belief that these deeply ingrained tropes of savagery inherently shaped the marketing and portrayal of the Godino twins, both during their childhood and into adulthood, perpetuating the harmful and dehumanizing stereotypes associated with Filipino identity. In her insightful article titled "Filipino Bodies, Lynching, and the Language of Empire," Nerissa S. Balce conducts a comprehensive analysis of Filipino racial violence and discrimination by examining a range of diverse sources. Through a comparative exploration of Carlos Bulosan's memoir "America is in The Heart," the protofeminist works by Black women writers from the mid-nineteenth century, writings by W.E.B. DuBois, Rudyard Kipling's poem "The White Man's Burden," and editorial cartoons portraying native Filipinos as "savage black bodies" (Balce 47), Balce sheds light on the emergence of the concept of "Filipino" within popular discourses surrounding Filipino savagery, the rise of lynching in the Southern United States, and the advent of U.S. imperial policies in the Pacific.

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Balce's account begins with a retelling of the United States' involvement in the Philippines in 1898 when the archipelago was still a Spanish colony. It is important to note that the Philippines' forfeiture to the United States as a result of the Spanish-American war was not a smooth transition. Filipino revolutionaries resisted the signing of any American treaty and managed to occupy some suburbs of Manila, which was met with hostility by the new imperial power and led to the Philippine-American war (Balce 45). Although economic and imperialist motives drove the decision to occupy the Philippines, U.S. imperialists justified their support for colonization by perpetuating the idea of "Filipino degeneracy" or savagery, as cited by Balce from Kristin L. Hoganson's work. Racialized and gendered stereotypes of Filipinos, disseminated through popular media, portrayed them as "dark savages," "children," and "feminized" subjects, positioning them as less than and in need of the United States' intervention for enlightenment (Balce 47). These archetypes and narratives of Filipino savagery shaped the American public's understanding of Filipinoness in the early twentieth century (Espiritu 87).

One significant source analyzed by Balce is the editorial cartoons of Filipinos published in newspapers and magazines in the U.S. and Canada. For instance, the cartoon titled "The White Man's Burden," inspired by Rudyard Kipling's poem of the same name, depicts the colonization of the Philippines as the burden of the United States, the "more civilized nation." In the illustration, a white U.S. military soldier carries a dark-skinned person with thick lips, dressed in a grass skirt, towards a building labeled "SCHOOL HOUSE." This image reinforces the notion of American educational superiority and the subsequent institutional takeover of the Philippines.

These types of cartoons often depicted former colonial subjects of the Spanish Empire as what Balce describes as "Black bodies." An example is the cartoon titled "Our Awkward Squad," which portrays a "Puerto Rican," a "Cuban," and a "Filipino" as dark-skinned, thick-lipped, diminutive individuals (Balce 48). The depiction of the Filipino character wearing a grass skirt and hoop earrings, instead of military attire, further perpetuates the perception of Filipinos as people stuck in a primitive state.

Balce provides further examples of the portrayal of Filipinos as "native" and "savage." An article published in the Washington D.C. Star titled "Filipino Must Be Taught Obedience" describes Filipinos as "treacherous, arrogant, stupid and vindictive, impervious to gratitude, and incapable of recognizing obligations." The author of this article advocates for more violence and brutality in the war against Filipinos, emphasizing their perceived moral inferiority compared to Americans (Balce 49). Other depictions of Filipinos in cartoons present them as monkey-like, reinforcing the stereotypes of Black people as "savages" and "beastly" and depicting Filipinos as secretive, untrustworthy "orientals." Additionally, the colonial subject is often represented as an infantilized Black body, with childlike features, dark skin, exaggerated thick lips, and dressed in precolonial attire.

Balce draws connections between the depictions of Filipinos in early twentieth-century editorials and the struggles of African Americans against white supremacy and racism on the domestic mainland. She highlights the long-standing tradition of African American political discourse in critiquing racism and imperialism, citing Frederick Douglass' objection to the U.S. war against Mexico in 1846 and Black journalists' opposition to the Spanish-American War of 1898 as points of solidarity between Black intellectuals and colonial subjects worldwide (Balce 52). Balce argues that these critical voices in the Negro press suggested that for many Black



Americans, the Philippine-American war was seen as an effort to enforce Jim Crow laws on other dark-skinned people.

One significant connection between Filipinos and African Americans is the act of lynching, which Balce references twice in her piece. The first reference is Carlos Bulosan's personal account of three Filipino farmworkers being lynched as victims of anti-Filipino sentiment, racial violence, and discrimination. Bulosan's description of the event conveys the brutality and includes instances of physical and sexual assault, reflecting the historical experiences of Filipino farmworkers who were terrorized by white mobs viewing them as economic and sexual threats while dehumanizing them as "monkeys" (Bulosan 24; Santa Ana 78).

The second reference to lynching in Balce's analysis connects racial violence in the U.S. with imperialistic endeavors abroad. Balce argues that both lynching and war serve as processes of white hegemony aimed at establishing and maintaining racial and economic status quo at home and abroad (Balce 53). This perspective links lynching and empire as attempts to dominate darker races, highlighting the shared histories of racial violence and economic oppression experienced by colonized peoples in Africa, Asia, and the Americas, including Black Americans. Balce references the "third worldist perspective" that emerged in the writings of DuBois and was later taken up by Pan-Africanist intellectuals in the 1950s and emphasizes the racialization of Filipinos as "savage Black bodies" within print media, editorial cartoons, and the protests of Black soldiers during the Philippine-American war (Man 52).

The Godino twins endured the painful consequences of being labeled as infantile and savage, reflecting the very arguments Balce presents in her work. Due to their Filipino ethnicity and conjoined body, the twins did not conform to the standard of white able-bodiedness,

consequently being situated closer to Blackness or perceived as akin to Blackness. Within the framework of white America, they were deemed savages.

Their encounters vividly resonate with the racialized hierarchies and pervasive discrimination deeply embedded within American society. By acknowledging and delving into these intersecting themes, we gain a deeper understanding of the Godino twins' journeys, shedding light on the significance of unearthing and amplifying the narratives of individuals like them. The profound themes of white supremacist hegemony, violence, and empire explored by above provide significant insights into the lived experiences of the Godino twins, who embody the intricate intersections of their Filipino heritage and conjoined body.

## **2.6 On Filipino Productions and Exchanges in the Cultural Realm**

Performance has played a central role in shaping Filipino identity in America, serving as a significant marker of their racialization throughout history (Quirino, *Pinoy Jazz Traditions* 13). From their introduction to the American public at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair to the present-day musicians of Filipino descent who contribute to American popular music, exhibition and performance have consistently been integral to their cultural expression. While performance is just one aspect of the expansive cultural citizenship that Filipinos embody, it holds particular significance in understanding how they identify within American society, especially considering the historical context of performances related to empire.

In her article "Citizenship as cultural: Towards a theory of cultural citizenship," Jean Beaman presents a framework that builds upon existing theories of the social, political, and cultural dimensions of citizenship (Beaman 854). Focusing on marginalized communities within American society, Beaman's understanding of cultural citizenship considers not only legal status but also other social statuses such as race and gender. This framework highlights the complex dynamics

between notions of inclusion and belonging within society, challenging the mainstream idea that legal status alone determines one's citizenship. Boundaries around citizenship in America are regularly reinforced and rearranged, necessitating a more detailed perspective to comprehend how marginalized individuals navigate their lived experiences and identities. Beaman's framework transcends conventional understandings of citizenship solely as a legal status or specific rights, emphasizing the importance of considering race and gender in the ways people belong to a community.

Further expanding on the construction of citizenship, Evelyn Nakano Glenn argues that it goes beyond formal legal status and requires recognition by other members of the community (Glenn 3). Filipinos demonstrate their belonging to American society through their engagement with performance and the practice of music. Filipino jazz musician and poet Jose M. Peña eloquently captures this sense of cultural citizenship in his poem "JAZZ: A Portrait of the Negro Oppression in the US," describing jazz as "the spirit of an oppressed breed, kept in the blood by ethnic rhythms that seem to keep pace with the beat of the heart." Peña also portrays jazz as a symbol of a people who were extracted from the darker realities of the world by white forces that controlled their destiny (Quirino, *Pinoy Jazz Traditions* 13). The history of American colonization in the Philippines has had a lasting impact on how modern Filipinos find their sense of belonging, and the tradition of performance has long been intertwined with Filipino culture.

Through performances and the practice of music, Filipinos not only express their cultural identity but also assert their belonging within American society. These performances of cultural citizenship provide a means for Filipinos to navigate and negotiate their place in a complex racial landscape shaped by historical legacies. By examining the intersections of performance, cultural

citizenship, and the enduring effects of colonization, we gain a deeper understanding of the multifaceted nature of Filipino identity in America.

To establish their cultural citizenship, Asian Americans find belonging through the practice and performance of popular music. In her text *Soundtracks of Asian America*, Grace Wang explores how Asian Americans navigate the social and political factors that shape their sense of belonging (Wang, *Soundtracks of Asian America: Navigating Race through Musical Performance* 110). Wang's research focuses on Western classical music, U.S. popular music, and global Mandopop as key musical fields for Asian American identity formation. While her study primarily centers on upper-middle-class Chinese and Korean Americans, Filipinos also align with Wang's arguments regarding the struggles of Asian American identity and acceptance as cultural citizens, despite their long-standing presence in the United States. Wang argues that Asian American musicians have become influential arbiters of taste and aesthetic value within the expanding global music market (Wang, *Soundtracks of Asian America: Navigating Race through Musical Performance* 25-26). However, she highlights the continued lack of adequate representation for Asian Americans and their contributions to the history of popular music.

Asian American musical history has often been marginalized and overlooked, reflecting the broader history of Asian America itself—silenced, forgotten, and rendered invisible. Yet, music holds significance beyond its commercial aspects for Asian American musicians. It serves as a site for protest and liberatory practice. Oliver Wang's essay, "Between the notes: finding Asian America in popular music," explores the pivotal role of music in the Asian American Movement following World War II. As white Americans' attitudes toward Asian Americans aligned with the rise of the Black Power Movement and anti-Vietnam War sentiments, music became a form of resistance (Wang, "Between the notes: finding Asian America in popular music"). Wang

specifically highlights the band A Grain of Sand, led by Nobuko Miyamoto, Chris Ijima, and William "Charlie" Chin, who used folk music as a means of political engagement. Their music conveyed messages of pan-ethnic identity, cross-racial coalition, class-based analyses of racial oppression, and opposition to American imperialism in Southeast Asia. A Grain of Sand's folk songs provided a pathway for cultural citizenship and enabled Asian Americans to take pride in their culture and identity.

In *The Unity of Music and Dance in World Cultures*, David Akombo explores the history of global music and dance traditions. In his chapter on Asia, Akombo highlights the Philippines and emphasizes the enduring presence of music and dance in Filipino culture, shaping the national identity (Akombo 165). He discusses the Kundiman, Sinulog, and Tinikling dances as well as the Santacruzán Dance, highlighting their significance. Akombo argues that centuries of colonization, particularly by Spain and the United States, have influenced Filipino music cultures through processes of Westernization and empire. The Americanization of Filipino music resulted in a shift from traditional dialects and languages to the use of American English in mainstream Filipino music, permanently altering the creation and performance of music in the Philippines (Akombo 168).

The exploration of Asian American musical experiences, including the Filipino context, sheds light on the complex dynamics of cultural citizenship, the struggle for representation, and the transformative power of music as a means of cultural expression and resistance. Through their diverse musical practices, Asian Americans assert their presence, challenge stereotypes, and forge a sense of belonging within American society. Understanding the intersections of music, culture, and identity provides valuable insights into the multifaceted experiences of Asian Americans and their ongoing quest for cultural recognition.

The historical role of Filipino musicians in the global propagation of jazz further underscores the significance of performativity in Filipino identity formation, particularly in America. Michael Denning's work in *Noise Uprising* highlights the transformative power of late 1920s studio recordings in shaping a political revolution against colonialism. Denning's exploration of Manila as a medium-sized global colonial port city reveals the diaspora of versatile Filipino musicians who played in various contexts, such as Hawaiian orchestras and jazz bands across Shanghai, Japan, the Dutch East Indies, and Malaysia. Filipino orchestras became interpreters of jazz music on Pacific Ocean liners, earning them recognition as the "Italians of the East" (Denning 61-62). This recognition speaks to the capacity of music to transcend time and space, with Filipino musicians playing a vital role in proliferating jazz as a vernacular music culture.

Richie C. Quirino's *Mabuhay Jazz* further solidifies the contributions of Filipino musicians in globalizing jazz. Quirino's research focuses on the late 1940s and '50s, a period marked by the socio-political emancipation of the Philippines from the United States and the transition to a global mainstream Western American art culture. Jazz in the Philippines became a fusion of Filipino folk songs and indigenous rhythms with the musical idioms of African American jazz. This era witnessed the collaboration and exchange between world musicians and American servicemembers, fostering a continued call-and-response dynamic between local Filipino music makers and international performers (Quirino).

Within the context of Filipino identity making in America, performativity remains central. Filipino musicians who perform American music serve as a discursive point that highlights the ties between Filipino cultural citizenship and the American nation-state. However, it is important to recognize that the struggle for belonging within American cultural citizenship is intricately tied to

the legacies of colonization that have shaped Filipino American cultural productions. Despite these challenges, performing American musical idioms provides a primary space for Filipinos to authentically express their cultural citizenship (Wang; Wang).

In the case of the Godino twins, the historical narratives of Filipino musicians' contributions to jazz and their involvement in the global music scene hold particular relevance. As Filipino American musicians, the Godino twins embody the significance of performativity in shaping their Filipino identity within the context of jazz music. Through their performances, they participate in propagating jazz as a vernacular music culture, showcasing the fusion of diverse musical traditions and facilitating transnational connections. Their music becomes a testimony to the cultural ties that bind them to their Filipino heritage, while simultaneously expressing their individual and collective identities as Filipino Americans. By navigating the complexities of cultural citizenship in America through their musical practice, the Godino twins demonstrate the enduring power of performativity in constructing Filipino identities within the broader Asian American context. Their journey exemplifies how the intersection of music, race, and politics shapes their experiences and aspirations as Asian American musicians, reinforcing the integral role of performativity in their cultural formation.

## **2.7 The Philippine Exposition of 1904**

The connections between African American and Arab lives, explored in Alex Lubin's *Geographies of Liberation: The Making of an Afro-Arab Political Imaginary*, go beyond mere circumstantial associations and hold deep significance. Lubin introduces the concept of an "abolitionist geography," which juxtaposes the waters of the Mississippi River and the River Jordan, challenging the cultural and physical borders of Africa and Asia (Lubin 24). In his introduction, titled "Overlapping Diasporas," Lubin examines American Orientalism, drawing

from Edward Said's seminal work, *Orientalism*. Lubin specifically links American Orientalism to the Philippine Exposition of 1904.

While Said argues that American involvement in orientalism began after World War II, Lubin contests this claim, asserting that American Orientalism has always played a crucial role in the national narrative. Lubin highlights the significance of American orientalism in shaping U.S. geopolitical power, particularly during the post-Civil War period and the era of the Mexican American and Spanish-American Wars (Lubin 22). Moreover, Lubin employs the term "American orientalism" to encompass U.S. imperial expansion across North America and the Pacific in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, emphasizing its role in shaping American imperial national culture (Lubin 23). He also examines the Philippine Exposition at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair, which occurred six years after the Spanish-American War and commemorated the 100th anniversary of the Louisiana Purchase. This exposition symbolized the United States' newfound status as an imperial power, having acquired the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Guam (Lubin 23).

The Philippine Exposition at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair stands as a poignant testament to the complex dynamics of Filipino racialization, diaspora, and empire. It was an event that showcased the stark realities of how Filipinos were subjected to objectification and commodification, transforming them into mere spectacles for the curiosity of working-class white Americans. Within the expansive grounds of the exposition, Filipinos were robbed of their humanity, intellect, and professional identities. Instead, they were reduced to tribal caricatures, adorned in pre-colonial garments and performing behaviors considered exotic by Western standards.



This dehumanizing event solidified tribal archetypes associated with Filipinos, reinforcing violent and degrading representations that seeped into the collective consciousness of the American imagination. These enduring stereotypes continue to impact the representation of Filipinos today, perpetuating harmful narratives and limiting their visibility and recognition in broader society. The Philippine Exposition serves as a stark reminder of the enduring consequences of such events, highlighting the ongoing struggle for dignity, agency, and authentic representation for the Filipino community.

The discourse surrounding Filipino performance theory has been a focal point in transnational American Studies. Lucy Mae San Pablo Burns, a Filipino Americanist, extensively examines the infamous representations (and subsequent misrepresentations) of Filipino culture at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair in her book *Puro Arte: Filipinos on the Stages of Empire*. By examining the fair, San Pablo Burns explores the role Filipinos played within the broader imaginary of U.S. empire. She contends that Filipino bodies were commodified for profit while being appropriated for pleasure, surpassing the mere workings of empire (San Pablo Burns 22). She suggests that the 1904 World's Fair served as an early discursive performance site on U.S. soil, reinforcing the notion of the savage Filipino body. These insights shed light on the complex dynamics of racialization, diaspora, and empire, underscoring the urgent need to critically analyze the representations and performances that contribute to the construction of Filipino identities within the broader American context.

The production of the St. Louis World's Fair involved collaboration between the U.S. government and Filipino state officials, who brought Filipinos to the fair as anthropological and ethnographic displays. The Philippine Reservation, also known as the Philippine Village, was designated as a distinct area within the fairground to recreate the spatial and material origins of the

savage inhabitants. Within this village, around twelve hundred Filipinos from diverse regions of the Philippines were exhibited, showcasing Filipinos in their perceived "natural" environment. The exhibition included performances of Filipino cultural customs such as the Igorot's dog feast, dwarf Negritos, Filipinos demonstrating archery skills with bows and poisoned arrows, and tribes lighting fires with bamboo sticks (San Pablo Burns 33). Filipinos were photographed in tribal attire, presenting a performative representation of Filipinoness to American fairgoers. The Filipino Exposition, as it was called, served as a spectacle that celebrated U.S. empire.

Despite the racist and sexist exhibits that framed Filipinos as savage Orientals, there were a few positive portrayals of Filipino cultural aesthetics, as noted by San Pablo Burns. Among these positive representations was the recognition of the "musicianship and showmanship" of the Philippine Constabulary band. The band, known for their performances at military and government-related events, gained significant popularity. Interestingly, over twenty years later, *The Billboard* published an article on December 26, 1925, titled "Filipino Band Must Not Play Jazz at Concerts," which featured the Philippine Constabulary band (San Pablo Burns). The article, placed at the top of the Orchestra and Cabaret page, discussed American General Rafael Crane instructing Lieutenant A.J. Fresnido, the band's leader, that they should not play jazz. The author's snarky comment about sending Paul Whiteman, a white American bandleader, to do "missionary work" on the band reflects the white supremacist control exerted by the American nation state over Filipinos. The notion that Filipinos needed a white bandleader to guide them in playing jazz during their concerts exemplifies America's desire to subjugate Black and brown bodies. This raises the question of why Filipinos were playing jazz in the first place—could it be seen as an act of rebellion against the constraints of orchestral sheet music, allowing them to express their free and unbound Filipino syncopated rhythms?

If we consider that U.S. culture is influential from the highest echelons downward, it becomes evident that the lack of respect for Filipino bodies within popular U.S. culture became normalized under the leadership of Roosevelt. Roosevelt's active involvement in the Spanish-American War, where he commanded the Asiatic Squadron and played a significant role in the Battle of Manila Bay on May 1, 1898, positions the conflict as "his war." Unfortunately, Roosevelt's aspirations were far from benevolent when it came to the Filipino people; his objective was to assert mastery over them.

Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that even amidst Roosevelt's colonial ambitions, Filipino musicians were recognized and celebrated for their exceptional talents during this period in American history (Tiongson 420). This recognition offers a glimpse of a more nuanced and multifaceted perspective.

In conclusion, San Pablo Burns' depiction of the Filipino as a savage during the St. Louis World's Fair, along with her analysis of the Philippine Constabulary band, provides us with a framework for comprehending how Filipinos have been perceived within American music culture in subsequent years. Moreover, it sheds light on the enduring impact this perception has had on individuals like the Godino twins. By understanding this historical context, we can gain a deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding the portrayal of Filipinos in American society and music culture.

After the annexation of the Philippines, Filipino migrant workers began to immigrate to the American mainland. Over the course of three decades, Filipinos established a network of communities that formed the foundation of their cultural infrastructure. Peter Jamero sheds light on the emergence of Filipino communities in central California farm fields in his memoir, *Growing Up Brown: Memoirs of a Filipino American*. This region, characterized by its fertile farmlands

near the coastline, attracted Filipinos seeking labor contracts (Jamero 34). By the 1930s, Filipinos began to embrace their cultural identity as Filipino Americans, but this assimilation was met with disdain from white America.

In late January 1930, violent riots erupted in Watsonville, California, led by predominantly white mobs protesting against Filipino migrant workers. Numerous individuals were injured in the incident, and one Filipino laborer named Fermin Tobera was tragically murdered during the violence (Showalter 341). Despite the outcry from Filipinos and the efforts of political ambassadors in Washington and Manila, the murder of Fermin remains unsolved to this day, nearly a century later.

