Frank Mancao's "Pinoy Image": Photography, Masculinity, and Respectability in Depression-Era California

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Abstract. *This article examines the construction of respectability politics and ethnic identity in the visual archives of Frank Mancao, a Filipino labor contractor and photographer in California. By investigating Mancao's relationship with the male Filipino farmworkers he managed and photographed, it argues that ethnic photographers and migrant workers as photographic subjects turned to the camera as a means of constructing a respectability politics to refashion a denigrated masculine Filipino identity in the American West. It begins with an investigation of Mancao's photographic practice and moves into how his work as a studio photographer provided Filipino men—including Mancao himself—opportunities to represent themselves against the popular image of the Filipino vagrant and criminal. However, this study also suggests that the "Pinoy image" crafted around the camera was not a revolutionary one; instead, the photographs reified industriousness and participation in capitalist production as the merits of good citizenship.*

> Before I came, the Pinoy image was very, very poor. They were discriminated by several ethnic groups, [who saw Filipinos] as very unwelcome in the group of citizenship. Because, mostly, [they] were pickpocket[s] and pimp[s] and gambler[s]. . . . [The cops said that] "their kind are not welcome in town" because . . . they are the safe-cracker, the pickpocket people, and they were just gambling and living on the Chinese gambling houses.[1]
>
> —Frank Mancao interview with Anne M. Fejeran, July 25, 1980

AFTER A COLD MORNING SHIFT IN THE FIELDS of California's wine country, a Filipino labor gang is ready to head back to their contractor's camp. It is midday, cloudy, and late winter in the San Joaquin Valley,

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Figure 1. Photographer: Frank Mancao, circa 1930s. Courtesy of the National Pinoy Archives at the Filipino American National Historical Society, Seattle, Washington.

and the grape fields are in the process of being cleared. The Sierra foothills border the farmlands, and the ragged road bisecting the grape fields stretches toward the horizon. Mounted on a tripod placed atop a truck, the camera awaits its self-timer to activate its shutter. The photographer himself stands tall, his fists on his hips and his galoshes displayed in stark contrast with his employees' field footwear. Several cars file behind the workers, who, by their leisurely—and tired—postures upon the muddy road, demand that those vehicles wait for the photograph to be taken. Several of the workers are too tired to keep their chins up, but most make the effort to hold their pose and look squarely at the camera. Amid the vines of California's booming wine industry, its laborers carve out a piece of time from their workday to let themselves be seen, if not just by the photographer in the darkroom, then by the many others who will see the photograph's many prints. *Click*.

About fifty years later, in an oral history interview, that same photographer expressed a "Pinoy image" of a different sort. During the 1930s,

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in between racial discrimination and collective vice, the Pinoy (a Tagalog-derived colloquial shortening of "Pilipino") was a deviant and destitute man and a tramp who tampered with urban law and order. As historians of Filipino America have shown, Filipino diasporic life was marked by their essential mobility around the commodity infrastructures of the American West.[2] For migrant men, cities served as places to recuperate from the discipline of industrial time and to express ownership over the motions and appearances of their bodies. On the other hand, the Filipino man in the city was also marked as a transgressive figure. He was notorious for engaging in recreational "vices" (such as cockfighting and gambling), and to the ire of white men, frequently paid for dances with young white women in "taxi-dance halls." Cities, where the archives of race were produced through law enforcement and print media, captured both recreation and destitution among the Manongs (the post–Civil Rights Era term for pre–World War II Filipino migrant men) in the 1930s.[3]

Here are two images of the Pinoy in rural California, captured by a Bisaya (Central Philippine) man named Frank Mancao. The image he recounts in memory is a Janus-faced one: Mancao, as a self-identified Pinoy, saw in his own community a set of social afflictions that he needed to both mediate and remedy. The visual image is one way that Mancao expressed his responsibility as ethnic mediator and moral compass. Because of his prolific portfolio of over six hundred *archived* photos at FANHS (many others, including negatives, had been tossed away), and the fine quality of many of his Manong photographs, social histories of Filipino America frequently turn to Mancao's photographs when writing about immigration in California. I myself first found these photographs as a scholar-in-training, whether in comprehensive exams or in Google searches of the Manongs of the West. I later encountered unsorted shelves of these prints in the filing cabinets of Fred and Dorothy Cordova, found at the National Pinoy Archives office on 18th Avenue in Seattle's Central District. The walls of this community archive are adorned with Filipino photographs, many of which were Frank Mancao's shots. Filipino American ethnic history comes through these archives, and thus, Mancao's visions of his community.[4]