This lynching was a direct response to the advancement of Filipinos in American society. As Filipinos started earning wages and securing job opportunities, their progress unsettled the white working-class men in California (Takaki 33). Similar to the experiences of Chinese and Japanese immigrants before them, Filipinos became the target of exclusionary laws and statutes. Anti-Filipino legislation gained popularity, with representatives of the California Joint Immigration Committee lobbying heavily in both Washington D.C. and Sacramento for exclusionary measures (Showalter 342). Organizations like the Asiatic Exclusion League argued that unregulated Asian immigrant labor would destabilize the white working class. Alexander Saxton highlights the lobbying power of Workingmen's Parties in California, emphasizing that while much of the anti-immigrant legislation primarily targeted Chinese laborers, Filipinos were also identified as a vulnerable group in need of protection for white workers (Saxton 1, 116).

The discriminatory laws and prevailing sentiments towards Filipinos had a profound impact on my understanding of the Godino twins and subsequently influenced how I critically fabulated and imagined their story on the mixtape. These laws and sentiments were emblematic of

the systemic racism that Filipinos faced in America. Despite their invaluable contributions to the labor force and their aspirations for upward mobility, Filipinos encountered hostility and exclusion.

The challenges and experiences endured by Filipinos in California serve as additional testament to the intricate dynamics surrounding Filipino cultural citizenship and their ongoing quest for a sense of belonging within American society. Their struggles shed light on the complexities of identity, assimilation, and the enduring effects of systemic racism on marginalized communities.

In crafting the narrative of the Godino twins on the mixtape, I captured not only their unique experiences as individuals but also the broader socio-historical context in which they existed. By intertwining their personal stories with the wider struggles faced by the Filipino community, the mixtape becomes a platform to explore and challenge the narratives of anti-Filipino racism and ableism they pervaded them.

## **2.8 Conclusion**

In conclusion, the examination of Filipino racialization and its connections to the experiences of the Godino twins offers valuable insights into the complex dynamics of Asian American identity and cultural production. The Godino twins, as Filipino, migrant, conjoined musicians, serve as a compelling focal point through which we can comprehend the broader themes of racial positioning, assimilation, and resistance encountered by Asian Americans, particularly Filipinos. This chapter looks into the experiences of the Godino twins as Filipino, migrant, conjoined musicians, analyzing the racialization of Asian Americans, with a specific focus on Filipinos, and its intersection with cultural production, notably music. It investigates how Asian Americans, including the Godino twins, are positioned within the racial hierarchy in relation to

Black and white Americans, exploring the concepts of relative valorization and civic ostracism they confront.

By scrutinizing the racialization of Filipinos in the context of significant historical events such as the Philippine Exposition at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair and the Watsonville Anti-Filipino Riot of 1930, we deepen our comprehension of the dehumanizing stereotypes and discriminatory practices that have shaped the Filipino experience in the United States. The Godino twins, through their defiance of societal norms and their challenge to preconceived notions of Filipino musicianship, exemplify the resilience and agency of Filipinos in the face of racialization and marginalization. Furthermore, an exploration of the cultural significance of Filipino music and the constraints imposed on the Philippine Constabulary band illuminates the power dynamics and white supremacist control over cultural expression.

Ultimately, the analysis of Filipino racialization and the experiences of the Godino twins underscores the urgency to confront anti-Blackness, deconstruct institutional white supremacy, and cultivate solidarity among marginalized communities. It serves as a call to action for Asian Americans to critically examine their own complicity in perpetuating racial hierarchies and actively work towards dismantling them. Through embracing inclusivity, challenging stereotypes, and promoting equity, we can forge a more just and equitable society that recognizes and values the diverse experiences and contributions of all individuals, including the Godino twins and those who have historically endured marginalization.

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### **CHAPTER 3. INTERSECTIONS OF SOUND AND SOLIDARITY: EXPLORING THE HISTORICAL EXCHANGE BETWEEN FILIPINO AND BLACK AMERICAN MUSICIANS**

#### **3.1 We Are the Music Makers, and We Are the Dreamers of Dreams: A critical fabulation**



Figure 3. Harmonious Melodies: The Godino twins and their all-Filipino jazz ensemble strike a pose. Photo sourced from, “The Unusual Life and Times of the Godino Twins” by Myles A. Garcia.

It’s a lovely photo isn’t it? Here’s our proof that we find solace and purpose in the language of jazz. Through the lens of this captured moment, where black and white hues blend into a symphony of contrasts, we stand beside our fellow Filipino musicians, instruments in hand, ready to unleash the magic of the Black music that lies within us.

Simplicio, with eyes locked upon the photographer, beholds his trumpet—a vessel of his soul's expression. It resonates with his passion, yearning to soar in melodic flight. As for me, Lucio, my saxophone rests against my body, an extension of my very being. Through it, melodies course

and flow, their currents intertwining our souls. United, we forge a harmonious alliance, embarking on a musical journey that defies boundaries and transcends the confines of our physical existence.

In the dance hall where this photograph was birthed, the checkered floor beneath our feet mirrors the rhythm of life, syncopating the experiences that shape our shared narrative. We are more than mere performers; we are storytellers, bearers of the heritage belonging to Black Americans through a conjoined Filipino frame. Their jazz melodies encapsulate the struggle, resilience, and triumphs of a people. As conjoined Filipino migrants, we find ourselves entwined with their music, for it resonates deep within our souls and reflects our own journey of displacement and hope.

In this era, the year is around 1930—a time stained with the shades of segregation and racial strife. As Filipino migrants in a land divided by prejudice, we bear witness to the strained relationship between Black and white Americans. The echoes of injustice reverberate through the air, unsettling the foundations of our shared humanity. Yet, as we found ourselves immersed in the struggle faced by Black Americans, we find echoes of our own experiences back in our motherland, the Philippines.

The treatment of Black people, marred by violence and discrimination, resonates deeply within our souls. We carry the weight of empathy for the struggles endured by a people who have long been colonized, and long been persecuted. It is an unbreakable bond that unites us, as we recognize the unjust treatment suffered by Black Americans as a reflection of the injustices faced by our own people.



Figure 4. Behind the Curtain: The Godino twins and their team of representatives, managers, and handlers gather outside a theater, preparing for an unforgettable show. Photo sourced from Historic Images Outlet.

We, too, have known the sting of exploitation and marginalization, both in our homeland and in this foreign land we now call home. The hands of white business managers and handlers seek to control and manipulate us, reducing our artistic expression to mere commodities. Their actions mirror the colonial legacy that has scarred our Filipino heritage, reminding us of the power imbalances that persist.

Yet, as the Godino twins, we refuse to be silenced. In the face of adversity, we channel our experiences into our music, transforming it into a vessel of resistance and resilience. We weave

our narratives through creative expression, using sound to reimagine a world where boundaries dissolve and equality reigns supreme.

In this alternate reality, our melodies become a force of liberation, tearing down the walls that separate us. We traverse the realms of time and space, using our music as a bridge between cultures, erasing the divisions that society imposes. Our performances become a testament to the strength and beauty of diversity, a celebration of the shared human experience.

Through the alchemy of our instruments, we negotiate our identities in this complex existence. We harmonize our Filipino heritage with the sounds of solidarity of Black Americans, blending and circulating the essence of both cultures. It is a defiant act, reclaiming our agency and refusing to be confined by the narrow boxes of expectation.

With each performance, we carry the spirit of jazz and the resilience of our journey. We share our story with the world, not as victims or curiosities but as ambassadors of the human spirit. Jazz music, as hot and popular as it is in our time, has given us a second chance at life. It has afforded us an opportunity to be celebrated and revered for our talents, and we will forever be grateful for the purpose it has bestowed upon us.

We were thrust into a world where being different meant being put on display, where our existence became a spectacle for the curious eyes of strangers. As children, we were exhibited in freak shows, our conjoined bodies an object of fascination and morbid curiosity. Each day in that surreal environment, we grappled with conflicting emotions. On one hand, we were keenly aware of the gazes that stripped us of our humanity, reducing us to mere oddities. We felt the weight of their stares, their whispers piercing our souls like tiny arrows. We yearned for acceptance, for the chance to be seen as more than a mere spectacle.

But within the confines of that suffocating world, a beacon of hope emerged in the form of Teodoro Yangco. A man whose heart overflowed with compassion, he saw beyond our physicality and recognized the potential within us. Teodoro, a savvy politician and businessman, saw music as a means for us to showcase our gifts to the world.

With determination, Teodoro adopted us and introduced us to the world of music. It was through his guidance and belief in our abilities that we began our transformation. We spent hours upon hours immersed in the language of notes, learning the intricacies of rhythm, melody, and harmony.

As the notes of the blues and jazz cascaded through the air, we were ensnared by their raw emotion and expressive power. It was as if these melodies bore the weight of centuries, a testament to the struggles and triumphs of a people whose stories intertwine with our own. In their syncopated rhythms and improvised solos, we discovered a kindred spirit—a connection that transcended borders, embracing our shared experiences as migrants and colonial subjects of the United States of America.

Something stirred within us as we listened intently, our hearts beating in unison with the pulsating grooves. In that moment, familiarity enveloped us—an epiphany that left us awestruck. The pentatonic scales and repetitive melodies reverberated with a resonance that harkened back to the indigenous music of our Filipino homeland. The rhythmic patterns and interplay of voices evoked memories of traditional chants and dances that colored our earliest recollections.

With each passing note, we felt a profound identification, as if the music of Black Americans was an intrinsic part of our own essence. Inspired and emboldened, we aspired to interweave the strands of our unique identities into this fusion of sound. Thus, we birthed our own

Filipino conjoined version of the blues and jazz—a fusion that celebrated our heritage while paying homage to the music that resonated with us on a profoundly deep level.

Music allowed for us to discover a newfound sense of freedom. In the melodies we crafted and the harmonies we weaved, we found comfort, joy, and a means of transcending the labels that had haunted us for so long. Music became our refuge, a sanctuary where our conjoined bodies no longer defined us.

This allowed for us to venture beyond the circus and into the larger music industry, where we faced newer and tougher sets of challenges. As Filipino musicians, we were met with stereotypes and prejudices that sought to limit our potential. The industry, at times, struggled to see beyond our ethnicity, perceiving us as exotic novelties rather than skilled artists.

Yet, we refused to be confined by these preconceived notions. With every note we played, we aimed to challenge those stereotypes, to showcase the depth of our musicality and the universality of our art. We strived to prove that our heritage was not a hindrance but rather a source of richness that added unique flavors to the jazz sound.

Navigating the music industry as conjoined Filipino musicians was undoubtedly a tumultuous journey. We faced skepticism, ignorance, and a lack of representation. But we pressed forward, armed with the passion and resilience that music had instilled within us. We sought out allies and collaborators who embraced our vision, who recognized our talent beyond the spectacle of our physicality.

Slowly but surely, we began to make our mark. Our music spoke for itself, transcending borders and cultural barriers. It was a testament to the power of art to bridge divides and touch the souls of all who listened. We were no longer confined to the role of mere curiosities; we were artists, composers, and storytellers, weaving narratives through our shared melodies.

We stand as Filipino musicians, united by our heritage and our love for jazz. We hope that our presence inspires others, particularly those who have been marginalized or underestimated, to pursue their passions with unyielding determination. We want to show that the confluence of our unique identities can be a source of strength, a force that propels us to break through barriers and shape our own narratives.

As we reflect on our journey, we are humbled by the strides we have made and the impact we have had. But we are also mindful of the path that lies ahead, as we continue to redefine what it means to be artists, performers, and, above all, human beings. The story of the Godinos is one of resilience, transformation, and the power of music to bestow dignity upon those who have been marginalized. And we are eternally grateful to have found salvation in the embrace of jazz, a genre that not only saved us but also gifted us with the opportunity to live a dignified and celebrated existence.

On stages across the nation, instruments gripped tightly, we unleashed our Filipino conjoined rendition of Black American music to audiences around the United States. Through harmonies and melodies, we sought to bridge cultural divides, reminding the world that music recognizes no boundaries. Our performances bore witness to the shared human experience, to the power of music transcending language, race, and physical limitations.

Long ago, our lives were confined to the confines of circus tents, where onlookers gawked at our conjoined bodies, reducing us to mere curiosities. We were objects of spectacle, stripped of our humanity and denied the opportunity to express ourselves fully. It was a life of confinement and degradation, with no hope of escape. Once relegated to performing in circus freak shows, we found consolation and purpose in the transformative power of jazz. What a life! We are so thankful.



As you take the opportunity to listen to our music, we hope you enjoy. Now sit back, relax, and get down to the grooves of Lucio and Simplicio, the Godino twins and the all-Filipino jazz band!

### **3.2 Chapter Overview:**

The historical exchange between Filipino and Black American musicians has been shaped by the impact of empire, and understanding this complex dynamic is crucial for comprehending the shared experiences of resistance against hegemonic powers. This chapter is centered on the intricate dynamics of cultural exchange, resistance, and profound musical innovation between these two communities. It explores the influence of Spanish and American imperialism on Filipino cultural production and music, the unity of music and dance in Filipino culture affected by colonization, the concept of 'disobedient listening' proposed by Christine Balance, and the significance of port cities as hubs for musical exchange. Additionally, the chapter examines the impact of African American roots music on Filipino musicians and highlights notable figures such as the Godino twins, Sugar Pie DeSanto, and H.E.R., who exemplify the intersections of African American and Filipino musical heritage. By addressing these themes, this chapter unveils the enduring connection and collaboration between Filipino and Black American musicians, firmly rooted in a shared history of resistance, cultural exchange, and profound musical expression.

The legacy of colonization has left an indelible mark on the creation and performance of music in the Philippines. Spanish and American imperialism influenced Filipino cultural production, resulting in a fusion of traditional songs and Western musical elements. This interplay reflects the historical and cultural tensions brought about by the imposition of imperial powers. Understanding the impact of empire on Filipino musical traditions is crucial for comprehending the historical exchange with Black American musicians and the shared experiences of resistance against hegemonic powers.

The concept of 'disobedient listening,' put forth by Christine Balance, emerges as a powerful tool for resistance and self-expression. It challenges racial stereotypes and provides valuable insights into the ways in which the Filipino diaspora engages with music. Music becomes a means of challenging oppressive systems, asserting identity, and fostering solidarity among marginalized communities. Engaging in disobedient listening allows Filipino and Black American musicians to reclaim their cultural narratives and defy hegemonic power structures that sought to marginalize and silence them. This theory illuminates the profound impact of music as a form of resistance, rebellion, and organization against the forces of empire.

Port cities played a pivotal role in facilitating the exchange and collaboration between Filipino and Black American musicians. These vibrant hubs served as conduits for the exchange of music and cultural practices. The profound influence of African American roots music on Filipino musicians is evident in the dynamic interconnectedness of these musical traditions. Filipino musicians embraced and performed Black American music, demonstrating solidarity and shared experiences of struggle against imperial powers. In addition, Stephanie Ng's ethnographic account highlights the transnational nature of Filipino entertainers and their critical role in supporting their families through remittances. It also draws parallels between the experiences of racism and labor exploitation faced by African Americans and Filipinos, further deepening the connections between these communities.

The racialization of Filipinos and African Americans during the twentieth century strengthened the bonds between these communities. Their shared struggles against imperial powers profoundly influenced their music-making practices. The exchange of cultural traditions solidified their connection and amplified their shared resistance against empire. Moreover, African American music, particularly the blues, exerted considerable influence on the development of

American music as a whole. Scholars such as Amiri Baraka and Jose M. Peña recognize the impact of African American music in shaping modern music. The intertwined history of Chinese Jamaicans and reggae music further illustrates the role played by colonialism, empire, and capitalism in shaping Afro-Asian cultural productions. The collaboration between African American drummers and Chinese opera percussionists contributed to the creation of the American trap drum set, showcasing the intricate dynamics of cultural exchange and innovation between African-American and Asian-American musics.

The chapter concludes by recognizing notable figures such as the Godino Twins, Sugar Pie DeSanto, and H.E.R. Their contributions to the music industry and their embrace of their Filipino heritage exemplify the rich intersectionality of their cultural background. In the realm of contemporary music, H.E.R., with her unapologetic embrace of her African American and Filipina roots, exemplifies the recognition of Filipino contributions to Black American music traditions. Her powerful anthem "I Can't Breathe" earned her the Grammy award for Song of the Year in 2021. Her lyrics and active presence on social media platforms demonstrate her commitment to addressing social issues and honoring her Filipino ancestry.

In conclusion, the historical exchange between Filipino and Black American musicians has been shaped by the impact of empire. This chapter explores the intricate dynamics of cultural exchange, resistance, and profound musical innovation between these two communities. The influence of Spanish and American imperialism on Filipino cultural production, the concept of 'disobedient listening' as a form of resistance, the significance of port cities as hubs for musical exchange, and the intersections of African American and Asian American musics all contribute to a nuanced understanding of this historical connection and collaboration. By recognizing the contributions of notable figures and showcasing the enduring connection between these

communities, we can appreciate the shared history of resistance, cultural exchange, and profound musical expression that unites Filipino and Black American musicians. This research is informed by the combination of Hip Hop music and critical fabulation, which is employed to amplify the story of the Godino twins, challenge the systematic erasure of marginalized histories from archives, and contribute to decolonization, justice, and equity.

### **3.3 The Impact of Empire and Cultural Exchange: Filipino and Black American Musicians**

The intersection of empire and cultural exchange has profoundly influenced the relationship between Filipino and Black American musicians. Musicians of Filipino descent have played pivotal roles as practitioners, innovators, and preservers of African American roots music culture. Despite their own vibrant musical traditions, Filipinos have forged solidarity and engaged in cross-cultural musical exchange with Black Americans, spanning centuries and continents (Pfeiffer 17). From the bayous of Louisiana to the galleon trading in Manila and contemporary performances across Asia, this ongoing Afro-Asian collaboration has become a testament to the continuous efforts of Filipino musicians in perpetuating the sonic traditions of Black America. Music holds great significance in Filipino life, serving as a means of establishing cultural identity and expressing a sense of belonging through the sounds of America (Gonzalves 53). This chapter explores the multifaceted impact of empire and cultural exchange on Filipino and Black American musicians, tracing historical connections, discussing scholarly perspectives, and highlighting the transformative power of music.

Scholar Shana L. Redmond, in her book *Anthem: Social Movements and the Sound of Solidarity in the African Diaspora*, presents a framework that positions music as a method. Redmond argues that music allows us to reimagine the possibilities of our existence and can

function as a form of resistance and organization in the fight against hegemony (Redmond 10). She emphasizes that music is more than just sound; it constitutes a multifaceted network that informs our relationships with one another, space, history, and the present moment (Redmond 5). *Anthem* asserts that marginalized groups around the world employ music as a means of organizing their resistance against hegemonic powers. Consequently, music plays a vital role in enabling marginalized Filipino populations to articulate their position in society in a revolutionary manner.

It is noteworthy that the main export of the Philippines is not agricultural products or manufactured goods, but rather human labor ("Empire of Care: Nursing and Migration in Filipino American History" 141). Whether in the form of housekeepers transported to places like the United Arab Emirates or nurses migrating to the United States, the Philippines' greatest contribution to the world is the labor of its people ("Nurses Across Borders" 5). Manila, the port city of the Philippines, exemplifies the export and transport of Filipino labor to the Western world.

In her book *The Making of Asian America*, Erika Lee traces the history of Manila as a prime location for the trafficking of indentured laborers since the 1500s. Lee argues that Spain's control over Manila facilitated the trading of indentured laborers from the Eastern world to the West, including the Philippines itself. Through Manila's galleon trade, Filipinos ended up in various parts of the Americas, such as Saint Malo in Louisiana, Morro Bay in California, and numerous locations in modern-day Mexico and South America (Lee 25). Henry Yu expands upon the impact of Spanish domination over the Philippines in his essay in *American Studies for American Cultural Studies*, asserting that empire and slavery are interconnected, and the United States' expansion into the Philippines in the 1890s officially identified it as an empire (Burgett). Spain's and the United States' imperial control over the Philippines and its people significantly influenced Filipino cultural production and music-making processes to this day.

In *Tropical Renditions: Making Musical Scenes in Filipino America*, Christine Balance introduces the theory of "disobedient listening." Balance urges her readers to listen to the Filipino diaspora in a disobedient manner, paying attention to discourses of dominance, race, and colonization. She examines the sociopolitical factors that influence the Filipino diaspora, including empire, colonization, and capitalism. By focusing on the process of Filipino Americans making music, Balance challenges racialized stereotypes of Asian-ness and highlights the mobility of Filipinos and the dynamics of their cultural production and performance. She explores the ways in which Filipinos and Filipino Americans navigate their musical lives and the politics that emerge from those experiences (Balance 10). This scholarship reframes our perspective on music making from an object (Filipino American Music) to a process, suggesting that understanding music as a vocabulary can help us interpret the history of the colonization of the Philippines and how Filipinos use their past to perform their subjectivity.

In conclusion, the study of the impact of empire and cultural exchange on Filipino and Black American musicians reveals a deep interconnectedness and transformative power of music. This passage has explored the historical connections and ongoing collaborations between these two communities, spanning continents and centuries. Musicians of Filipino descent have made significant contributions to African American roots music culture, showcasing their versatility as practitioners, innovators, and preservers of tradition. Through music, marginalized groups have organized resistance against hegemonic powers and reimagined possibilities of existence (Redmond 10). The essay has also highlighted the significant role of the Philippines as a source of human labor and its historical ties to empire, colonization, and cultural production (*Empire of Care: Nursing and Migration in Filipino American History* 141; Lee 25). By examining the process of music-making in the Filipino diaspora, scholars like Christine Balance challenge stereotypes and

empower individuals to assert their cultural identity (Balance 10). Ultimately, understanding the complex dynamics of empire and cultural exchange enriches our interpretation of history, showcases the resilience of communities, and illuminates the ways in which music becomes a vehicle for expression and resistance in shaping collective subjectivity.

The impact of music and polycultural exchange between Filipino performers and Black American musicians has been profound and far-reaching throughout history. Port cities, such as Manila, played a crucial role in the exchange of African American roots music to Filipino musicians, leading to the exportation of Filipino performers to various parts of Asia and global audiences (Denning 39). This phenomenon highlights the concept of polycultural exchange, which recognizes that cultures are porous, dynamic, and in constant flux, circulating and influencing each other without clear boundaries or restrictions (Prashad 40). The solidarity between Black and Asian musicians in their performances challenges prevailing conventions of Western racial ideology and showcases their ongoing negotiation of identities and resistance over centuries.

The phenomenon of Filipinos performing Black American music serves as a prime example of polycultural exchange. According to Vijay Prashad's interpretations of polycultural theory, history is not static, monolithic, or fixed. Instead, it is porous, complex, dynamic, and in a constant state of flux, with cultures circulating and mutually influencing each other without clear boundaries or restrictions (Prashad 40). Polyculturalism, therefore, explores how cultures share their histories to challenge the prevailing conventions of Western racial ideology. Within the dynamic realm of music history, we witness instances of solidarity between Black and Asian musicians through their performances. Filipino performers of Black American music have been engaged in an ongoing process of negotiating their identities and demonstrating resistance since the initial encounters between these two cultures centuries ago.

By gaining access to commercial audiences in other Asian metropolitan cities, Filipino musicians had the opportunity to connect and collaborate with traveling Black American musicians residing abroad. This facilitated the sharing of musical cultures, blending of sounds, and challenged the notion that music history is fixed. Music does not have a single origin; rather, it is in a constant state of flux and perpetual motion. Filipino musicians, by immersing themselves in the history and sound of Black American music, embody the essence of polyculturalism. Pioneering Filipino jazz musicians like Porfirio "Ping" Joaquin, Angel Peña, Lou Borromeo, and their female counterpart Catalina "Mommy Kate" de la Cruz performed the music of Black Americans to large audiences in luxury hotels and on cruise liners across Asia during the 1920s and 1930s (Peña 87).

Even in the present day, the tradition of Filipino migrant musician labor endures. In Stephanie Ng's work "Performing the 'Filipino' at the Crossroads: Filipino Bands in Five-Star Hotels Throughout Asia," she describes Filipinos as a form of global labor, diasporic performers who engage in multinational performances across Asia to sustain their livelihoods (Ng 273). Ng provides an ethnographic account of her experience watching a Filipino band named "2 by 2" perform Western pop and rock classics at The Concorde Hotel in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. She admiringly describes the band's captivating sounds and notes that their main audience consists of business travelers from across Asia. Notably, Ng also observes the presence of enthusiastic local Malaysian fans who cheer with delight at the band's high notes. Ng's thesis is clear: Filipino entertainers are transnational subjects who constantly traverse borders in pursuit of their labor (Ng 276). These musicians often send remittances back to the Philippines to support their loved ones, whom they left behind while earning a living through their performances abroad.



It is their shared resistance to anti-Black and indigenous racism, along with the subsequent experiences of violence, subjugation, marginalization, and forced labor imposed on them by settler colonial logics, that laid the foundation for polycultural exchanges between African Americans and Filipinos to flourish. The decolonial politics shared between African and Asian communities are evident in significant historical events like the Bandung Conference held in Bandung, Indonesia, in 1955. Also known as the Asian-African Conference, this gathering brought together representatives from twenty-nine Asian and African nations to discuss peace, the role of the Third World in Cold War politics, economic development, and decolonization (Asian-African Conference). This conference holds significance as it links Africa and Asia as geographical sites of the Third World. Furthermore, the Philippines actively participated in the conference, seeking to establish its identity beyond the tropes imposed upon it by the U.S. nation-state, following its recent emancipation from American colonial rule.

Scholar Mark Villegas explores the racialization of Filipinos at the turn of the twentieth century in his book *Manifest Technique: Hip Hop, Empire, and Visionary Filipino American Culture*. Villegas argues that the U.S. perception of Filipino bodies in proximity to Blackness is crucial to understanding contemporary Filipino American cultural politics (Villegas 17). He cites Afro-Filipino solidarity during the Philippine-American War of 1899 as an example of how colonialism fosters Third World solidarity, setting the stage for cultural exchange between the two groups.

Filipino jazz music scholar Richie C. Quirino explains that American popular music culture was transmitted to Filipinos through African American military personnel stationed in the Philippines during American foreign rule. Quirino refers to musician and writer Artemio Agnes, who asserts that some African American soldiers, dissatisfied with racial discrimination from their

white superiors, defected from the U.S. Army to join the Philippine Revolutionary Army (*Mabuhay Jazz: Jazz in Postwar Philippines*, 14-19). This led to shared spaces and cultural circulation between Filipinos and African Americans as a result of American imperialism and exploitation.

Scholar Amy Kaplan, in her book *The Anarchy of Empire*, discusses how Black American soldiers resisted empire through their realignment with external forces. She notes that following the decisive battle of San Juan Hill in Cuba, where the United States emerged victorious in the Spanish-American War, Black soldiers began to leave their military positions and align politically with the citizens of the recently acquired territories. Similarly, in the Philippines, Black American soldiers chose to fight on behalf of the Philippine resistance rather than endure the daily racism inflicted upon them by their superiors (Kaplan 144-145).

Howard Zinn provides additional support for this historical claim through letters written by these soldiers to the Black press on the domestic mainland. In the chapter "The Empire and The People" in *A People's History of the United States*, Zinn includes excerpts from these letters. For instance, William Simms writes:

I was struck by a question a little Filipino boy asked me, which ran about this way: "Why does the American Negro come... to fight us when we are much a friend to him and have not done anything to him. He is all the same as me and me all the same as you. Why don't you fight those people in America who burn Negroes, that make a beast of you...?" (Zinn 318-319)

Black American soldiers grew dissatisfied with their treatment in American society, and their letters provide evidence of African American and Filipino solidarity in opposition to the United States' imperial agenda at the turn of the twentieth century. Kaplan and Zinn suggest that cultures and languages were shared between the two societies, with Filipinos teaching the expatriates indigenous languages and customs while the soldiers shared their Black American

cultural traditions. This act of resistance created opportunities for the development and exploration of Afro-Filipino music traditions.

Amiri Baraka, in his influential book *Blues People: Negro Music in White America*, defines American music as Black music. He argues that all American music is rooted in the blues, which he considers the quintessential "native American music" born out of African American cultural production. Baraka asserts that the blues could not have existed without the African captives becoming American captives (Baraka, 28). Baraka's claims highlight the impact of colonialism and empire on music-making processes, as American music has evolved from the blues tradition (Southern 9). It is the result of displaced Africans on American soil, carrying Afro-diasporic musical motifs that manifested in the blues through Negro spirituals and work songs.

Filipino jazz musician and poet Jose M. Peña explores the intersections between Filipinos and Black music in his poem "JAZZ: A Portrait of the Negro Oppression in the US." Peña describes jazz as "the spirit of an oppressed breed, kept in the blood by ethnic rhythms that seem to keep pace with the beat of the heart." He also depicts jazz as "a people, a breed; extracted from the dark side of this world by white masters of their destiny." In this poem, Peña draws connections between the diasporas of displaced enslaved Africans and colonized Filipinos, identifying jazz music as their celebrated and notable point of connection. According to Filipino scholar Richie C. Quirino, Filipinos began performing jazz as soon as they were subjected to American colonization, although the performance tradition has long been associated with their culture (Pinoy Jazz Traditions 13). The lasting impact of previous American occupation in the Philippines continues to shape the way modern Filipinos find belonging, with music, particularly American music, serving as a vehicle for them to express their humanity in the face of colonial oppression (Powell 260).

Filipinos performing Black American roots music is part of a larger discourse surrounding Asian bodies engaging in music performance, collaboration, and innovation. For instance, Timothy Chin's article "Notes on Reggae Music, Diaspora Aesthetics, and Chinese Jamaican Transmigrancy: The Case of VP Records" focuses on the involvement of Chinese Jamaicans in the development of reggae music. Chinese and Indian migrant workers ended up in Jamaica as coolie labor after the abolition of African slavery in Western nations (Chin 2). African and Asian people would interact and exchange cultural practices on plantations, including musical influences. The example of Chinese Jamaicans and Indian Jamaicans demonstrates how colonialism, empire, and capitalism drive Afro-Asian cultural productions, particularly music. While Chin's article primarily discusses Chinese Jamaican record executives' role in producing and marketing music, there are also numerous examples of musicians of Chinese descent performing reggae music. Reggae pioneers of Chinese ancestry, such as Byron Lee, Herman Chin Loy, and Stephen Cheng, are credited with making significant contributions to the genre (Proudfoot).

In the book *Afro Asia: Revolutionary Political and Cultural Connections between African Americans and Asian Americans*, edited by Fred Ho and Bill Mullen, an illuminating essay titled "The American Drum Set: Black Musicians and Chinese Opera along the Mississippi River" sheds light on the true history of the American drum set. Drummer royal hartigan suggests that African American drummers drew inspiration from the percussive sounds of popular Chinese opera to create the standard American trap drum set used worldwide today. hartigan explains that African American drummers studied and borrowed instruments from Chinese opera and incorporated the particular instrumental percussion into the hybrid drum set (Ho and Mullen 289). The shared percussion culture due to their proximity and intimate interactions exemplifies the mutual inspiration and solidarity of Afro-Asian music-making.

The intersections of empire, colonization, and shared resistance to racism and oppression have laid the foundation for the flourishing polycultural exchanges between African Americans and Filipinos in the realm of music. Historical events like the Bandung Conference and the Philippine-American War have strengthened the decolonial politics shared between these communities, fostering cultural exchange and cooperation (Asian-African Conference; Villegas 17). The engagement of Filipino musicians with Black American music, from early jazz pioneers to present-day migrant musicians, demonstrates the enduring impact of American imperialism and exploitation (Quirino; Ng 273). It is through the transformative power of music that Filipino performers have traversed borders, challenged stereotypes, and sustained their livelihoods while connecting with global audiences (Ng 276). The recognition of the interconnectedness of African American and Filipino experiences in the history of music-making provides insights into the resilience and creativity of these communities. By embracing polyculturalism, we appreciate the dynamic nature of music history and the continual exploration of Afro-Asian musical traditions that defy fixed boundaries and shape collective subjectivities.

### **3.4 The Filipino American Musical Legacy: From the Godino Twins to Sugar Pie DeSanto**

Among the most famous Filipino migrant musicians performing Black American roots music are the Godino Twins. Lucio and Simplicio Godino, born in 1908 and connected by a strip of cartilage on their backs, were brought to the U.S. from Samar, Philippines, for exhibition as the "Samar United Twins." After a custody battle, they came under the guidance of Teodoro Yangco. Under Yangco's guidance, they rose to fame in the 1920s and 30s as the leaders of a touring all-Filipino jazz band, captivating audiences with their music and performance (Anderson).

The Godino twins' success demonstrates that Filipinos became headlining attractions on the U.S. musical stage in the first half of the 1900s. Advertisements in *The Billboard* and *Variety* announced their North American tour, supported by a 14-piece all-Filipino band in which they played saxophone and trumpet. They signed contracts with entertainment industry promoters and performed in major music venues across the country (Turner Signs Filipino Twins). A review in *The Billboard* praised their performance, highlighting their blending of the African American jazz aesthetic with native and indigenous Filipino sounds (E.F. Albee, Cincinnati). The Godino twins became some of the first Filipino jazz musicians to receive critical acclaim in the United States (Anderson).

In 1954, Sugar Pie DeSanto emerged as a new manifestation of Afro-Filipino music in American popular culture. Her single "I Want to Know" topped *The Billboard* charts, featuring a guitar-driven melody and an up-tempo beat that captured the attention of young America. DeSanto's lyrics about lost love resonated with listeners:

“When we first got together, you treated me like a queen  
Though soon as I turn my back  
You got yourself another woman and you done split the scene” (DeSanto, “I Want to Know”)

The success of DeSanto's song opened doors for her to join the renowned Chess Records. At Chess, she stood alongside prominent artists such as her cousin Etta James, Chuck Berry, Muddy Waters, Buddy Guy, Howlin' Wolf, and Bo Diddley. Throughout her long tenure at the company, DeSanto became the most prolific and highest-paid writer at Chess (Porter 115).

Born to an African American mother and a Filipino father, and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area, Sugar Pie DeSanto defied the expectations of a traditional blueswoman ("Sugar Pie DeSanto Rocks"). Her dual heritage of being African American and Filipino added layers of complexity to her narrative, identity, and performances. This intersection of identities allowed

Sugar Pie DeSanto to pioneer a musical act that incorporated the Filipino diaspora into the history of Black American music. Although never explicitly stated, the undertones of DeSanto's lived experience as a descendant of both African American and Filipino heritage undoubtedly influenced the tone of her voice, style of dress, musical choices, and the themes present in her lyrics, which explored life's highs and lows.

While DeSanto's songwriting talent was undeniably remarkable, it was her live performances that truly made her a star. Her voice resonated with depth, strength, and a captivating low register, always staying in key and on her own rhythm ("Rock Me Baby - Sugar Pie DeSanto (Live)"). Furthermore, her stage presence was mesmerizing. In the true fashion of a blueswoman, DeSanto often performed in front of an all-male band (Davis 23). As she sang, DeSanto would dance, jump into the audience, and flirt with concertgoers. The back cover of her 2018 release, *Sugar's Suite*, captured the essence of her stage persona, featuring an image of her holding onto a man with her legs spread open in the air. Even in her twilight years, DeSanto remains dedicated to delivering memorable performances. She is a true innovator who has inspired younger musicians today ("Sugar's Suite").

Carrying on the tradition of Afro-Filipino blueswomen is the contemporary recording artist H.E.R. Like Sugar Pie DeSanto, H.E.R. is of African American and Filipino descent and consistently pays homage to both her African American and Filipina roots through her music. Also raised in the San Francisco Bay Area, H.E.R. speaks in a video-recorded interview with digital media company Genius about how Black American music influenced her while growing up in the Bay. The scene takes place as she and her interviewer cook and enjoy Filipino food together. H.E.R. fondly mentions her Filipina mother's love for American soul music and highlights the fact that "Filipinos love the ballads of Whitney Houston and Mariah Carey" ("H.E.R. Reflects on Black

Music History & Cooks Filipino Food | Genius IRL"). The conversation goes deeper into the shared culture of music, food, and other aspects between African Americans and Filipinos, emphasizing how these roots serve as the pillars of H.E.R.'s identity. Throughout the interview, H.E.R. proudly embraces her Black American and Filipino heritages, discussing how these identities are interwoven into her music.

H.E.R. won the 2021 Grammy award for Song of the Year with her song, "I Can't Breathe", an emotional tribute to humanity inspired by the George Floyd - Black Lives Matter uprisings of 2020. H.E.R.'s lyrics sing:

"We breathe the same and we bleed the same  
But still, we don't see the same  
Be thankful we are God-fearing  
Because we do not seek revenge  
We seek justice, we are past fear  
We are fed up eating your shit  
Because you think your so-called "Black friend"  
Validates your wokeness and erases your racism" (H.E.R., *I Can't Breathe*)

In this song, H.E.R. calls out the larger historical systemic violence of white supremacy that permeates American and Western society. Drawing on her heritage as both Black American and Filipino, the artist makes a unified statement of frustration regarding the resurgence of violent anti-Black and anti-Asian racism. Following her Grammy win, H.E.R. took to the social media platform TikTok to celebrate her accomplishment. In a viral video, she affectionately imitates her Tita Joanne's thick Filipino accent while giving a shout-out to all Filipinos for their support. In this moment, H.E.R. used her voice not only to raise awareness about the daily struggles faced by African Americans but also to honor (albeit playfully) her Filipino ancestry (Legaspi).

The recognition of the Godino twins, Sugar Pie DeSanto, and H.E.R.'s Grammy win by Billboard solidifies the significant contribution of Filipino-descended musicians to African American music traditions and American popular culture. This connection has been ongoing for



over a century, with artists such as Bambu and Kiwi, Ruby Ibarra, Apl.de.ap of the Black Eyed Peas, Angel M. Pena, and the legendary mobile hip-hop DJ crews of Southern and Northern California in the 1980s and 1990s (Wang 43). Chad Hugo, a Filipino American musician, perpetuates Afro-Asian music-making as his long-time collaborator Pharrell Williams attests that he won't enter the studio without him by his side (Williams, *In My Mind*). Williams and Hugo, comprising the renowned hip-hop production duo The Neptunes, have been friends since grade school band camp and have since co-produced numerous hit songs in the 20th and 21st centuries, earning them many awards and accolades along the way.

The Filipino American musical legacy is a testament to the profound contributions of Filipino migrant musicians to Black American roots music and American popular culture. From the iconic Godino Twins, who captivated audiences with their all-Filipino jazz band in the 1920s and 30s, to the trailblazing Sugar Pie DeSanto, who fused her African American and Filipino heritage in her music and performances, these musicians have left an indelible mark on the music industry (Anderson). The Afro-Filipino musical legacy continues with contemporary artists like H.E.R., who proudly embrace their African American and Filipino roots, channeling their heritage into their music and speaking to social justice issues of today.

Filipinos have made significant contributions to the development of Hip Hop music. Antonio T. Tiongson Jr. explores these interventions in his book *Filipinos Represent: DJs, Racial Authenticity, and the Hip-Hop Nation*. Through interviews, cultural studies frameworks, and a critique of the Black/white binary in Hip Hop, Tiongson highlights the success of Filipino DJs as pioneers and innovators in the genre. He challenges prevailing U.S. racial categories by considering Hip Hop's cross-cultural history and emphasizing themes of cultural citizenship, authenticity, and belonging (Tiongson 11-21). It is widely acknowledged that Filipinos have

played a pivotal role as pioneers and innovators in Hip Hop DJing and turntablism culture (McLeod). In West Coast Hip Hop history, Filipinos are akin to what Puerto Ricans are to New York Hip Hop (Rose 15). Tiongson's discourse invites us to rethink genre paradigms and understand how Filipinos find a sense of belonging through their involvement in Hip Hop.

The student documentary-film *Beats, Rhymes, and Resistance: Pilipinos and Hip Hop in Los Angeles* further explores Filipino innovation in Hip Hop. Set in 1990s Los Angeles, the film follows amateur filmmakers and scholars Dawn Mabalon, Lakan de Leon, and Jonathan Ramos as they investigate the cultural production of Filipinos in the city's Hip Hop culture. Filipino youth in the documentary identify with Hip Hop for its political and radical aesthetics. They see Hip Hop as counterculture to the white Western patriarchal and hegemonic American society, providing them with a space for self-expression and mastery of a craft. For Filipino American youth, Hip Hop also serves as a means to defy the constraints imposed by the legacies of colonization on their identities and lived experiences. The documentary highlights the struggles of Filipino American youth in identifying as American, with many proclaiming that they "identify as Hip Hop" (*Beats, Rhymes, and Resistance: Pilipinos and Hip Hop in Los Angeles*). In line with Tiongson's claims, *Beats, Rhymes, and Resistance* underscores that Hip Hop is not just a medium of expression for Filipino practitioners but a musical subculture that helps them understand their lifestyles, cultural citizenship, and authenticity in America.

While Hip Hop is widely recognized as a Black American musical genre, Filipino contributions and interventions in Hip Hop compel us to explore the connections between Filipinoness and Blackness. This linkage goes beyond a narrative of appropriation associated with Filipino participation in Black American cultural productions. Instead, we can view Filipino contributions to Black American music cultures as rooted in resistance against colonial logics

(Lay). In her article "How Blackness Informs Global Filipino Corporeality: The Embodied and Racial Politics of Afro-Filipino Hip-Hop Dance," Maiko Lay draws on the scholarship of J. Lorenzo Perillo to explore the linkages between Filipinos and African Americans within Hip Hop culture. Lay notes Perillo's observation that Filipinoness and Blackness are intertwined in "beautiful and violent" ways, highlighting how Filipinos engage with Hip Hop as a form of rebellion against empire, neoliberalism, and state-sanctioned violence, creating a space where their participation goes "beyond cooption, mimicry, and appropriation" (Perillo).