Other photographers, including many non-Filipino men and women, also took pictures of farmworkers before and during the Depression. For example, James Earl Wood brought his camera to the fields as he wrote his master's thesis on farmworkers in California. Working in the tradition of photography and the social sciences, Wood used the camera as a means of data collection,

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to capture scenes that reinforced academic research on migrant workers.[5] Unlike the social scientists of his age, Frank Mancao did not take photographs to collect data. He instead sought to document the working conditions of Filipinos in the field or in other rural areas, where most laypeople did not witness Filipino lifeways. Furthermore, unlike other photographers of the period, one more feature sets Frank Mancao apart: he was a labor contractor. To profit as much as possible from his various enterprises, a respectable "Pinoy image" was necessary, since he self-identified as a Filipino while also perpetuating labor regimes over his *kababayan* (countrypeople). In the cities, he collaborated with local police to identify deviant Pinoys—another act of rendering Filipino workers as respectable and industrious. For Mancao the capitalist and community mediator, the act of photography was doubly a moral act of racial uplift. When asked why he took the photographs, he replied, "I felt like I needed to."[6]

Outlining the visual economies of Filipino America through Frank Mancao offers insight into one of the most prolific diasporic Filipino photographers of his time, who had a disproportionate impact on the community storytelling that Filipino Americans tell today. I argue that the Mancao photographs captured the labor and lifeways of Filipino workers in the American West, cultivating a masculine "Filipino" identity by means of a respectability politics of photography. But while Mancao provided an opportunity for migrant workers to present themselves beyond simply being labor resources, the photographs' visual field reified industriousness in American agricultural industries as a merit for good citizenship. In other words, the visual politics of Mancao's photography valorized productivity as Filipino subjectivity against racial stereotypes of Filipino indolence.[7]

As a predominantly visual archive, Mancao's collection demands that researchers move beyond textual analysis and center the unique conditions under which images were each produced, circulated, and received. Furthermore, a study of the Pinoy image, in the eyes of police officers, non-Filipino migrant communities, and Filipinos themselves, must pay attention to the historical conditions of perception under which such images emerged. In her study of the nineteenth-century Andes, anthropologist Deborah Poole understands racialization's myriad image worlds as the production of a *visual economy*.[8] For historians, visual economy provides a method to treat photographs on their own terms: as an indexical document of an instant in time; as an encounter between multiple parties mediated through the camera; and as an aesthetic object that often exceeds discourse.[9]

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THE PINOY IMAGE AS AN UNPRODUCTIVE MASCULINITY

Since the 1898 purchase and colonization of the Philippines and subsequent wars against native insurrections all over the archipelago, the United States considered the islands as a fruitful colony for extracting tropical resources. Filipino workers, considered colonial commodities for export, provided the massive labor-power that sustained American industries in Hawai'i and the West Coast.[10] Across the United States empire, Filipinos came to be coveted, much like coolie labor before them, for the hyper-mobility afforded to them by their status as US nationals. For Hawai'i's sugar plantation elites, Filipino labor provided low-cost strikebreakers against Japanese farmworkers, who had staged general strikes in 1906.[11] In California, during a simultaneous wartime labor shortage and an increase in arable land, white homesteaders and agricultural corporations voted to recruit cheap Filipino labor.[12] In this transpacific West, the infrastructures of commodity circulation, including freight trains and steamships, served as the connective tissue between spaces of production (farms and fisheries) and processing and distribution (canneries). Under the colonial labor structures of the early twentieth century, these commodities for transport included Filipino workers themselves.[13]

Out of work during the off-season, or otherwise in low-employment stretches during the Depression, Filipino men were known to loiter in Chinatowns and other urban areas in search of work or to indulge in vices such as gambling and taxi dancing. These nodes of leisure were themselves connected to the places of rural labor, notably through the various cheap hotels that served transient workers. For example, in Seattle, the YMCA and Chinatown hotels provided places for Filipinos, such as the novelist Carlos Bulosan, to congregate and rest.[14] In California, Stockton's maritime and railroad connections to farms in the San Joaquin Valley and the Delta made its places of recreation and settlement perfect for the off-season; as a result, the city developed one of the most robust Filipino ethnic enclaves before World War II.[15]

As cultural historians Linda España-Maram and Lucy Mae San Pablo Burns have argued, places of leisure and intimacy allowed Filipino workers to move their bodies out of the alienating structures of stoop labor.[16] But when encountered outside of their places of work, or namely when *out of place* as units of human capital, Filipino workers posed a threat to white populations by virtue of their discomfiting proximity to white women (in dancehalls) and urban commercial spaces (through loitering).[17] Through

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increased surveillance schemes in urban places of contact, particularly with accusations of disorder and vagrancy, local police charged migrant men with the crime of being out of place in the racist spatial orders of the American West.[18]

It is in these places of dangerous contact that law enforcement, white vigilantes, news media, and conservative Filipino leaders alike cultivated what Mancao called a "very, very poor" Pinoy image. The negative Pinoy image, then, calcified not only around an undesirable masculine subject, but specifically around an *unproductive masculinity*. Thus, I suggest that racial stereotypes against Filipino men on the West Coast do not merely signal xenophobia for xenophobia's sake. Rather, they emerge out of racist violence brought against transient workers trying to make a life beyond the alienating experience of work.