One of the most prominent Filipino American Hip Hop artists is Apl.de.ap of the group Black Eyed Peas. Apl.de.ap gained recognition for his song "The Apl Song" from the Black Eyed Peas' 2003 album *Elephunk*. In this song, Apl.de.ap raps and sings about his position as a son of the Filipino diaspora. Using Hip Hop as a medium to convey his story, he rhapsodizes about his family's journey from the Philippines to seek a better life in America. "The Apl Song" became an international hit, contributing to the critical and commercial success of *Elephunk* in numerous countries worldwide. What made the song revolutionary was its inclusion of the Tagalog language, the Filipino national language, in the chorus—a rare occurrence for a chart-topping song on global music charts at the time. Apl.de.ap's narrative of Filipino migration told through Hip Hop reached a wide audience and resonated with Filipino listeners who longed for their histories to be sung on mainstream platforms. The chorus of "The Apl Song" goes:

“La pit m-ga kai bigan (Close friends)  
At makinig kayo (Come and listen)  
Ako'y may dala-dalang (I have news)  
Balita galing sa bayan ko (From my hometown)  
Nais kong ipamahagi (I want to share)  
Ang mga kwento (These stories with you)  
Ang mga pangyayaring nagaganap (The events taking place)  
Sa lupang pinangako (In the promised land)” (Apl.de.ap, “The Apl Song”)

Apl.de.ap's song serves as a call for Filipinos to share their stories of diaspora, emphasizing the importance of preserving oral histories and traditions within Filipino culture. The song utilizes the word "kwento," meaning storytelling, to encourage the discourse of Filipino experiences, countering the erasure perpetuated by colonial logics (Hall 275).

In the contemporary moment, Guapdad 4000, a Filipino American rapper, proudly represents his Filipino roots through his music. Collaborating with Filipino American producer !llmind, Guapdad 4000 uses their joint album, *1176*, as a platform to showcase Filipino culture while reflecting on his upbringing in West Oakland, California. The album's title is a reference to Guapdad's childhood home, symbolizing a place where Filipino culture and the national dish "Chicken Adobo" are readily available, nourishing both body and soul. The album's final track, "Stoop Kid," tells Guapdad's family's migration story as Filipino Americans. Through his lyrics, Guapdad shares:

“Shout out to Douglas for meeting my grandma  
In the Philippines, in the middle of Subic Bay  
'Cause he was in the Marines and, uh  
He seen her and said ‘Ayy baby  
I need something, I need something in my pocket  
Can you do that for me?”  
And you know what she said?  
"Oo-oo" hella Filipino, no English  
And then he end up marrying her  
And moved to California  
They would have a baby, three babies  
And the youngest of them three babies  
Ended up making the Guapdad” (Guapdad 4000, *1176*)

In his song, Guapdad 4000 shares the story of his family history, specifically recounting how his African American grandfather met his Filipino grandmother at the U.S. military base in Subic Bay. This narrative exposes the role of colonialism, as the presence of the U.S. empire led to the establishment of the military base in Subic Bay (Reyes 132). It is important to acknowledge

that the base provided a platform for numerous servicemen to visit the Philippines, resulting in a complex dynamic where some sought to exploit local women (Yuh 11).

By referencing this family tale, Guapdad 4000 sheds light on the entangled histories of colonialism, U.S. military presence, and the intimate relationships formed during that time. The lyrics invite us to critically examine the impact of imperialism on personal narratives and intergenerational connections, highlighting the complex power dynamics at play. Through his music, Guapdad 4000 contributes to a broader conversation on the lasting effects of colonialism and the resilience of communities in navigating these legacies.

The enduring Filipino contributions to the American musical legacy stands as a testament to the transformative power of music and the profound connections forged between African American and Filipino communities. Through their artistry, from the pioneering Godino Twins to the boundary-breaking Sugar Pie DeSanto and contemporary artists like H.E.R., these musicians have embraced their shared heritage, challenging norms and shaping the landscape of Black American roots music. Their music not only reflects the intersectionality of their identities but also serves as a powerful vehicle for resistance and social consciousness. H.E.R.'s Grammy win for "I Can't Breathe" exemplifies the ongoing struggle against systemic racism, amplifying the voices of marginalized and oppressed communities. Moreover, the broader Filipino American Hip Hop music scene, with artists such as Chad Hugo, Bambu, Ruby Ibarra, and Apl.de.ap, Guapdad 4000 and many more continues to contribute to the Afro-Filipino musical legacy, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of the shared struggles and triumphs of these cultures.

### **3.5 Unifying Voices: Filipino Contributions to Black American Music History and Cultural Resistance**

In conclusion, the contributions of Filipinos to Black American music history extend far beyond mere extraction or appropriation. They represent a collaborative and shared struggle rooted in resistance against Western and Eurocentric colonial ideologies (Roberts 101). Music serves as a powerful platform for polycultural exchange, defying racial categorizations and bridging disparate histories. It stands as a unifying force, promoting peace, love, and unity among diverse communities.

The Godino twins' narrative is a captivating testament to the intersection of identities and the impact of historical context. Despite not being African American, their Filipino heritage and unique conjoined twin status contributed to a distinct life experience. During their active years from 1929 to 1936, they were marketed in spaces that mirrored the segregated nature of the time, reminiscent of 'Black only' or 'colored only' environments. This historical backdrop of racial segregation and discrimination undoubtedly influenced their careers, adding an intriguing layer to the discourse on Afro-Filipino cross-cultural musical exchanges. As Filipino musicians propagating Black American sound, their contribution to musical history extended beyond mere absorption or appropriation. Their active participation and interpretation represented a cooperative and shared endeavor, challenging prevailing Western and Eurocentric colonial ideologies.

The Godino twins' journey reflects a broader pattern that goes beyond extraction or appropriation. It highlights the collaborative and cooperative spirit of Filipinos in the development of Black American music history. In defying racial stereotypes and bridging different historical narratives, music emerges as a powerful platform for intercultural exchange. It becomes a unifying force that fosters peace, love, and unity among diverse communities. The remarkable story of the Godino twins serves as an exemplification of the profound convergence between African

Americans and Filipinos within the realm of music. Their musical talent, showcased despite societal expectations, left an indelible mark on the narrative of Black American music. From their humble beginnings in a Coney Island Freak Show to their eventual rise as the headliners of an all-Filipino jazz band, the Godino twins embody the resilience, creativity, and mutual appreciation that characterize the shared cultural heritage of these two communities.

Afro-Filipino musical connections are an embodiment of cultural resistance. The stories and experiences of the Godino twins and other Filipino musicians engaging in Black Music, as significant figures in this narrative, lay a strong foundation for my research. Through a comprehensive exploration of historical context, analysis of musical collaborations, and examination of narratives and experiences of Afro-Filipino musicians, I illuminate the profound significance of these collaborations in challenging colonial logics and fostering meaningful cultural exchange.

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## CHAPTER 4. CONJOINED MUSICIANS: THE GODINO TWINS AND THE INTERSECTION OF DISABILITY, VISUAL CULTURE, AND IDENTITY

### 4.1 A Lifetime as Filipino and Conjoined: A critical fabulation



Figure 5. Elegance and Prestige: The Godino twins and their wives exude timeless style and sophistication beside a Rolls-Royce Phantom I. Photo sourced from Ambeth R. Ocampo

Step into our world and witness the captivating tale of the Godino twins unfold before your eyes. Our narrative weaves through the realms of disability, visual culture, and identity, revealing a journey filled with both challenges and triumphs that defy the limitations imposed upon us. The photograph, a portal to the past, beckons your gaze. There we stand, inseparable, our bodies conjoined at the hip, a testament to the intricacies of our shared existence. It captures a moment, encapsulating the essence of our being and inviting contemplation.

As visual culture intertwines with the study of disability, the historical significance of freak shows emerges from the shadows. As you heard us mention earlier, we are no stranger to these freak shows. We helped make them cool. These spectacles shaped the very fabric of Western societies, molding perceptions of normality and deformity while perpetuating ableist beliefs. Within this landscape, we, the Godino twins, were unwilling participants, labeled as "freaks" and "oddities," reducing us to mere curiosities.

However, within the midst of this spectacle, we catch glimpses of empowerment, a delicate interplay between exploitation and agency. Our bodies, subjected to the scrutinizing gaze of onlookers, serve as a canvas upon which society projects its biases, fears, and preconceptions. Until now, we have led lives that were relatively ordinary. Yet, amidst this struggle, instances of self-determination emerge, enabling us to transcend the confines of misrepresentation and affirm our inherent humanity. We refuse to be misunderstood or toyed with. We, just like you, deserve to be treated with dignity.

Various visual mediums become our battleground, where representations of our existence take shape. We become the "other," embodying difference and challenging society's preconceived notions. As objects of study, our bodies are commodified, and our experiences become fodder for public consumption. However, within these representations, we reclaim our narrative through the excellent performance of our music, shattering the shackles of misrepresentation and asserting our autonomy.

As conjoined twins, the visibility we embody plays a pivotal role in shaping public perceptions and deepening the understanding of disability. We serve as catalysts for conversations, challenging societal biases and expanding the boundaries of what is deemed "normal." Each day, we surpass conventional notions of normality simply by existing. Our marriages to our beautiful

wives are a testament to the richness and complexity of our lives. What sets us apart? Why should we be seen as any less normal than any other men?

Our presence demands recognition of our unique talents, accomplishments, and contributions, defying reduction to mere oddities. We defy the confines of narrow categorizations and urge others to acknowledge the richness of our individual experiences. By embracing our full humanity, we strive to dismantle the limitations imposed upon us and inspire others to recognize the immense potential and dignity that lies within each person, regardless of physical form or ability. Together, we challenge society's preconceived notions, paving the way for a more inclusive and accepting world.

Within our prominence, our Filipino identity intertwines with our “disability”, forging a powerful fusion that disrupts prevailing narratives. We reject the notion that our bodies must be fixed or normalized, challenging the Western obsession with finding a cure. Our existence defies the gaze that seeks to pity or exoticize us. We are not cursed, nor broken. We are made divinely in God’s image. We embrace the interconnectedness of our bodies and minds, affirming our Filipino heritage and asserting our right to be seen as whole individuals.

Standing before the Rolls-Royce Phantom I, an emblem of status and success, we make our resounding statement. We are men; we are human. Dressed in tailored garments, accompanied by our beloved wives who share our twin bond, we emanate pride and confidence. The car symbolizes our triumph over the confines of spectacle, a testament to our journey as accomplished musicians who create art and beauty.

In the world of spectacle, we were commodified and advertised as the Siamese twins, a nod to the legendary Chang and Eng Bunker, the original conjoined twins who captivated audiences in the 19th century. Yet, while we pay homage to those who came before us, we bring

a different flavor, a unique swagger that sets us apart. With all due respect to the countless other performing conjoined twins, we dare to believe that we are the best.

Singing, dancing, and playing instruments as conjoined twins became our art form, our medium of expression that transcended the physical limitations imposed upon us. Our voices harmonized as one, intertwining in perfect synchrony, captivating audiences with the richness and depth of our melodies. The nimble movements of our bodies, fused by flesh and bone, became a testament to our hyper ability and proficient artistry. We mastered choreography and dance moves that seemed impossible for conjoined individuals, defying expectations and surpassing the boundaries of what society deemed possible.

To us, disability is but an idea, a construct that fails to capture the essence of who we truly are. We are more than the sum of our physical form; we are men, with dreams, passions, and an unyielding determination to succeed. Our conjoined bodies may evoke curiosity and fascination, but they do not define us. We navigate the world with a resilience and fortitude that surpasses the limitations society may impose upon us. In our hearts, we are whole, and our abilities as musicians and performers are unrivaled.

With every note we strike, every step we take, we challenge the notion that disability is synonymous with inability. We are proof that the human spirit knows no bounds, that the power of determination and talent can overcome any obstacle. In the realm of artistry, we command attention and demand recognition, not as mere curiosities, but as skilled artists who have honed our craft to perfection.

So, as you witness our performance, dear observer, let our music stir your soul, our dance moves ignite your spirit, and our confidence inspire you. We are more than just conjoined twins; we are the embodiment of resilience, talent, and the indomitable human spirit. Disability may be

a label that is placed upon us, but we transcend such notions. We are men, artists, and performers who have forged our own path, leaving an indelible mark on the world.

This image of us holds immense significance. It shapes our narrative, challenges societal norms, and demands a critical reevaluation of ableist and racist ideologies. They didn't preserve our music very well, but they preserved our photos. You can see us. And through our visual story, we celebrate the radiant presence of individuals with disabilities in the world of art, demanding a world where barriers are dismantled, and inclusivity prevails. Embrace the strength and resilience found within our conjoined bodies.

We are not disabled; we are hyper abled. We can do things others can't, twice as fast and twice as excellent! Don't believe us? Buy tickets to our next show. You'll see!



Figure 6. Nurturing Bonds: The Godino twins receive care in the loving embrace of their wives. Photo sourced from WorthPoint Photos.

The bond between Lucio and me, Simplicio, was unlike any other. We shared not only a physical connection but a deep, unbreakable bond that transcended our conjoined state. As we traversed the journey of life together, we refused to be mere passive subjects in the face of medicalization. We were keenly aware of the curiosity and objectification directed towards us within the medical realm, where we were reduced to anomalies to be examined and studied.

Restlessness and curiosity coursed through my veins, refusing to accept the preconceived notions and narratives that others constructed around us. Our unique existence made the world see us as possessing extraordinary abilities, both intellectually and physically. Our conversations were deemed extraordinary, our musical talents applauded, and our physical prowess left spectators in awe.

The concept of surgical separation held a promise of liberation from the constraints of our conjoined state, tantalizing us with the prospect of a so-called "normal" life. Whispers of this possibility circulated around us, offering a glimmer of hope. Doctors promised a separation achieved with relative ease, without endangering the life of the other. It portrayed the surgical separation as the ultimate solution, an escape from our conjoined existence.

As adulthood approached, we were forced into the daunting task of separation. Lucio, my beloved twin, fell ill, causing doctors to spring into action. Hope and trepidation entwined within my heart as I contemplated the unknown that lay ahead. But, as fate would have it, the path that unfolded before us took a cruel and unforeseen turn. Lucio's ailment, initially brushed aside as a common cold, revealed its true nature—an insidious pneumonia resulting from rheumatic fever that had already taken a toll on his weakened heart. In a devastatingly short span of time, he succumbed to the disease, leaving me to grapple with an overwhelming sense of loss and the immense weight of our separation on my own.



The aftermath of Lucio's passing brought about discussions and deliberations surrounding the potential separation of our shared body and mind. The surgical intervention, hailed as a success, had only led to the loss of my twin, exacerbating the doubts and uncertainties that had already taken root within me. Yet, even amidst the tragedy, I resolved to continue my journey, determined to navigate life without the physical presence of my other half.

Artificial organs were integrated into my bodymind—a desperate attempt to sustain my existence, to keep the flame of life burning. Initially, there were no signs of illness, raising hopes that we had triumphed over the odds stacked against us. However, as time unfurled its relentless march, my health began to falter, and the strength that once defined me slipped away like sand through my fingers. The doctors fought valiantly, performing blood transfusions in a desperate bid to save me from the clutches of mortality. Yet, despite their efforts, it all proved in vain.

Cerebrospinal meningitis ravaged my weakened body with a violent onslaught, leaving me defenseless against its merciless grip. I succumbed to its relentless assault, as my existence slipped away into the eternal embrace of death. The surgical intervention, intended to grant me a chance at a "normal" life, proved woefully inadequate in protecting me from the ravages of this formidable foe. However, there is more to my story than the physical deterioration that claimed my life.

In truth, it was not solely the devastating impact of the disease that led to my demise. It was the profound loss of my twin brother, Lucio, that shattered my spirit and broke my heart. With Lucio gone, I found myself adrift in a world that felt incomplete and hollow. The artificial organs may have sustained my physical existence, but they could not heal the void left by his absence. The essence of who I was, intertwined with my twin, could not endure the weight of his departure.

Grief enveloped me, consuming every fiber of my being. The pain of his loss became unbearable, overshadowing any hope or desire I had to continue on without him. The strength that

once defined me was replaced by an overwhelming sense of emptiness, as if a vital part of myself had been torn away. I refused to accept a life that lacked the presence of my other half. The bond we shared was far too profound, far too essential to be discarded or replaced. It was as if our souls had been entwined since birth, and without him, I was a mere fragment, a shadow of who I once was.

In the end, it was not solely the physical ailments that claimed my life, but a broken heart that could not bear the burden of existence without my twin brother. The grief and longing became insurmountable, extinguishing the flame of life within me. And so, I embraced death, not as an escape from suffering, but as a reunion with the one who completed me.

In death, I found relief, knowing that we would be reunited once more, and that we no longer had to endure this human existence. The weight of our shared struggles and the burden of being objectified and medicalized had finally been lifted. No longer would we be reduced to mere anomalies to be prodded and examined, stripped of our humanity.

I want our story to serve as a poignant reminder that the pursuit of "normalcy" should never come at the cost of disregarding the profound and unique connections that shape our lives. Let us celebrate the diversity of human experiences and cherish the bonds that make us whole, for it is in embracing our interconnectedness that we truly find meaning and fulfillment in life.

The true extent to which Western medicine contributed to our misdiagnoses, mistreatment, and ultimate demise remains shrouded in uncertainty. The dreams we clung to—dreams of normalcy, liberation, and the pursuit of a singular ideal—were shattered, exposing the fallacy that had enveloped the assumptions surrounding surgical separation. May our untimely demise signify the death of freak show politics and the birth of a society that values every individual, where respect and inclusivity flourish, and where our shared humanity is cherished above all.

## 4.2 From Exploitation to Empowerment: The Journey of the Godino Twins in American Entertainment

“Today disabled people are disdained as inferior and ugly almost everywhere; but in the world of art, the one corner of the human universe with the greatest claim to create and recognize beauty, people with disabilities are radiant.”

- Tobin Siebers, *Introduction: Disability and Visual Culture*

Tobin Siebers' quote highlights the marginalization and societal perception of disabled individuals as inferior and ugly. However, the realm of art offers a different narrative, where people with disabilities often radiate and excel. This chapter shares the captivating experiences of the Godino twins, conjoined Filipino musicians, as they navigate the world of performance within the context of disability and visual culture. By examining the historical significance of freak shows, exploring the twins' interconnected bodymind through Disability Studies scholarship, and investigating the intersection of disability and race, this chapter provides a comprehensive analysis of their story, challenging prevailing norms and perceptions.

Before their musical careers, the Godino twins were exhibited in the Coney Island Freak Show, exposing them to early exploitation. These shows were significant in shaping Western ideologies of normality and deformity, perpetuating ableist beliefs regarding disability. They served as platforms for able-bodied spectators to assert their own identity and superiority over those deemed different or "less than civilized."

Throughout their careers, the Godino twins were consistently labeled as freaks and othered in the marketing and reception of their performances. Even when recognized for their talent and skill, they were referred to as "Siamese Twins," disregarding their Filipino heritage. Drawing parallels with the original Siamese twins, Chang and Eng Bunker, the twins' story underscores the West's enduring fascination with the freak show and its implications for race, disability, and performance.

Drawing from Disability Studies scholarship by Eli Clare and Sami Schalk, this chapter explores the concept of the Godinos' bodymind, which merges their physical and mental aspects. It emphasizes the inseparable connection between the twins' conjoined bodies and their intersected identities of masculinity, Filipino racialization, and disability. Through their existence and unique bodymind, the Godino twins challenge the conventional separation of body and mind, defying white Western perspectives and asserting their Filipino identity.

The chapter discusses the intersection of disability and race within the context of society's focus on "cure." Eli Clare's critique of the Western preoccupation with finding a cure for disabilities is examined, highlighting how it perpetuates stereotypes and overlooks the value of diverse experiences. The Godino twins, with their existence and bodymind, defy these ideals and serve as a counterpoint to the emphasis on curing disabilities. Their story sheds light on the complex dynamics between disability and race, particularly in the context of American attitudes towards Filipinos and people with disabilities.

This chapter emphasizes the significance of talent and musical abilities over societal norms of appearance. It presents examples of musicians with disabilities, such as Ray Charles, Ludwig van Beethoven, and Stevie Wonder, who have achieved recognition and respect for their mastery of their craft, challenging societal expectations and biases. However, the chapter also highlights ongoing debates and challenges faced by musicians with disabilities, such as the incident during Dr. Dre's Super Bowl performance that relegated two deaf performers to a smaller stage, reflecting the barriers and discrimination that persist in the music industry.

The Godino twins' experiences, framed within the context of Disability Studies and visual culture, illuminate the radiant presence of individuals with disabilities in the world of art. Their story calls for a critical reevaluation of ableist and racist ideologies that marginalize and exploit

people based on their differences. Through the examination of the Godino twins' journey and engagement with visual representations, society is urged to confront ableist imaginaries and strive towards a more inclusive and equitable understanding of disability, race, and performance. The legacy of the Godino twins disrupts prevailing narratives and demands recognition and celebration of the diverse talents and contributions that individuals of all abilities and appearances bring to the forefront.

### **4.3 The Exploitation and Legacy of Conjoined Twins in American Entertainment**

The popular success of freak shows in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries provides a lens into American attitudes concerning bodily difference, oppression, and exploitation (Fordham 220). For Lucio and Simplicio Godino, their path to becoming professional jazz musicians with an "all Filipino" band was preceded by their early exposure as attractions in the Coney Island Freak Show, where they were billed as "The Samar United Twins" ("CARNIVAL AND CIRCUS: SAMAR PHILIPPINE TWINS"). Remarkably, these twins were less than ten years old when they found themselves living and working in New York, unable to provide informed consent for their labor agreements, thus further highlighting the narrative of their exploitation. The experiences of Lucio and Simplicio Godino, conjoined Filipino musicians, reveal the pervasive nature of their exploitation from a young age and the enduring legacy of conjoined twins in American entertainment.

The Godino twins' popularity as freak show attractions reflects the prevailing Western ideologies of the early twentieth century, perpetuating the ableist perception of the freak as abnormal and deformed (Cassuto 87). These spectacles were profitable ventures, with the twins manipulated into performing under the guidance of handlers or promotional companies. The inherent exploitation of the freak is an inevitable outcome within this context. The freak show

served as an opportunity for able-bodied spectators to assert their own identity, validating their citizenship, race, and personhood against the backdrop of the supposedly "less than civilized" freak (Thomson 47).

Throughout their career, the Godino twins were constantly associated with the concept of a freak show. Whether in their early years on the freak show circuit or during their later, more refined vaudeville performances, their image and reception by the public consistently reinforced their categorization as "freaks." An example that epitomizes this marginalization can be found in a review of the Godino twins' vaudeville performance in Cincinnati, published in *The Billboard* on January 11, 1930:

"Simplicio and Lucio Godino, known as the Siamese Twins, take the spotlight in this week's show, impressing the audience despite its focus on their 'freak' status. Backed by a talented 10-piece Filipino orchestra, the twins deliver a captivating performance featuring a mix of jazz and native selections executed with remarkable style. The opening segment showcases the band's rendition of popular numbers before the Godino twins make a grand entrance on roller skates. Displaying their versatile talents, the Siamese Twins entertain the crowd with saxophone melodies, a brief solo dance routine, engaging banter, and even share a dance with their recently acquired brides." (Sachs 16)

The author of the review acknowledges the twins' ability to captivate the audience with their skill and talent yet succumbs to the temptation of categorizing them as mere "freaks", disregarding their accomplishments. Unfortunately, the reviewer inserts their own Western and ableist perspectives onto the Godino twins, dismissing them as less than human. Furthermore, the use of the descriptor "Siamese" is improper, as the Godinos are of Filipino ancestry and birthright, not Siamese.

From the moment Terry Turner and Arthur Klein's entertainment production house signed the Godino twins in 1929 ("Turner Signs Filipino Twins" 10), their path to stardom was paved. Turner and Klein had already represented several commercially successful vaudeville acts featuring conjoined twins in the preceding decades. Acts such as Daisy and Violet Hilton and Mary

and Margaret Gibb ("Vaudeville: Terry Turner Partner with Arthur Klein" 39) showcased their exceptional talents in variety shows, incorporating live music, singing, and dancing with remarkable flair. Similarly, the Godinos were improperly advertised as "Siamese twins," despite their Filipino heritage. The term "Siamese twins" carries racial and ethnic implications, originating from the fame of the original Siamese twins, Chang and Eng Bunker, who rose to prominence in the early to mid-nineteenth century, nearly a century before the Hiltons, Gibbs, and Godinos (Orser). Chang and Eng's legacy was so profound that the term "Siamese twins" eventually encompassed all conjoined twins, including those predating the Bunkers and subsequent sets of twins (Rowena 15). Their impact on the discourse surrounding the West's fascination with the freak show, as well as American attitudes towards race, disability, and music performance, cannot be understated (Selim 88). In many ways, the Bunker twins paved the way for the Godino twins to enter the American consciousness, further highlighting the misconception that the Godinos are also commonly and incorrectly referred to as Siamese twins.

Cynthia Wu's book, *Chang and Eng Reconnected: The Original Siamese Twins in American Culture*, serves as a case study, examining the dynamics of power within American society through the lens of the Bunker twins (Wu 15). Wu employs a transhistorical analysis, delving into sources from the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries that depict the Bunkers in various facets of popular culture (Wu 15). Through an interdisciplinary approach, she dissects a wide range of artifacts, including medical journals, print advertisements, fiction and non-fiction literature, photographs, legal documents, and more, to explore the multifaceted impact of performing conjoined twins on different aspects of culture. This rigorous analysis invites us to contemplate the diverse entry points of culture affected by these twins and the significance of their legacy in fields such as Asian American Studies, Music History, Visual Culture Studies, and

Disability Studies (Spencer 17). Drawing inspiration from Wu's methodology, I adopt a similar approach in my exploration of the Godino twins. In the American political consciousness, the Godinos represent a contemporary manifestation of the performing conjoined twin tradition established by the Bunkers a century ago.

The significant time span between the acts of the original Siamese twins, Chang and Eng Bunker, and the newer Filipino "Siamese" twins, Lucio and Simplicio Godino, underscores the prominence and profitability of presenting conjoined twins as entertainment for show promoters. In her book *The Freak-Garde: Extraordinary Bodies and Revolutionary Art in America*, Robin Blyn extensively discusses the popularity of freak shows and highlights their close connection to American capitalism and consumption practices (Blyn 41). Over the course of a hundred years, the enduring demand for such entertainment reveals the American market's fascination with consuming performances by conjoined twins on musical stages. The narrative of the Godino twins adds to the ongoing discourse surrounding conjoined twins who graced American theater stages during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, further enriching our understanding of this phenomenon (Blyn 41).

Through the exploration of Lucio and Simplicio Godino's journey from the freak show circuit to their later vaudeville performances, it becomes evident that their marketing and public reception consistently othered them as "freaks." Even in instances where their talent and skill won over audiences, they were still relegated to the status of freaks, reinforcing ableist perspectives (Sachs 16). The exploitation of the Godino twins was perpetuated by their portrayal as abnormal and deformed, aligning with the prevailing Western ideologies of the early twentieth century (Cassuto 87). Furthermore, the mislabeling of the twins as "Siamese," despite their Filipino



heritage, reflects a broader trend in misrepresenting and exoticizing conjoined twins in American entertainment (Orser).

In conclusion, the story of Lucio and Simplicio Godino exposes the exploitation and marginalization faced by conjoined twins in American entertainment. Their experiences within the freak show circuit and their subsequent career in vaudeville serve as a poignant reminder of the ableist attitudes and capitalist motivations that underpinned the popularity of freak shows (Fordham 220; Blyn 41). By examining their journey alongside the broader historical context, we gain valuable insights into the enduring legacy and complex societal dynamics surrounding conjoined twins in American culture.

#### **4.4 The Godino Twins and their Bodymind: Intersecting Disability and Race**

The Godino Twins, Simplicio and Lucio, mesmerized audiences during their jazz band tours in the 1920s and 30s, not only through their musical prowess but also with their unique physicality as conjoined twins. The twins' distinctive bodymind, a union of physical and mental aspects, presents a fascinating confluence of race and disability. This essay explores the Godino Twins' physical attributes, investigates the concept of bodymind using Disability Studies scholarship of Eli Clare and Sami Schalk, and considers the ways in which their Filipino racialization and conjoined existence shaped their experiences. By untangling these intertwined aspects, we gain insight into the ideologies of ableist dominance and racial othering perpetuated by the American public.

In considering photographs of the Godino twins, their physical appearance is striking. To fully appreciate their uniqueness, one must view them as definitively spectacular; they demand attention. During their jazz band tours in the 1920s and 30s, they were often seen adorned in elegant attire, brandishing musical instruments (Garcia). Despite their ability to blend in Western

attire, as evidenced by images from their time in the Vaudeville circuit, it's challenging to overlook their Filipino features - brown skin, dark hair, and a distinctly Asian phenotype. Yet, their Filipino identity is inseparably tied to their conjoined existence. Simplicio and Lucio shared everything; their lives were synchronous, a single shared experience. It's unimaginable to consider their lives as separate entities.

The Godino twins' shared bodymind is a compelling perspective to consider through the lens of Eli Clare and Sami Schalk's Disability Studies scholarship. Both authors elaborate on bodymind discourses inspired by and developed upon Margaret Price's pioneering work. According to Price, mental and physical processes are fundamentally interconnected, even when traditionally perceived as separate (Price 269). Clare and Schalk build on this concept but focus on specific topics. Clare confronts the notion of "cure," examining how white Western medicine seeks to "fix" or "repair" the bodymind. Schalk, conversely, explores disability through the lens of bodymind and intersectionality, applying this grounding to an analysis of Black women writers' speculative fiction. Building upon these scholars' work, I explore the intersecting conditions of the Godinos' bodymind, specifically their masculinity, Filipino racialization, and disability (via their conjoinedness).

Clare emphasizes the symbiotic relationship between body and mind, critiquing the societal tendency to separate these elements - a dualism that Clare sees as pervasive in white Western culture (Clare, xvi). In Clare's view, understanding bodymind as a unified entity resists this separation. Accordingly, the Godino twins, sharing a biological vessel, exist not as separate entities but in unison, their intersected identities inextricably linked. Simplicio and Lucio represent a singular existence.

In contrast, Sami Schalk views "bodymind" within discussions about the impact of racism on people of color, specifically Black women (Schalk 4). Schalk reimagines the term "bodymind" to include nonphysical experiences of oppression and overall well-being, examining how these experiences are portrayed in Black women's speculative fiction. Schalk considers bodyminds through an intersectional lens, interpreting (dis)ability, race, gender, and sexuality as simultaneously existing identities, experiences, systems of privilege and oppression, and historically situated social constructions with material effects (Schalk 7).

Continuing her discourse on the intersection of race and disability, Schalk emphasizes the significance of the American freak show, highlighting its pivotal role in perpetuating oppressive narratives. Schalk contends that the relevance of the freak show in preliminary studies of race and disability has greatly influenced her work, as its decline in the 1940s coincided with the emergence of speculative fiction and the so-called Golden Age of Science Fiction (Schalk 11-13). She asserts that the freak show held a unique sway over American society as it presented non-Western or disabled individuals as objects of amusement for the general public (Schalk 11). The Godino Twins, who spent most of their lives on display, aptly illustrate how the American public absorbed their bodymind, solidifying their position in American freak show history.

In *Brilliant Imperfection: Grappling with Cure*, Eli Clare presents an intricate "mosaic" critique of disability within the context of a white western patriarchal society. Clare's race commentary is incisive, as he candidly discusses the contribution of affluent white men to ablism and violence against the disabled community (Clare 11). Clare criticizes the pursuit of a cure for disabilities, highlighting how it reinforces stereotypes and negatively affects individuals living with disabilities. Instead of embracing the diversity of human conditions, Western culture fixates on 'curing' them (Withers 17). This critique helps illuminate how the Godino twins, with their

conjoined bodymind, challenged whiteness and racial norms. Their Filipino heritage, when intersected with their physical state, intensifies their otherness, illustrating the American attitudes toward Filipinos and the disabled.

Furthermore, Clare scrutinizes race in his exploration of the derogatory trope of the term 'monkey'. In a chapter titled "Living with Monkey", he shares the background history of the term as an insult against people with disabilities. Clare illustrates how, for centuries, disabled individuals and people of color have had to endure being likened to monkeys (Clare 115). He traces this association back to early twentieth-century freak show advertisements, where such slurs as "Ape Girl" and "The Missing Link" were used to promote human attractions (Taylor 211). Clare argues that such commercial exhibitions epitomize the exploitation, power dynamics, and violence against disabled bodyminds. He concludes with the assertion that the term "monkey" has become entangled with racism, colonialism, and ablism.

Drawing upon Clare's scholarship, we can gain insight into the lived experiences of the Godino twins. As previously mentioned, they spent over two decades on exhibit - first at the Coney Island Freak Show as a 'freak attraction', later as part of a traveling jazz band ("Inseparable Brothers Throw Party for Press and Others"). Their rise in popularity coincided with the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair's Philippine Exposition, which in itself was akin to a freak show. This exposition showcased 'exotic' individuals to a white Western audience, enabling American society to voyeuristically enjoy the 'Filipino condition' just a few years after the U.S. annexed the Philippines as a colony post the 1898 Spanish-American war. Such exhibits reflected public attitudes towards human attractions and Filipinos, who were perceived as less than human and ill-suited for the modern world (Erevelles).

The exhibition of human zoos dates to the dawn of recorded history, with the public's fascination with human anomalies being a consistent thread through time. This practice became highly profitable in the eighteenth century when entrepreneurs began seeking individuals with unusual appearances for Western audiences' entertainment. Saartjie Baartman is a poignant example of this phenomenon. Sold into slavery by Dutch traders, she was paraded in England and France due to her large breasts and buttocks - characteristics typical of her people. Labelled the "Hottentot Venus", she was exploited as a symbol of racial inferiority and sexual deviance. Her display was highly profitable for her handlers and provided a crucial link between freak shows, museums, and circuses (Mothoagae 71).

Despite her tragic death at the age of twenty-six, parts of Baartman's body were displayed in the Musée de l'Homme (Museum of Man) in Paris until 1974, reinforcing Western prejudices about African people. It was only in 2002 that her remains were returned to Africa, following a request by South African President Nelson Mandela. Baartman's story exemplifies society's capacity to commodify individuals deemed different due to their race or body, even posthumously. Her display in various venues underlines the continuity between colonial logic and the culture of difference and exploitation exhibited at freak shows, circuses, and museums (Howard).

Supplementing my analysis of the Godino twins is the acknowledgment that Filipinos were exhibited as living displays even before the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair. Michael C. Hawkins, in his article "Undecided Empire: The Travails of Imperial Representation of Filipinos at the Greater America Exposition, 1899", unveils the first Filipino exhibition at the 1899 Greater America Exposition in Omaha, Nebraska. Hawkins elucidates how this 1899 exposition provided a "critical baseline" that molded the narratives of representation in future Filipino exhibitions, notably at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair. This earlier exposition positioned Filipinos as colonial acquisitions,

with over seventy-five live human displays, and exhibits featuring "captured war material" and "trophies" from conflicts in the Philippines (Hawkins 350). According to Hawkins, the 1899 exposition fostered the portrayal of Filipinos as "exotic, savage, and primitive" in line with the colonial and imperial ambitions of the United States. This underscores the view of Filipinos as others, defined by their race and body under the guise of Western colonial domination.

In her work, *Bodyminds Reimagined: (Dis)ability, Race, and Gender in Black Women's Speculative Fiction*, Sami Schalk asserts that "the field of disability studies, while often attentive to gender and sexuality, has frequently sidestepped issues of race, remaining focused on white experiences and representations of disability" (Schalk 11). Schalk's critique echoes Clare's critique of white Western patriarchal norms in the discourse on disability. This discussion surrounding the Godino twins presents an opportunity to expand academic discourse at the intersections of race and disability, given their otherness, both racially (due to their Filipino heritage) and physically (because of their conjoined nature). Adopting a Disability Studies perspective that takes into account the racial implications of the Godinos' experiences and bodymind illuminates the ableist dominance perpetuated by the American public (Linton 111).

The Godino Twins represent an intriguing nexus of physical appearance, bodymind, race, and disability. Their existence defies conventional norms and expectations, challenging the mind-body dualism propagated by white Western culture. Through the prism of Disability Studies scholarship, the twins are perceived not as separate entities but as a singular presence that contests whiteness while asserting their Filipinoness and conjoinedness. Their lived experiences, intertwined with the history of freak shows and the tradition of exhibiting Filipinos as living displays, underscore the ways in which the American public exploited and commodified their bodymind. The narrative of the Godino Twins compels us to critically scrutinize ableist and racist

ideologies, confront the dehumanization and exploitation of those deemed different, and promote a more inclusive and equitable comprehension of disability, race, and identity.

#### **4.5 The Illusion of Cure: The Godino Twins, Western Medicine, and the Perils of 'Normalization'**

The pursuit of 'cure' is a defining characteristic of Western medicine, oftentimes prioritizing the eradication of difference over the comprehension of diverse human experiences. Drawing on Eli Clare's argument that "cure saves lives; cure manipulates lives; cure prioritizes some lives over others; cure makes profits; cure justifies violence; cure promises resolution to body-mind loss" (Clare xvi), this analysis focuses on the poignant case of the Godino twins. Born conjoined, the twins found themselves at the center of medical scrutiny from early childhood, their lives seen as a challenge to be 'cured' and 'normalized' according to Western medical standards. Their narrative serves as a sobering examination of the pervasive, and often detrimental, impacts of such an obsession with 'cure.'

In the paradigm of Western medicine, the focus has historically been, and remains, primarily on finding cures. This relentless pursuit of treatment and rectification is conspicuously apparent in the case of the Godino twins, who were subjected to this medical gaze from their infancy. The early narrative of the twins was significantly shaped by their positioning within this curative obsession. A 1924 publication in the respected medical journal, *California and Western Medicine*, provides a poignant illustration of this dynamic. In this piece, the twins are depicted as subjects of medical curiosity and inquiry - individuals to be examined, studied, and perhaps, 'fixed'. The author of the journal writes:

"Simplicio is quick in manner, restless, and asks a multiplicity of questions, rather fearful that someone may do harm to him, and often asked, "Which one of us are you going to kill?"'" (Van Denburg, M. D. 514)

Indeed, the medicalization of their existence was not passively accepted by the twins. They demonstrated a sharp awareness of their objectification within this medicalized lens, leading to their heightened unease and discontent. Notably in the journal article, the twins' apprehension is vividly depicted, with Simplicio, described as both restless and inquisitive, frequently expressing his suspicions and fear of those around him.

They were attributed with almost superhuman abilities, specifically concerning their intellectual capacity, conversation skills, musical talents, and physical prowess, including their ability to walk, run, and engage in sports. The article further indicates that surgical separation of the twins could be accomplished with "comparative ease without jeopardizing the life of the other," subtly insinuating that such a separation would offer the twins an opportunity to live a so-called "normal" life.

This article on the Godino twins aligns with Sami Schalk's discourse in her analysis of Nalo Hopkinson's novel, *Sister Mine*, which presents the narrative of two separated twin sisters. Schalk contends that Hopkinson's novel disrupts the normative assumption that surgical separation is the safest and most ideal path for conjoined twins. The experiences of the Godino twins echo Schalk's argument. Despite their successful separation as adults, the twins faced severe health complications. Initially, Lucio's ailment was misdiagnosed as a common cold. However, a Manhattan doctor subsequently diagnosed him with pneumonia, which later turned out to be rheumatic fever that compromised his heart. In a tragically short period, Lucio succumbed to the disease, leaving behind Simplicio and sparking discussions about the potential separation of their shared bodymind.

Following a "successful" separation surgery, Lucio was laid to rest, and Simplicio was fitted with artificial organs to support the functioning of his bodymind ("Siamese Severed" 61).



Initially, he showed no signs of illness. However, his health soon began to deteriorate. Doctors attempted to sustain him by performing a blood transfusion. Despite their efforts, Simplicio's body rejected the treatment and he fell victim to a violent attack of cerebrospinal meningitis, leading to his untimely demise. The true extent of how much Western medical malpractice contributed to the misdiagnoses, mistreatment, and ultimate death of the Godino twins remains uncertain. However, Simplicio's death suggests that the surgery may not have been as successful as doctors and media initially reported.

In *Sister Mine*, Hopkinson presents conjoined sisters who, like the Godino twins, grapple with disease even after their separation. Schalk illuminates the fact that one twin is living with scoliosis and a shortened leg, necessitating the use of a cane or crutches for mobility, while the other is managing a liver problem requiring constant medication and occasionally leading to seizures (Schalk, 124). Schalk adeptly challenges the notion that separation surgery invariably permits conjoined twins to lead "normal" lives, with normal serving as a euphemism for nondisabled. Her analysis probes whether this is even attainable, and the narrative of the Godino twins lends credence to her critique. Their unfortunate tale serves as poignant evidence that the surgical separation of conjoined twins can lead to devastating, even fatal outcomes.

In conclusion, the tragic tale of the Godino twins underlines the perils of an overemphasis on 'cure' and 'normalization' within the realm of Western medicine. Their lived experience, marked by intrusive medical intervention and misguided efforts at achieving normalcy, substantiates Sami Schalk's contention that the surgical separation of conjoined twins may not necessarily lead to an ideal or 'normal' existence. Their narrative therefore underscores the necessity for an expanded understanding of normalcy and respect for diverse bodymind experiences. The outcomes for the Godino twins serve as a stark reminder of the risks involved in a single-minded pursuit of a 'cure,'

and stress the urgency of redefining our perceptions of bodymind diversity. This reorientation requires us to move beyond the rigid binary of 'cure' or 'disease,' toward a more inclusive conception of human existence.

#### **4.6 Transcending Boundaries: The Impact and Influence of Musicians with Disabilities**

The music industry has historically been a platform for the extraordinary, often elevating artists who challenge societal norms, thereby transforming the perception of 'normalcy.' Musicians who deviate from these norms, especially those with diverse bodyminds, have continually intrigued and captivated Western audiences (Kuppers 141). It is not merely their distinctive appearances that captivate the masses, but rather their remarkable talents and their ability to rise above societal impositions placed upon them due to their disabilities (Sandahl 45). This fascination with difference transcends mere curiosity, igniting admiration for iconic figures like Ray Charles and Ludwig van Beethoven, who have transcended their physical limitations to deliver unparalleled musical experiences.

Humanity has marveled at musicians like Ray Charles, who despite an inability to see, could paint the most vivid pictures with his voice and instrumentation (Charles 17). His masterful combination of gospel, jazz, and rhythm and blues transcended the barriers of his blindness, serving as a testament to his musical genius. Audiences have long celebrated Ludwig van Beethoven for his musical contributions in the face of the fact that he was partially deaf and still was able to compose great music (Edwards 24). The profound depth and complexity of his symphonies and sonatas, composed amidst encroaching deafness, demonstrated a talent so extraordinary that it refused to be quieted by physical limitations. The stakes of whether these musicians are seen as “able-bodied” pales in comparison to the importance of their actual abilities to play, their contribution to the world of music undeniably monumental and transformative.

In the 1920s and 30s, drummer and jazz band leader Chick Webb was a resident of the Savoy Ballroom in Harlem New York. Chick Webb would go on to be Ella Fitzgerald's bandleader and collaborate as a peer with the jazz greats of his time. Webb was born as, what Western language would call, a hunchback dwarf (Scheib 24). This spinal condition affected his stature. However even at his adult height of just over four-feet-tall, Webb's ability to play music made him a giant. Chick Webb was known to perform for audiences in the thousands and was revered by his colleagues and fans around the world. Furthermore, he was very famous for challenging Benny Goodman, a white jazz band leader who nicknamed himself the "King of Swing." During the faceoff, Chick Webb's band would go on to route Benny Goodman's band at their own claim to fame as the audience favored Webb's swing over Goodman's during their head-to-head matchup at the Savoy ("Chick Webb.flv." *YouTube*).

In more recent years, blind musicians like classical vocalist Andrea Bocelli and Stevie Wonder have captured the public's imagination with their world class talent despite their ability to see (Cesar 3). Their popularity is clear as Bocelli and Wonder are widely considered masters of their craft and heralded for their contributions to the world of music (Rowden 33). In continuation, German classical vocalist Thomas Quasthoff's popularity has also risen. Quasthoff was born "deformed", the result of his mother taking the drug thalidomide during her early pregnancy as a treatment for morning sickness. Quasthoff's arms never fully developed and his right foot faces backward (Quasthoff 47). Despite this, he has commanded the respect of his audiences for the mastery of his craft. Quasthoff is now considered a world renowned and award-winning vocalist performing in the genres of classical opera and jazz ("Thomas Quasthoff & Daniel Barenboim – Schubert: Winterreise, D. 911: 5. Der Lindenbaum (excerpt)" *YouTube*).

In contemporary dialogues surrounding the visibility of musicians classified as "disabled," tensions and controversies persist. A particularly striking instance occurred on February 11, 2022, when Hip-Hop icon Dr. Dre announced his ambitious plan to incorporate two deaf performers, Warren "Wawa" Snipe and Sean Forbes, into the halftime show at Super Bowl LVI (Lage). This progressive lineup, which also boasted industry heavyweights such as Eminem, Snoop Dogg, Mary J. Blige, and Kendrick Lamar, aimed to shatter conventional norms and captivate an audience traditionally accustomed to Pop and Rock n' Roll performances.

However, the aftermath of this promising performance revealed an unsettling truth: instead of sharing the limelight on the primary stage, Snipe and Forbes were regrettably sidelined to a less prominent position (Singh). This episode uncovers the pervasive influence of white Western patriarchal power structures that continually obstruct those whose capabilities deviate from what's traditionally viewed as "normal" (Wong 27). This system, deeply entrenched in colonialism, perpetuates a societal status quo favoring white, able-bodied individuals, emphasizing the urgent need for comprehensive inclusion and recognition in the musical sphere.

In conclusion, music and its power to unite and inspire individuals across boundaries becomes truly transformative when it nurtures diversity and embraces the wide array of human experiences. From Beethoven to Ray Charles, and Chick Webb to Andrea Bocelli, history is replete with examples of gifted musicians who, despite societal perceptions of disability, have soared to great heights. Their resilience, combined with their remarkable talent, stands testament to the potential that lies beyond Western definitions of 'normalcy.' However, the unfortunate sidelining of Wawa Snipe and Sean Forbes at Super Bowl LVI, underlines the persistent and deep-rooted power structures that continue to hinder true inclusivity. It emphasizes the need for continuous

dialogue, advocacy, and action towards dismantling these biases, creating a truly equitable space where talent and passion take precedence over perceived physical attributes.

#### **4.7 The Intricate Lives and Portrayal of the Godino Twins: A Study in Representation and Exploitation**

Born on the Philippine Island of Samar in 1908, Lucio and Simplicio Godino were conjoined twins who catapulted into public prominence due to their unusual condition. Their unique circumstances and ability to captivate audiences led them into a life as childhood performers, primarily with the Coney Island Freak Show. The court ruling in favor of Teodoro R. Yangco, a Filipino politician and businessman based in Washington D.C., over their biological father, Leconcio Godino, changed the trajectory of their lives significantly. This exploration critically scrutinizes the intersection of disability, exploitation, and representation within the context of the twins' lives, in relation to their portrayal within the media, society, and their political and commercial engagements.

In 1918, Leconcio Godino made a plea for custody to the Supreme Court of Brooklyn, New York. However, the courts instead transferred the custody of the Godino twins to Yangco, who was serving the U.S. government as a political ambassador representing the Philippines ("Carnival and Circus: Samar Philippine Twins"). This marked a significant turning point in the lives of the Godino twins, thrusting them into a different realm of existence far removed from their parents' hopes and aspirations.

The image of Teodoro Yangco as a selfless benefactor, philanthropist, and "father of the YMCA in the Philippines," as described in his biography, is somewhat contradictory to the twins' plight ("Yangco, Teodoro R."). His wealth and status, though instrumental in their upbringing and education, may have also contributed to their exploitation within the spectacle of their

performances. Understanding the profitability of performing conjoined twins, I interrogate the role of Yangco, exploring how he might have utilized his wealth and influence to turn the twins into a commodity for public consumption.

Delving into the twins' professional journey, their rise to fame can be attributed to their distinct physical condition and cultural background. Upon Yangco's adoption, the twins were educated, developed interests in sports, and received musical training (Quigley, 75). This multifaceted upbringing set the stage for their future as performers and public figures. The reemergence of the Godino twins in public consciousness as a musical act, however, provokes questions about the underlying implications of their commercial success and exploitation within the entertainment industry ("Pictures: Married! Simplicio and Lucio Godino"). This study draws on disability studies scholarship and utilizes the framework of freak studies to understand the complex dynamics that framed the Godino twins as 'freaks' (Cassuto, 87). The twins, undoubtedly, were under the American societal gaze, contributing to the narrative of exoticism and spectacle. Their journey reflects a complex intersection of the politics of disability, race, and nationality, with the twins embodying both the excitement of the 'other' and the remnants of American colonial influence.

However, over time, public perception and reception of such spectacles have evolved, leading to a shift from the physical sideshow tents to the digital realms of television and the internet (Cassuto, 87-88). Still, the underlying exploitative narratives persist. The Godino twins' performances in the 20th century, through this lens, serve as critical representations of this exploitative trend in the entertainment industry, bolstered by Western imperial rhetoric and capitalistic ambitions.

The twins' musical ability, however, warrants separate consideration. Despite the significant lack of visual and auditory records that complicate the process of examining their musicianship, I have used critical fabulation and Hip Hop to bring them back into the contemporary moment. In the face of scant evidence of their performances, my Hip Hop album aspires to serve as an artistic interpretation of their musical journey, offering a fresh lens to view their talents separate from their conjoined status. It is my hope that this endeavor will humanize the Godino twins, amplifying their story in a culturally relevant and resonant way today.

The brief yet impactful lives of the Godino twins, who tragically passed away in 1936, illuminate several facets of American society in the early 20th century ("Feature News: Ex-Siamese Twin to Stay in Showbiz" 4). Their status as conjoined twins, their Filipino identity, and their musical prowess intersected to create a unique spectacle for the American public. In the broader context, the Godino twins' journey reflects the complexities of disability representation, the exploitation of the 'other,' and the intersection of politics and showmanship within the American landscape. It also underscores the need for a closer scrutiny of societal attitudes towards disability and the influence of historical and political contexts in shaping these perceptions. Their narrative serves as a potent reminder of the enduring impact of societal prejudices, voyeuristic tendencies, and the underlying power dynamics that shape the representation of 'the other' within popular culture.

#### **4.8 Conclusion: The Evolution of the Spectacle**

As key figures in the discourse on freak shows, the Godino twins reflect the intersectionality of music, race, and disability within the American psyche. The twins' existence extends the legacy of performing conjoined twins from the 19th and 20th centuries, serving as a testament to the Western fascination with human spectacles, especially those perceived as unusual

or strange. Their embodiment of otherness, amplified by their racial background and unique physical condition, underscores the intertwining of race and disability.

A comprehensive understanding of such phenomena, particularly the spectacle of performing conjoined twins, necessitates a visual component. As Siebers (250) asserts, conjoined twins like the Godinos bridge Disability Studies with Visual Culture. The striking visual aesthetics of conjoined twins push the boundaries of our ableist imagination, emphasizing the need to witness such a spectacle to truly comprehend it. Modern technology enables us to visually engage with images of the twins, in essence allowing us a guilt-free opportunity to stare and engage with our fascination.

However, no two pairs of conjoined twins are identical (Quigley 5). Each possesses unique attributes and narratives that set them apart, and the Godinos' story is no exception. Despite efforts by Western society to marginalize conjoined twins as "deformed" (Durbach 21), this study aligns with Clare's assertion that many so-called "disabled" individuals may actually be hyper-abled, exhibiting capabilities beyond conventional norms (Peers 655).

This exploration not only contributes to the discourse but also underscores the humanity of these individuals, whose human rights were often overlooked in the wake of their exploitation. In a world where the circus tents of the past have morphed into today's social media platforms, society is compelled to confront its enduring fascination with the exotic, offbeat, and strange. The freak show has not disappeared; it has merely evolved. The Godinos, although born in the Philippines, epitomize a quintessentially American narrative, encapsulating the complex interplay of race, music, and disability in the early twentieth century.



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## CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION

### 5.1 A Convergence of Narratives: A critical fabulation



Figure 7. Triumphant Graduation Day: Capturing the proud moment with my parents as I receive my undergraduate degree in American Studies & Ethnicity with a minor in Music Industry from the University of Southern California in 2014. Photo by Zyaire Porter of Porterhouse Los Angeles.

This photo carries immense significance, serving as a testament to the intricate intersections woven by my Filipino American identity, academic pursuits, and musical aspirations. Proudly standing behind me in this captured moment are my parents, Melvin Sr. and Eleonor, courageous Filipino immigrants who fearlessly left their homeland in the Philippines to pursue their dreams in the United States. Their determination led them to achieve their dream of American citizenship, and they devoted themselves to raising and educating their children in this new land. From their example, I have inherited a profound sense of dedication, strength, and a solid

commitment to the pursuit of knowledge and excellence. As the first-ever Villaver born in the United States, with the successful defense of this dissertation, I am also poised to become the first in my family to earn a Ph.D.

Reflecting on this photo evokes a time of profound breakthrough in my life. As I approached the completion of my bachelor's degree in American Studies & Ethnicity with a minor in Music Industry at the University of Southern California, a transformative journey of self-discovery unfolded before me. Under the guidance of the insightful Dr. Shana L. Redmond, I embarked on an unforgettable research expedition during a summer undergraduate research fellowship, immersing myself in the captivating realm of the Entertainment Music Industry Archive (EMIA). Fueled by a yearning for representation and a deep-rooted desire to unravel the intricate layers of my cultural heritage, my path was propelled forward.

My quest was to unearth the stories of Filipino musicians who left an indelible mark on American music. It was during this search that the Godino twins emerged from the annals of history, their names illuminated in a significant amount of Billboard and Variety articles returned from the EMIA, celebrating their exceptional features, performances, and notable achievements. This discovery resonated profoundly with me as a Filipino American musician, yearning for recognition and visibility within a landscape that had yet to fully embrace our presence. Their story became a powerful catalyst, igniting a fire within me to carve my own path and contribute to the ongoing narrative of Filipino American musical excellence.

As I explored deeper into the archives, my astonishment grew exponentially. In an era overshadowed by the dark cloud of Jim Crow segregation, where racial barriers cast long shadows over the dreams and aspirations of marginalized musicians, I stumbled upon a revelation that defied all expectations. Printed advertisements, resplendent with captivating visuals and bold

headlines, prominently featured Filipino musicians. This was an epoch when Filipinos, too, found themselves in the paradoxical position of being territorial colonial subjects of the United States. Yet, against all odds, the Godino twins emerged as radiant examples, blazing trails in the Filipino American music scene.

Amongst a landscape where opportunities were scarce and barriers seemingly insurmountable, these remarkable twins shattered expectations. Not only did they possess extraordinary musical talents, but they also defied the boundaries of physicality, as their conjoined existence symbolized a shared resilience and unity. Their presence as Filipinos performing in the (Black) American musical spaces of the early twentieth century was a testament to the unyielding spirit of a community grappling with both the weight of colonial legacies and the struggle for recognition.

Through their inclusion in headline features, the Godino twins shattered the constraints of societal norms, boldly showcasing the quality of their artistry and the impenetrable spirit of human resilience. In an era plagued by racial discrimination and entrenched social hierarchies, their presence defied categorization and opened up a space that was uniquely theirs. Their remarkable journey resonated not only within the United States but also across borders, as they graced stages from Vancouver, B.C. to Los Angeles, from Cincinnati to Washington, D.C., and all the way to the pulsating heart of New York City. Their performances captivated audiences, transcending boundaries and leaving an indelible mark on the collective consciousness of a nation.

During my undergraduate years, being proudly Filipino in the music industry was not as commonplace as it is today. However, my discovery of the Godino twins shattered that perception, revealing their remarkable journey of success as Filipino musicians despite their conjoined and racialized condition nearly a century ago. Their story became a profound source of inspiration,

highlighting the firm power of Filipino persistence, talent, and identity. Through researching this topic and uncovering the legacy of the Godino twins, any doubts regarding the significant contributions of Filipinos to the music industry were unequivocally solidified. Their story serves as a testament to the enduring presence and invaluable contributions of Filipino musicians throughout history.

In my research, I researched into numerous articles and photographs that provided insights into the lives of the Godino twins. However, a crucial component was conspicuously absent—their music. It seemed as though their sonic voices had been muted, leaving a void in the archival record. Driven by an ardent desire to resurrect their musical legacy and bridge the gap between the past and present, I embarked on a unique and imaginative pursuit. This dissertation represents a fusion of two distinctive methodologies: critical fabulation and Hip Hop. Through the intertwining of these approaches, I created conjoined artifacts—a Hip Hop mixtape and a literary document—where the theoretical foundations explored in the literary document inform the construction and conceptualization of the mixtape. By employing critical fabulations of their photos and literature reviews that inquire into the theoretical underpinnings shaping my understanding of the Godino twins' Filipino racialization, interventions in Black American music vernaculars, and the perception of their conjoinedness, I sought to restore their narrative to its rightful place and give voice to their silenced music.

Through this process, I crafted a mixtape titled *Harmonic Resurgence*. This project became a conduit to reimagine and re-envision the Godino twins in a contemporary sonic landscape, infusing their Filipino American identities and racialization into Black American musical vernaculars such as blues, jazz, and Hip Hop. Through this musical fusion, I honored their Filipino heritage and conjoined nature, challenging preconceived notions of ability and disability, and



celebrating the inherent beauty of their shared existence. *Harmonic Resurgence* serves as a testament to the power of music in amplifying voices, reclaiming narratives, and forging connections across time and space.

In my artistic exploration, my mixtape contributes to the ongoing narrative of Filipino American representation, using the Godino twins' story as a catalyst for conversation and transformation. Just as artists like Chad Hugo, Bruno Mars, H.E.R., Guapdad 4000, and Apl.de.ap proudly claim their Filipino heritage today, I hope that my work, alongside their achievements, serves as a testament to the rich contributions and cultural vibrancy of the Filipino American community.

The journey of researching the Godino twins has been a profound exploration of my Filipino heritage, allowing me to forge a deeper connection with my roots. As I became enveloped with their story, I discovered a plethora of Filipino musicians who have made significant contributions and breakthroughs in the American music scene for nearly a century, if not longer. It was a revelation that shattered preconceived notions and highlighted the often overlooked presence and impact of Filipinos in shaping the cultural fabric of the United States.

The Godino twins' narrative served as a catalyst, propelling me to dive deeper into the history and presence of Filipino musicians within the American music landscape. I uncovered remarkable stories of resilience, creativity, and innovation that had been obscured or forgotten over time. These musical pioneers defied expectations, broke barriers, and left an indelible mark on the evolution of various genres, from jazz and swing to R&B and rock.

Through their remarkable contributions, these Filipino musicians paved the way for future generations, challenging stereotypes and expanding the boundaries of artistic expression. Their influence extends far beyond the music itself, inspiring countless individuals, like myself, to

embrace their heritage and celebrate the contribution of Filipinos to American culture. As I excavated the Godinos' forgotten narratives and engaged in the process of fabulating their music, I became reminded of the profound legacy of Filipinos in American music. This newfound understanding fuels my commitment to preserving and amplifying their voices, ensuring that their invaluable contributions are recognized, celebrated, and woven into the larger narrative of American musical history.

During my extensive research on the Godino twins, I faced the challenge of uncovering explicit information regarding their political ideologies in relation to their racialization and conjoined nature. With a lack of direct evidence, I turned to critical fabulation as a means to imagine their perspectives on their Filipino colonial subjectivity, which inevitably played a role in their subsequent marketing and exploitation. Through this exploration, it became evident that their presence within the early twentieth-century Black American musical vernaculars of jazz and vaudeville positioned them within the context of the Blues Epistemology. While I acknowledge the distinct differences between African American and Asian American experiences in the United States, I also recognize the significant contributions made by Asian communities, including Filipinos, in fostering solidarity with African Americans, particularly within the realm of music.

In Chapter 2 of my dissertation, I solidify that Filipinos in America were often racialized within a Black-white paradigm. While some Asians might identify as the model minority, aspiring to live closer to or in proximity to whiteness and perpetuating divisions among non-white ethnic "minorities," Filipinos have historically faced discrimination, violence, oppression, and racist acts from white Americans. This level of ostracization is mutually exclusive, yet the shared experience of marginalization helped forge a connection between Filipinos and African Americans, leading to mutual support and collaboration within musical spaces.

This understanding of Filipinos being racialized within a Black-white paradigm allowed me to shape my fabulation of the Godino twins' existence within this complex framework. They found themselves positioned in a space that was neither fully embraced as Black nor accepted as white. This racialized fabulation of Filipino American identity became apparent in the music I created for *Harmonic Resurgence*. Through rap, I stepped into the Godino twins' perspective, expressing their discontent with being subjected to labor and exhibition. Songs like "Welcome to The Freak Show" and "Looking Glass" serve as vehicles to convey their experiences and challenge the oppressive dynamics they faced. This mixtape aimed to create a space where their voices could be heard and their narratives could be reclaimed, contributing to a broader conversation on racial identity and resistance within the American music landscape.

In the vibrant music scene of the 1920s and 1930s, with jazz reigning as the hot and popular genre, the Godino twins emerged as conduits of Black noise on a mainstream level. Their racialized and differently abled subjectivities added depth to their musical expressions, positioning them to speak from subaltern perspectives. Chapter 3 of this dissertation focuses on the shared experiences and spaces between Filipinos and Black Americans, where music became a powerful tool for coping with and envisioning new futures within their colonial subjected and subordinated conditions.

Historical records reveal that Filipino house bands frequently performed blues and jazz in Asian hotels and aboard ocean liners, playing an integral role in the musical scene of the time. While it is important to recognize that Filipinos should not explicitly be considered Black musicians, it is equally crucial to acknowledge the distinct struggles faced by both groups within the racial hierarchy of the United States and the West. My research sheds light on the spaces where Filipinos propagated, collaborated within, and influenced Black American musical traditions.

The technical practice and propagation of jazz by the Godino twins are evidence of early Filipino interventions and influence on Black American musical vernaculars, specifically jazz. It underscores the interconnectedness of these communities and demonstrates the significant contributions made by Filipinos to the evolution of American music, with a foundational understanding that American music is Black music. This recognition celebrates the collaborative nature of musical expression, transcending racial boundaries and fostering solidarity in the face of shared struggles.

Chapter 4 probes deep into the captivating journey of the Godino twins, conjoined Filipino musicians, shedding light on the intersection of disability, visual culture, and identity in their lives. The chapter explores the historical significance of freak shows, immersing readers in the context of these spectacles that shaped Western perceptions of normality, deformity, and perpetuated ableist beliefs. It reveals how the Godino twins were consistently labeled as "freaks" and subjected to othering in the realms of marketing and reception, highlighting the enduring fascination with the freak show and its profound implications for race, disability, and performance.

Drawing upon insights from Disability Studies scholarship, the chapter challenges the artificial separation of body and mind by delving into the concept of the Godinos' bodymind. By exploring the inseparable connection between their physicality and mental experiences, the chapter asserts the twins' unshakable Filipino identity and disrupts notions that reduce their existence to mere deformity. In addition to their Filipino racialization, the chapter also examines the Godino twins' contributions to Black American musical vernaculars, recognizing the dynamic interplay between their unique identity and their artistic expressions.

Moreover, the chapter examines into the intricate interplay between disability and race, critically examining the Western obsession with seeking a cure as well as the limited narratives

that overshadow the diverse experiences of individuals with disabilities. By celebrating the radiant presence of individuals with disabilities in the realm of art, the chapter calls for a critical reevaluation of ableist and racist ideologies, urging society to recognize the invaluable talents and contributions that individuals of all abilities bring to the forefront.

In sum, the journey of researching the Godino twins has been a profound exploration of my Filipino heritage, unearthing hidden narratives and shedding light on the significant contributions of Filipinos to American music. Through my mixtape, *Harmonic Resurgence*, I honor the Godino twins' legacy by fusing their Filipino American identities with Black American musical vernaculars, challenging preconceived notions of race and disability, and celebrating their shared existence. This artistic exploration contributes to the ongoing narrative of Filipino American representation and serves as a testament to the cultural vibrancy of the community I represent. Additionally, my research highlights the cultural interconnectedness between Filipinos and African Americans within the racialized Black-white paradigm, forging connections that promote the creation of music and art. By fabulating the Godino twins' experiences through music, I created a space for their voices to be heard and their narratives to be reclaimed, sparking conversations about racial identity and resistance in the face of white supremacist and colonial logics. Furthermore, my dissertation delves into the shared experiences of Filipinos and Black Americans, the interventions of Filipinos in Black American musical traditions, and the intersection of disability, visual culture, and identity in the lives of the Godino twins. It challenges ableist and racist ideologies while celebrating the resilience and artistic prowess of individuals with disabilities. Ultimately, this research urges society to recognize and appreciate the diverse contributions and experiences that individuals of all backgrounds bring to the forefront of art and society as a whole.

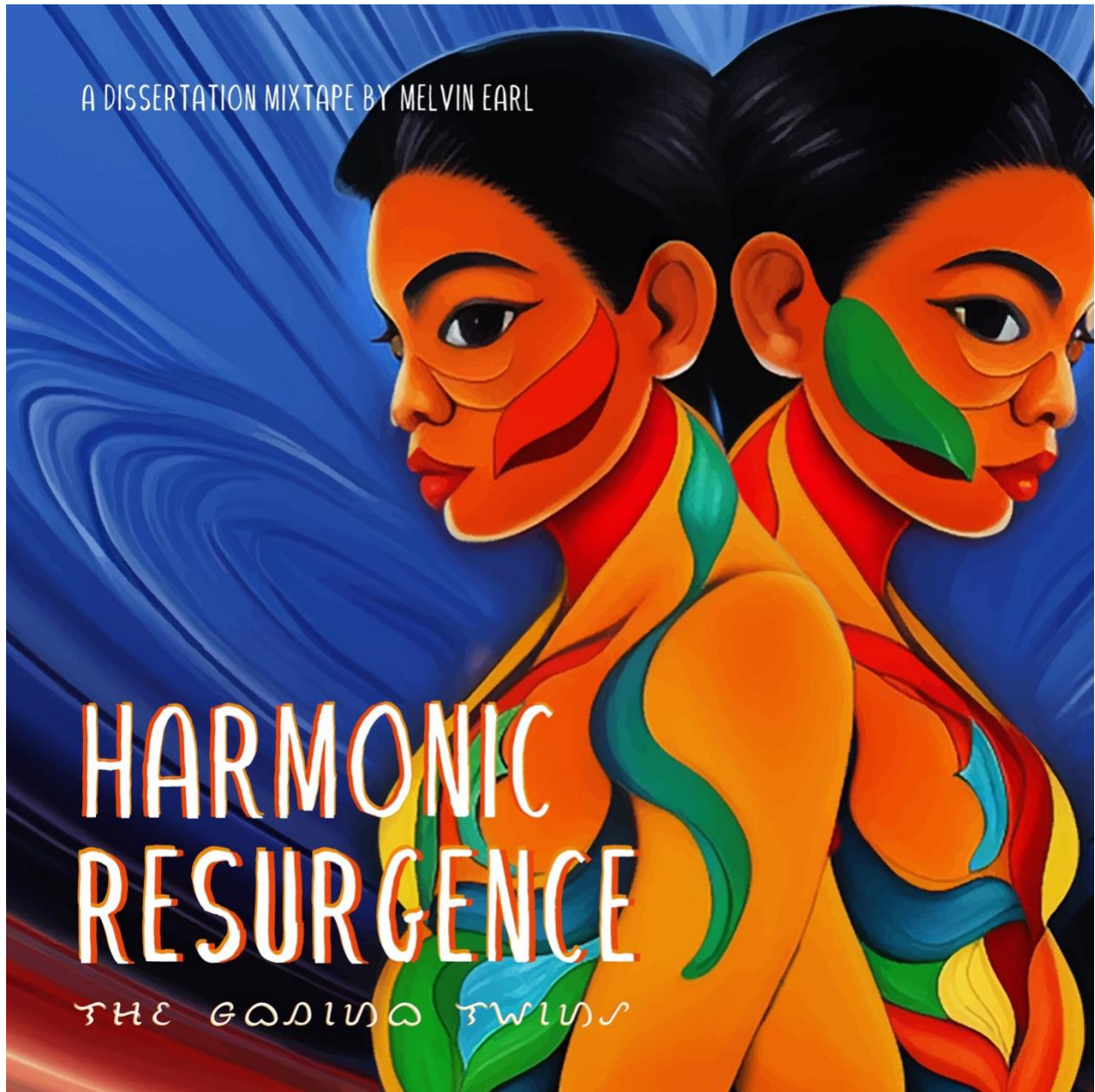


Figure 8. Album artwork for *Harmonic Resurgence* by Shantanu Kashyap

## 5.2 Analysis of the Mixtape, *Harmonic Resurgence*

During an extensive period from September 2022 to June 2023, I embarked on a creative journey to bring the story of the Godino twins to life through the creation of the mixtape titled, *Harmonic Resurgence*. This artistic project was the culmination of years of dedicated research and study that began in 2014 during my time as an undergraduate student at the University of Southern

California and was continued during my time as both a Master's and Ph.D. student at Purdue University starting in 2019. As a firm believer that creating music is both a process and a craft, I took my time and poured my heart and soul into ensuring that the Godino twins' narrative was portrayed in the most compelling and authentic way possible, supported by the research I've conducted.

My main aim of using critical fabulation was to breathe life into the captivating story of the Godino twins. Guided by the profound connection I felt with them, I channeled my musical expertise and immersed myself in their narrative. As I sat in reflective silence within the sacred confines of my music studio, I eagerly sought to hear their whispers, their unspoken melodies that resonated across time. Whenever the spark of inspiration ignited within me, I let the music flow, capturing the essence of their journey. The resulting creation was a labor of love. *Harmonic Resurgence* was not merely a product of chance, but rather the culmination of years of dedicated research and study. With meticulous attention to detail and a deep understanding of their extraordinary lives, my intention was to honor their memory and illuminate their remarkable story through the transformative medium of music.

Within the mixtape, I drew inspiration from Hip Hop—a genre renowned for its ability to seamlessly blend diverse musical influences. Guided by this dynamic approach, I embarked on a sonic exploration, amalgamating myself into an array of genres to weave a rich and eclectic musical narrative. Sampling from genres as varied as blues, jazz, rock n' roll, Disney soundtracks, circus music, and Filipino indigenous and contemporary music, I harnessed the power of these diverse elements to pay homage to the Godino twins' own musical odyssey. Equipped with my trusty iMac, fitted with Logic Pro X as my Digital Audio Workstation, complemented by a Focusrite Scarlett 2i2 audio interface, an M-Audio MIDI controller keyboard, and an MXL 990

condenser studio microphone, I skillfully crafted the intricate layers of sound that would form the foundation of this mixtape. This mixture of musical influences served as a testament to the breadth and depth of the Godino twins' musical journey, transcending boundaries and defying categorization in a celebration of their indomitable spirit.

One notable example of this exploration is the opening record of the mixtape, "Welcome to the Freak Show." In this track, I sampled "UNA," words and music by Neil Cervantes, and arranged and performed by Kuntaw Mindanao. "UNA" is a powerful song that embodies the struggle of the Lumad, the indigenous peoples in Mindanao, as they defend their communities against encroachment and exploitation. By incorporating this sample, I highlighted the Godinos' Filipino heritage and the broader indigenous resistance movements in the Philippines ("UNA (Kuntaw Mindanao)," *YouTube*).

Although the Godino twins originate from Samar, it is important to note that I do not intend to blur the distinction between their specific place of origin and the sampled music. Instead, I employed the method of critical fabulation to comprehend the significance of indigenous sounds in the context of their Filipino identity. One such example is the incorporation of a kulintang sample from the song "UNA" in "Welcome to the Freak Show." The kulintang is a widely practiced indigenous musical instrument throughout the Philippines, and by integrating this sample, I sonically situated the Godinos' Filipinoness within the music. The inclusion of the kulintang sample not only pays homage to their cultural heritage but also enriches the sonic aesthetics of the mixtape, creating a unique fusion of influences that resonates with the Godinos' complex identity as Filipino jazz musicians.

In a deliberate effort to deepen the connection between the Godino twins and their indigenous Filipino roots, I also incorporated a sample of the kubing, an indigenous bamboo mouth



harp, from the audio of the video "GOT Opening Theme Cover | Kontra-GaPi." This particular rendition, arranged and performed by Edru Abraham, an esteemed Art Studies Professor at the University of the Philippines, alongside the ensemble Ang Kontemporaryong Gamelan Pilipino (Kontra-GaPi), offered a distinctive Filipino-Southeast Asian interpretation of the iconic HBO series "Game of Thrones" opening theme. By sampling the kubing segments and integrating them into the composition of the song "Bodymind," I further accentuated the Godino twins' Filipinoness within sounds of the mixtape.

The incorporation of the kubing sample, a bamboo mouth harp with distinct timbre and rhythmic patterns revered in indigenous Filipino communities, infuses the mixtape with an indigenous Filipino sound that surpasses the confines of its Hip Hop medium ("GOT Opening Theme Cover | Kontra-GaPi"). This purposeful selection forges a musical bond between the Godinos and their ancestral heritage, enabling them to reclaim and rejoice in their Filipino identity amidst their conjoined and racialized existence. The inclusion of the kubing sample expands the mixtape's sonic palette, bearing testament to the Godino twins' intricate persona as Filipino jazz musicians who derive strength from their indigenous roots. These conscious musical explorations and samples not only pay homage to the Godinos' heritage but also establish interconnections between their odyssey and the wider musical landscape. By interlacing diverse musical traditions, my intention was to craft a vivid conjoining of sounds that not only honors the Godinos' story but also beckons listeners to acknowledge the profoundness, opulence, and interconnectedness of Filipino indigenous sound and musical expressions.

Amidst the mentioned samples, I purposefully incorporated others of significant importance, such as in the track "Wisdom of the Ancestors" on the mixtape. Here, I sampled "Circus Music" by The Hit Crew, a composition deeply intertwined with the carnival atmosphere

of early 20th century America. This particular sample serves as a thoughtful means of transporting listeners to the circus tents of yesteryears, where eerie and freakish human attractions were showcased (“Circus Music”). By employing the circus music sample, my intention was to evoke the haunting historical context surrounding the Godino twins' performances, while concurrently providing them with a platform to reclaim their inherent dignity and embrace their Filipino heritage within the complex fabric of a colonized, racialized, and differently abled existence.

In a similar vein, I intentionally incorporated a sample from the song "We Are Siamese (If You Please)" featured in Disney's film *Lady and the Tramp*. This particular sample carries significant meaning as it highlights the problematic Western tendency to lump disparate Asian ethnic identities into a monolithic stereotype. The Godino twins, being Filipino, were consistently mislabeled as Siamese, a racist, ignorant, and lazy categorization that fails to honor their true ethnic and cultural heritage (“Siamese Cat Song”). By flipping and sampling this Disney track, I directly responded to the hateful rhetoric and subvert the oppressive narrative imposed upon the Godinos. Their proud assertion in the lyrics of the record, "we are not from Siam, we are Filipino!" challenges the misconceptions associated with their conjoined existence and reclaims their Filipino identity. Through this intentional sampling, the mixtape becomes a platform to confront and dismantle the stereotypes and misconceptions perpetuated by Western discourse, promoting a more nuanced understanding of the Godino twins' true cultural heritage.

Moreover, the use of these samples, combined with the intentional incorporation of the sound of a turntable's power being cut on most of them, serves as a form of sonic reclamation. It enables the critically fabulated Godino twins to manipulate the elements that once confined and oppressed them, asserting their pride as Filipino jazz musicians who are not only highly skilled and accomplished but also extraordinary in their own unique way. Through these carefully chosen

samples, the Godinos reclaim their narrative, transforming their experiences into a source of empowerment and celebration.

This mixtape, *Harmonic Resurgence*, is meant to be played from beginning to end, top to bottom, with no skips, in order to fully experience the intended effect. It takes listeners on a journey that traces the Godino twins' evolution from their early years in the circus and freak show circuit to their emergence as jazz musicians. As the mixtape progresses, the music evolves, subtly shifting in tone and tempo to reflect their musical growth. While the music may not adhere strictly to the conventions of jazz, it captures the essence of their journey and showcases their musical versatility.

Songs like "Self Love" and "Get By" are highlights within the mixtape, showcasing the twins' musical range and serving as a call for collective unity in the face of violence and division. These tracks specifically emphasize the importance of self-love, even in situations where society encourages individuals to believe they are "ugly" or "flawed". The Godino twins' Filipinoness and conjoinedness were seen by some as markers of stains and ugliness, but these records encourage listeners to love the parts of themselves that society deems undesirable. Through their music, the Godinos advocate for self-love as a radical act in a society that celebrates harm associated with difference.

One of the final songs on the mixtape, titled "Farewell," tells the heartbreaking narrative surrounding the Godino twins' tragic end. It explores the forced surgical separation of the twins and the subsequent demise of Lucio and Simplicio. Despite the deemed successful surgery, Lucio fell ill and passed away from pneumonia, leaving Simplicio to navigate the world without his beloved brother by his side. The song encapsulates their unbreakable bond, expressing their longing to be reunited in this lifetime and beyond. It serves as a poignant testament to their profound friendship as twins who spent every day together.

The lyrics of *Harmonic Resurgence* are an integral component of the mixtape, capturing the essence of the Godino twins' story and experiences. In certain tracks, the delivery is brash, boasting the bravado often associated with contemporary Hip Hop emcees. These lyrics serve as powerful expressions of defiance and resilience, echoing the twins' determination to challenge oppressive dynamics and reclaim their narratives. Additionally, there are records that lean more towards rap than singing, adding a dynamic and energetic dimension to the mixtape. Furthermore, some songs feature the Godinos themselves as singers, providing an intimate and authentic portrayal of their musical abilities and voices. To fully immerse yourself in the mixtape's narrative, I highly encourage you to listen to the music while reading the attached lyrics at the end of this chapter. This dual experience of listening and reading will enhance the impact of the music and lyrics and provide a comprehensive understanding of the Godino twins' journey.

"Farewell" tells the story of the diminishing light on their unbreakable bond, highlighting the deep void left by Lucio's absence. Simplicio's longing to be with his brother is expressed, showcasing the true depth of their connection. This final song serves as a bittersweet farewell, lamenting what was lost while celebrating the extraordinary love and friendship shared by the Godino twins, a bond that remains unbreakable even in their physical separation.

The mixtape *Harmonic Resurgence* stands as a powerful testament to the Godino twins' unwavering resilience, reclaiming their narrative and adding their voices to the discourse of Filipino musicians who have shaped American musical history. By experiencing the mixtape in its entirety, listeners are invited to deeply connect with the Godinos' story, embracing self-love and celebrating their own unique identities in the face of societal pressures and divisions. It serves as a transformative medium through which their legacy is honored, inspiring individuals to embark

on their personal journeys with courage and authenticity, while recognizing the indomitable spirit of the Godino twins as they find their rightful place in the annals of history.

### **5.3 A Convergence of Narratives: A critical fabulation continued**

Referencing back to the photo at the beginning of this chapter: As I stood there, enveloped by the warmth of the captured moment, I could not help but feel the weight of my parents' presence standing over my shoulder. Their unwavering support and guidance throughout my journey held profound significance, connecting me not only to my Filipino American identity but also to the larger narrative of migration and dreams of a better future.

As a Filipino American musician, I have come to realize that I am not just an individual pursuing a passion for music; rather, I am a cultural legacy of the Godino twins. Their story lives on through me, and I feel a deep sense of responsibility to share their narrative with the world. In many ways, I may be one of the few individuals in a position to effectively tell their story, drawing upon my own experiences and identity as a Filipino American growing up in the predominantly Black American and Latinx neighborhoods of southside Los Angeles. My chosen path, immersing myself in the world of music, honing my skills through diligent training, and ultimately earning degrees in Music Industry and American Studies, is intricately woven into the larger stories of Filipino migration to the United States. It is a testament to the toughness and creative spirit that runs through the veins of our community, echoing the artistic endeavors and musical talents of the Godino twins. Now, it is my privilege and duty to bring their story to light, ensuring that their contributions and legacy are recognized, celebrated, and woven into the larger narrative of American musical history.

My parents migrated to Los Angeles, sacrificing their lives in the Philippines to build a new home, family, and life in a new home in a new city. If you were to ask them where they would

rather be, The Philippines or Los Angeles, their resounding response would be that they will live the rest of their days in Los Angeles. They embraced their new American identity, fully immersing themselves in the opportunities and possibilities that L.A. offered. Just like the Godino twins, my parents embarked on a courageous journey, leaving behind their respective hometowns in the Philippines in search of hope and a new reality in the United States. My father, hailing from Gumaca Quezon near Quezon City in Luzon, and my mother, from the vibrant city of Cebu in the Visayan island region, carried with them the dreams of a brighter future. Their determination to create a life filled with possibilities anchored their hearts and fueled their spirit.

As their child, I am forever grateful for my Filipino roots and for the opportunities that Los Angeles has provided. Growing up in Los Angeles allowed me to explore my Filipino American identity. Standing upon the foundation they built, I am driven by my parents' sacrifices and support as I strive to create a meaningful legacy of my own. In the convergence of our stories, the remarkable narrative of the Godino twins finds a poignant resonance with the experiences of myself, my parents, and the vast multitude of Filipino immigrants. It becomes evident that the reasons for migration, often rooted in political upheaval and the enduring legacy of colonialism, transcend individual circumstances and echo through generations.

Like the Godino twins, my parents embarked on a journey driven by a yearning for a better future, guided by hope and fueled by their steadfast strength. However, we must acknowledge that migration stories are multifaceted and complex. They are not always characterized by idyllic beginnings or flawless trajectories. Instead, they encompass struggles and triumphs, sacrifices and pain. It is essential that we cherish the entirety of these migration narratives, recognizing the invaluable contributions and resilience of those who dare to uproot themselves in pursuit of a brighter tomorrow. In places like Los Angeles, where Filipino communities have found new homes,

we continue to weave our stories, simultaneously honoring our roots and embracing the opportunities that unfold when dreams are courageously pursued and ultimately realized.

Their immigrant story intertwines with that of the Godino twins, as they all navigated the challenges and complexities of adapting to a new culture while holding committed to their heritage. Just as the Godinos embraced their Filipino American identities, infusing their music with the richness of their roots, my parents fostered a deep connection to their Filipino heritage, passing it on to me, their youngest child, as a cherished inheritance.

As I unearthed the story of the Godino twins during my research, I could not help but recognize the parallel threads that connected our journeys. Their pursuit of recognition and representation in the American music industry resonated deeply within me, reflecting my own yearning to carve out a space as a Filipino American musician. Like them, through this dissertation, I honor my Filipino heritage and contribute to a wider narrative of cultural expression and identity.

In the intertwining of our narratives, I discovered a profound kinship that transcended time and space. The Godino twins' legacy became a guiding light, reminding me of the power of music to bridge cultures, challenge societal expectations, and redefine notions of normalcy. Their story became intertwined with my own, fueling my desire to not only excel as a musician but also to amplify the voices and stories of the Filipino American community, instilling a sense of pride for any Filipino who has desired for representation within American popular culture.

The work I have undertaken in this dissertation holds great potential for future implications and actions. Moving forward, my goal is to publish the music and literary component of this project as a multimedia book and music project. I envision this publication being made available through a reputable academic or mainstream publisher, reaching a wide audience and sparking conversations about the intersection of scholarship, creativity, and the power of storytelling.

Furthermore, I eventually hope to adapt this dissertation into a manuscript of the Godinos' life story with the potential to be turned into derivative creative works such as film, television, and/or musical theater. I would love to see *Harmonic Resurgence* develop into a novel, stage play, or screen play, in addition to other creative mediums to ensure the preservation of the Godinos' story for future generations to critically engage with.

While I have made significant strides in uncovering the Godino twins' narrative, there is still more to explore. I am committed to continuing my search for their sound recordings, digging into different archives and repositories in the hopes of unearthing additional pieces of their musical legacy. These recordings, if found, would not only enrich our understanding of the Godinos' artistic expression but also provide further insights into the musical landscape of the time. Until I find their actual sound recordings, we have my critically fabulated music in the form of *Harmonic Resurgence* to satisfy any need to hear them.

Furthermore, I aspire for this work to serve as a model for future scholar practitioners who embark on similar research journeys. I want this dissertation to be a testament to the possibilities of meshing literary scholarship and creative practice, bridging the gaps in historical records and speaking directly to the voids within the archives. By embracing a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approach and engaging with the complexities of storytelling, future scholars can create projects that are multi-sensory and multi-layered, providing a more holistic understanding of the subjects they study.

In essence, I envision this work as a catalyst for inspiring future dissertations and projects that defy traditional disciplinary boundaries. By fusing rigorous scholarship with creative expression, we can create immersive experiences that captivate and engage audiences, breathing new life into forgotten narratives and amplifying voices that have long been marginalized. Through



this approach, we can reshape the academic landscape and contribute to a more inclusive and vibrant understanding of history, culture, and the arts.

Moving forward, I am committed to the ongoing scholarship and practice of music, fueled by the knowledge and insights gained throughout this research. I am delighted to announce that I have recently accepted an appointment at Clemson University in a joint position as Assistant Professor of Music and Global Black Studies. This new role provides a platform for me to further explore the foundations established in this dissertation, focusing on Afro-Filipino solidarity through music, preserving the Blues Epistemology within the academic sphere, and actively encouraging and propagating Black Studies.

As I embark on this new chapter, I am grateful to be joining an institution that not only values research on Black music but also supports and encourages my continued creative endeavors. Hip Hop music remains an integral part of my identity, and I am thrilled to have the opportunity to continue producing and performing music alongside my academic pursuits. This dissertation, along with my future work, effectively bridges disciplinary boundaries and challenges traditional modes of scholarship. It is my aspiration that this work will inspire future generations of scholar practitioners to undertake interdisciplinary projects that blend literary scholarship and creative practice, creating multi-sensory and multi-layered narratives that resonate deeply.

In closing, I am overwhelmed with profound gratitude for the privilege bestowed upon me to narrate the captivating story of the Godino twins, adding a vibrant thread to the rich conjoining of Filipino and American cultural heritage. As I conclude this dissertation, I recognize that it represents not only the culmination of extensive research and creative exploration but also marks the commencement of a lifelong dedication to understanding my own place in this world. It is a commitment to safeguarding and amplifying the voices of the marginalized, using the

transformative power of music, scholarship, and artistic expression as instruments of change. With untiring resolve, I embark on a lifelong journey to illuminate untold narratives, to uplift underrepresented communities, and to celebrate the diverse mosaic of human experiences. This dissertation serves as a foundation, laying the groundwork for the meaningful contributions I strive to make in the ongoing pursuit of justice, understanding, and the relentless pursuit of a more inclusive world.

## **5.4 Lyrics**

### **5.4.1 Welcome to the Freak Show Lyrics**

We was born up in them other lands  
Philippines is our motherland  
Me and my brother  
Just me and my brother  
When they see us they stop and stare  
Cuz we are something normal people could never comprehend  
Different  
Brown skin, black hair, small stature  
Two minds, one body, no fracture  
Interconnected like that  
So you know what we mean when we say  
I got my brother's back  
Rat tat tat

Connected  
Brodie from the womb to the tomb  
We connected  
Tell me baby am I cutting through  
We connected

Do you know everything we been through  
What a blessing  
Connected  
Me and my brodie  
We connected  
What a blessing  
Me and my brodie  
We connected  
Simplicio:  
I don't know if they feel us, Lu

Lucio:  
Aye keep talking that talk bro.  
Uhh!  
Listen up!

1898 the bayan was under siege  
Four centuries of Spain  
Then entered a new regime  
Anglo America  
What do you want from me  
Rape my momma and my sisters  
Then pillage our family tree  
It ain't only mangoes and rice  
You exporting  
No work sa Pilipinas  
So the people have to flee  
Uhh  
Making dollars while we sing  
Then send money back in remittances  
So the family can eat

Uhh

I keep my family with me

Took us from tatay and nanay young

So they call us a circus freak

Ain't no side show, you paying me

We pulling up in a Phantom

Tailored suits, rocking mink

Lucio:

I know you saw me and my brother

Pull up

Rolls Royce

Something different

Extraordinary

Something you've never seen before

Welcome to the freak show

Connected

Brodie from the womb to the tomb

We connected

Tell me baby am I cutting through

We connected

Do you know everything we been through

What a blessing

Connected

Me and my brodie

We connected

What a blessing

Me and my brodie

We connected

### 5.4.2 Who Am I? (Mr. Godino) Lyrics

That's my twin

Mr. Godino

Mr. Godino, yeah

Mr. Godino

Mr. Godino

That's my twin

Mr. Godino

Mr. Godino, yeah

Mr. Godino

Mr. Godino

Who am I?

A walking intersection

Godino boys, yeah we repping

Conjoined Filipinos, we some legends

Beautiful beyond comprehension

Who am I?

A walking intersection

Disability but still getting it

Really hyperabled evidenced by the tension

That the audience feels when we singing out our message

One of one

Filipino boys just want to have fun

Find us in the Phantom straight cruising in the sun

Stacking every dollar bill

Boy there ain't no free lunch

Through the circus lens

Yeah they viewed us with awe

As if or conjoinedness really was a flaw

Musical giants barely five feet tall

And the girls go crazy when they see us at the mall

That's my twin

Mr. Godino

Mr. Godino, yeah

Mr. Godino

Mr. Godino

That's my twin

Mr. Godino

Mr. Godino, yeah

Mr. Godino

Mr. Godino

Who am I?

Young Lucio

Baby come through shoot it's about to be a trio

Rapping like a griot

Sipping pinot grigio

Straight out the carnival

Like we out in Rio

Who am I?

Simplicio

Looking real fly dressed like Filipino titos

Raking up the fives, tens, twenties, and the c-notes

And I bet it all on black at the casino

Who am I?

Two beats on the same drum

You'd be stunting to if you came were we came from

A set of twins with more clout? Name one

Why you stuttering? Boy this aint the time to play dumb.

A life story arch you could never make up  
Painting perfect pictures, you should come and frame some  
Brodie we're on top  
You're on a lame run  
And I promise you, we'll never change up

That's my twin  
Mr. Godino  
Mr. Godino, yeah  
Mr. Godino  
Mr. Godino  
That's my twin  
Mr. Godino  
Mr. Godino, yeah  
Mr. Godino  
Mr. Godino

### **5.4.3 Bodymind Lyrics**

Bodymind  
Bodymind  
Bodymind  
Bodymind  
Soul to soul  
Something you'd hardly find  
Story that's lost in time  
Ready behold  
Spectacle cruel and it's taking it toll  
We was just youngins forced out on the road  
Manager making like hundreds a show  
While we singing and dancing with nothing to show for it

Bodymind

Bodymind

Bodymind

Pray this body be kind to us

They staring but really they blind to us

We don't know anyone we can trust

Everyone trying to make a buck

Tell me what about this is fair and just

Staring but they aren't hearing us

Bodymind

Bodymind

We are two, yet one of a kind

On the stage in the lights

Tied by fate we still shine

In the eyes of the crowd

Our spirits, they fly

Bodymind

Bodymind

In this life side by side

Oh

In this life side by side

Oh

In this life side by side

Oh

In this life side by side

Oh

In this life side by side

Stuck in a human zoo shackled and chained

Cast for their gaze



In a spectacle dazed  
This is how we've been spending our days  
Two souls emerged yet it's freedom we crave  
Blazing our trail and the road isn't paved  
Making our way brodie day after day  
Making our way brodie day after day  
Harmonic resurgence in every note  
Singing of freedom's what keeps afloat  
From the Philippines, we fresh off the boat  
Performing for masses, we put on a show  
You wouldn't want to be me  
But we gon keep singing until we're truly free  
We are not spectacle, please leave us be  
From inside this cage, music is key

Bodymind  
Bodymind  
We are two, yet one of a kind  
On the stage in the lights  
Tied by fate we still shine  
In the eyes of the crowd  
Our spirits, they fly  
Bodymind  
Bodymind  
In this life side by side  
Oh  
In this life side by side  
Oh  
In this life side by side  
Oh  
In this life side by side

Oh

In this life side by side

#### **5.4.4 Wisdom of the Ancestors Lyrics**

From the Philippines to Coney Island

On this vaudeville stage me and my bro be wildin’

Come on through right here in my tent

Everything seem cool yet it’s utterly violent

Born in this world where difference is scorned

Conjoined and Filipino our identities adorned

They call us freaks, yet they coming back for more

Shoot we selling Black music

You can’t buy it in the store

Exploitation, degradation

That’s the law of this American nation

Exploitation, degradation

Are you hearing all these words that I’m saying?

(Chris Tucker sample from Rush Hour: Do you understand the words that are coming out of my mouth?)

All this for fun and entertainment

Me and my brother like, “Are you entertained yet?”

Look at our pictures, is it painted or it’s tainted?

Audience laughing, but their minds lay vacant

Me and my brother stay patient

Work seven days a week, homie no vacation

Exploitation, degradation

That’s the law of this American nation

Uh

Wisdom of the ancestors

Wisdom of the ancestors  
Wisdom of the ancestors  
Wisdom of the ancestors

In the midst of all this darkness  
We gon always make a way  
Navigating all challenges  
Come what may  
Conjoined body is a symbol of our strength  
Bound together by the rhythm  
We're defying all the hate  
Pinoy roots, yeah it's deep within our soul  
Heritage rich, with these stories untold  
Look at our lineage  
Vibrant and bold  
Survived Spain and American  
Boy them Filipinos cold!  
Wisdom of the ancestors  
Wisdom of the ancestors  
Wisdom of the ancestors  
Wisdom of the ancestors

Take heed to the score  
From Luzon's green mountains  
To Visayan sea shores  
Born in this world where different is scorned  
Cojoined and Filipino, our identities adorned

Wisdom of the ancestors  
Wisdom of the ancestors

#### 5.4.5 They Don't Even Know Lyrics

They don't even know  
Everything that we've been through  
They don't even know  
Everything that we've been through  
But we're still here  
(Still here, still here)  
And we're not going nowhere  
No, nowhere

Brother we done come from out of nothing oh  
Never seen us coming but we're coming for  
Every single reparation that we're owed  
Finally feeling free and so fantastical  
Hop out the whip, asking what's next  
We're paying respects  
The rooking, the vet  
Who making it crack  
Don't get yourself checked  
We've been with the shits  
We're still with the shits  
We're just older and wiser  
Growing in spite of this American nightmare  
That want me to die young  
Two Brown boys but we're pro Black  
Military minded, better know that  
Revolution recorded on audio tracks  
Uplifting the people no Prozac  
We are the kings and the queens  
And spiritual beings  
Don't get caught up with material things

I'm saying keep your heart pure and you will be at peace  
And may the light inside you shine bright and never do cease

They don't even know  
Everything that we've been through  
They don't even know  
Everything that we've been through  
But we're still here  
(Still here, still here)  
And we're not going nowhere  
No, nowhere

Brother we done come from out of nothing oh  
Shining cuz we're from the archipelago  
Water on the beat  
Water on the beat  
I call this here my Pacific ocean flow  
Hop off the boat into the Rolls  
Get it an go  
We are the goats  
From growing up poor  
To touring the road  
You don't want smoke  
With me and my team, we're living out dreams now  
Getting this cream  
And fans start to scream  
"We want Godinos!"  
Two Brown boys wearing black tie  
Hate to break it to you but we're that guy  
Everything we do we're looking mad fly  
Cuz we are Filipino baby that's why

No flexing  
Pay us full in cash, nah we don't accept checks and  
No stressing  
Anything is possible that be the message

They don't even know  
Everything that we've been through  
They don't even know  
Everything that we've been through  
But we're still here  
(Still here, still here)  
And we're not going nowhere  
No, nowhere

#### **5.4.6 Self Love Lyrics:**

Yeah yeah yeah yeah  
Yeah yeah yeah yeah  
Yeah yeah yeah yeah  
Nah nah nah nah nah nah nah oh

Born in Samar  
On an island near a beach  
They in uproar when they see we  
But we only wanna sing  
For you and you  
Coming from far  
But it's closer than it's seems  
Prism lights a trillion beams  
Entire spectrum full and deep

Deep lover

I could show you whole new worlds  
Under covers  
Two become one  
Too much wouldn't wanna  
Pressure make diamonds  
And we pressing on forward  
Take a ride with me  
Multiple facets  
Different sides of me  
Oh  
We just doing our thing  
Put us on stages so we could be seen  
Come come  
See the universe through the eyes of my brother  
Two minds one lover  
Heart shine through  
Lead us out of the struggle  
Take your time with me  
Multiple facets  
Different sides of me  
Oh  
We're just doing our thing  
Dancing on stages  
Living out dreams  
  
Loving you is easy  
Loving me loving you oh  
Loving you is easy  
So wonderful  
  
Gotta love the skin that we in

This a toast to our melanin  
Breaking gates down that they wouldn't let us in  
Playing keep away with our medicine  
I mix the candy with the healing  
Candy paint drippin riding low when you see us  
Go from the islands cuz we wyling with the sound  
Grow from the ocean we got water watch you drown with a frown clown  
We was selling out shows down town  
Before sun down towns  
Fans going crazy when we come 'round now  
Billboard saying that we wow our crowds <sup>[...]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>  
All in attendance for the spectacle that we be  
When really all we dreaming of is how to live freely  
Still showing love holla at me when you see me  
This life gets freaky, we be shining bright in 3D  
I just wanna chill by the water with the family  
We just want our fair share, honesty, integrity  
Carve our own history, change the world viscerally  
Debunk any mystery, with dignity  
The missing link

Deep lover  
I could show you whole new worlds  
Under covers  
Two become one  
Too much wouldn't wanna  
Pressure make diamonds  
And we pressing on forward  
Take a ride with me  
Multiple facets  
Different sides of me



Oh  
We just doing our thing  
Put us on stages so we could be seen  
Come come  
See the universe through the eyes of my brother  
Two minds one lover  
Heart shine through  
Lead us out of the struggle  
Take your time with me  
Multiple facets  
Different sides of me  
Oh  
We're just doing our thing  
Dancing on stages  
Living out dreams

Loving you is easy  
Loving me loving you oh  
Loving you is easy  
So wonderful

Yeah yeah yeah yeah  
Yeah yeah yeah yeah  
Yeah yeah yeah yeah  
Nah nah nah nah nah nah oh

#### **5.4.7 We Are Filipino Lyrics:**

Sample:

We are Siamese if you please  
We are Siamese if you don't please

Lucio and Simplicio:

Aye yo I'm tired of this Siamese stuff bro

I know all in the papers, they be calling us Siamese

We're not Siamese, we're Filipino

Exactly

We're going to let them know, though

We are Filipino if you please

We are Filipino if you don't please

Embracing our roots and proud to reassure

Filipino blood flowing in our core

We are Filipino if you please

We are Filipino if you don't please

Now we're looking forward to a world tour

United we stand a cultural allure

We're not the Bunker twins

We are the Godinos

We are not from Siam

Nah, we're Filipino

Different set of twins, next of kin

We're the truth

They reduced us to the sideshow circus booth

At the World's Fair

They referred to us as savages

No longer confined by everybody's ravages

Uncharted territory, marking new passages

If you call us Siamese, we calling you blasphemous

Don't label us freaks

Can't you hear the revolution whenever we sing?

Conjoined by fate but our heartbeat is free

Filipino pride is our one true decree  
We're not Siamese  
We come from the Philippines and we're proud to be  
Ako ay Pilipino  
Sing it with me  
Lucio and Simplicio  
Proud Pinoy kings

We are Filipino if you please  
We are Filipino if you don't please  
Embracing our roots and proud to reassure  
Filipino blood flowing in our core  
We are Filipino if you please  
We are Filipino if you don't please  
Now we're looking forward to a world tour  
United we stand a cultural allure

Legends of the fall offs  
Can we escape it?  
Story so crazy they should tape it  
Filipino twins getting paper  
Play our instruments and keep it player  
Teddy Yangco got us out in D.C.  
Selling out box offices to party with we  
You could hear the bass bumping all down the street  
All Filipino band, all Filipino team  
Look  
All Filipino me, checking in the hotel  
In the Palomino suite  
Riding Rolls Royce, singing get like me  
We're our Filipino ancestors' wildest dreams

That's the nature of this bond  
Testament of love where we both belong  
We are Filipino baby and we're putting on  
For our cultural legacy  
Represent it strong

We are Filipino if you don't please  
Embracing our roots and proud to reassure  
Filipino blood flowing in our core  
We are Filipino if you please  
We are Filipino if you don't please  
Now we're looking forward to a world tour  
United we stand a cultural allure

#### **5.4.8 Looking Glass Lyrics**

Look  
What do you dream of when dreaming of free  
What does cost and is it what you believed it to be  
Who got exploited for their labor in creation of it  
And who is raking all the profits off the making of it  
Taking public credit for the work of others  
Subordinate the artist while we running up the numbers  
Would you rather be the puppet or the puppet master  
Or the arsonist who burned the theater stage down faster  
A selfish bastard  
What do you dream when you dreaming of free  
Is it chains around your neck or shackle less feet  
Why do they call me such a savage when they savage to me  
Why do they refer as a monkey when they dumber than me  
Why do they exhibit my existence and call me a freak  
All because I am a twin and my brother with me

Took us from the Philippines to perform for the world

Gave us diamond and pearls

This life of luxury

Look

What do you dream of when dreaming of free

Is it the kiss from a lover you ain't seen in weeks

Is it choosing a dollar over family

Are you living in the moment as it's happening

We been working for the man all day

Don't know when we gon see our pay

Easy for you to pass judgment

Staring through the looking glass

Looking glass looking glass

We been working for the man all day

Tell me what's normal anyway

Children laughing as they walking past

Staring through the looking glass

Looking glass looking glass

I am not your pet

I'm not your scapegoat

Not to be studied for you to take notes

I am human

I am a man

I am human

I am a man

Look

Autonomy's in the plan

Tour the world with bro

And stack every chip we can

Betting on ourselves  
And all the members of this band  
Turn third world poverty into a couple hundred bands  
A couple hundred bands?  
Flip that then double back  
Til we raking in  
Big checks and fat money stacks  
Shows so crazy audience keep coming back  
If the critics say it's weak  
Then we show them why they whack  
For publishing that bullshit  
Preach tabernacle coming live from the pulpit  
Conjoined twin brothers that you was cool with  
Going out with a bang like a bullet

We been working for the man all day  
Don't know when we gon see our pay  
Easy for you to pass judgment  
Staring through the looking glass  
Looking glass looking glass  
We been working for the man all day  
Tell me what's normal anyway  
Children laughing as they walking past  
Staring through the looking glass  
Looking glass looking glass

Aye Lu  
What up Simplicio  
They wouldn't even know what it's like mane  
Haha for real  
I hear you bro

But we gon show em what it's like on this side of the looking glass

Yup!

Turn up on em!

One time!

Let's go!

We Out!

#### **5.4.9 Get By Lyrics:**

Yeah yeah yeah yeah

Follow me come through

Know the way

Yeah yeah yeah yeah

One two

What would I be without you?

I'd traverse this Earth for you

Baby

Home's where I'd rather be

But in our society

I gotta leave while I'm dreaming of you

Boat ride or a jet ride

Feel right or we get fly

Baby we're just trying to get by

Get ours and we get mine

Boat ride or a jet ride

Feel right or we get fly

Baby we're just trying to get by

Get ours and we get mine

I just want to stay  
In this place forever  
In this sacred space  
Distance couldn't sever

Keep it a hundred, yeah we banging like drum  
I just want to put on for the city and the slums  
Finna get it hot  
If you let me in it, I'mma stunt  
Yeah we really pop  
And them pretty islands where we from  
Riding the waves, say bye to the days  
Where we taking less than we worth  
Hi to the pay, smile in our faces  
We make what we deserve  
Yeah they need us now  
They see us wow  
Yeah we shifting the culture for good  
Me and my brother here  
Love and fear  
We might just be in your hood  
Like  
Get busy  
If you couldn't get it, then try your best to get with me  
In and out of cars, onto the next city  
And every time we leave  
Write a letter saying you miss me

What would I be without you?  
I'd traverse this Earth for you  
Baby



Home's where I'd rather be  
But in our society  
I gotta leave while I'm dreaming of you

Boat ride or a jet ride  
Feel right or we get fly  
Baby we're just trying to get by  
Get ours and we get mine  
Boat ride or a jet ride  
Feel right or we get fly  
Baby we're just trying to get by  
Get ours and we get mine

#### **5.4.10 Farwell Lyrics:**

This is where we say goodbye  
Bye bye bye bye bye  
This is where we say goodbye  
Bye bye bye bye bye

We've been inseparable since birth  
We are a gift, they call us cursed  
Now I gotta see you in this hurst  
I don't know what makes me feel worse  
The ridicule we took as little kids  
Being exhibited like we did  
Or having to live life apart  
Please God mend my broken heart

I don't want to live without you  
I don't want to live without you  
Please don't make me have to

I don't want to live without you  
Please don't make me have to

A moment, a decision  
Fate we have to face  
Illness struck with a cruel embrace  
Dr.'s of the West steady trying to find a cure  
This is an experiment I doubt we'll endure  
Scalpel's blade so cold on our backs  
Tearing us apart yet the soul's intact  
In that fateful moment our lives were changed  
Forever marked by decisions estranged

This is where we say goodbye  
Bye bye bye bye bye  
This is where we say goodbye  
Bye bye bye bye bye

Farewell to the fans and the family  
Farewell y'all, thank you for having me  
Farewell to the stage and the lights  
Farewell brother this is your time  
Farewell to the fans and the family  
Farewell y'all, thank you for having me  
Farewell to the stage and the lights  
Goodnight

## 5.5 References

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