Filipino workers' hyper-mobility is constitutive of how they understood themselves, and were understood by others, as an ethnic community. Furthermore, their seasonal mobility maps onto their articulated identities as men of color in a colonial economy. As historian Linda España-Maram argues, Filipinos were simultaneously "immigrants, gendered subjects, members of an aggrieved population and consumers."[19] Some of these aggrieved included Filipino leaders, who took to political organizing and community conventions to address the problems of the Pinoy image. However, such grievances did not address the exploitative nature of colonial labor, but rather appealed to uplifting Filipinos into respectable subjects of the United States. For example, in 1937, the Seattle-based intellectual Trinidad Rojo hosted a conference for Filipino labor leaders and activists to address ways to "[curtail] crime, vice, and corruption" among the people, particularly through teaching proper practices of economic activity and personal finance.[20] Other community members took to photography to (quite literally) refashion the Pinoy image. One of the most influential of these photographers was Frank Mancao himself.

THE POLITICAL EDUCATION OF A PINOY PHOTOGRAPHER

Studio photography in the Philippines started in the 1860s and quickly became a popular practice. It likely stemmed from a middle-class painterly tradition that boomed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries under Spanish and American colonialism, but through the growing availability of cameras, opened a wider market of portraiture across social class.[21] Studios furnished customers with a wide range of costumes and backdrops,

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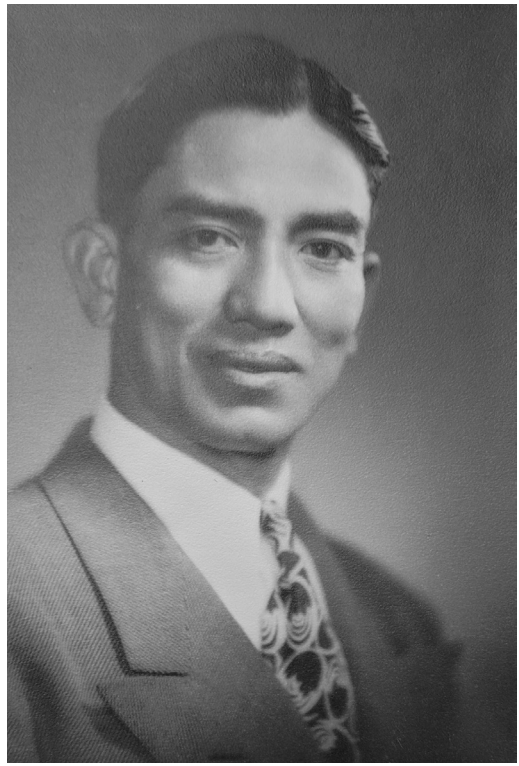

Figure 2. Portrait of Frank Mancao.
Photographer unknown. Courtesy of FANHS.

placing subjects in fantastical scenes at their request. For workers and newly landed middle-class Filipinos, the studio was one novel place where they could present themselves—for a fee—as they wished to be presented. In the case of Spanish colonial-era portraiture, Filipinos could don pristine suits and regalia, print those photographs, and circulate them across their kinship networks as gifts. The local studio was a public place where Filipinos could produce visual economies for private circulation.[22]

Such was the case of the Mancao family. From the 1920s into the 1950s, the Mancaos were hired by their local communities to capture class photos, individual and family portraits, and other life events. The class standings of their subjects are uncertain, as is whether they owned the clothing they wore. But in their town of Carcar, Cebu, the Mancaos were middle-class, and could afford to send their children to multi-lingual schools. Photography was most

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likely not their only source of regular income, but they gained local fame through that work.

At the helm of the Mancaos' booming studio business was the youngest son. Felimon "Frank" Mancao was raised in a well-to-do family with access to both English and Spanish language programs in Cebu, and he acquired enough Spanish to continue speaking it in the United States. Frank studied Spanish for two and a half years as an adolescent, and first set sail to the United States in 1918. Upon arrival to the San Francisco Bay Area at the age of eighteen, he entered school as a mechanical engineer, only to become a private chauffeur in Oakland two years later, a job which paid $130 per month, well-paying at the time compared to most migrant workers from the Philippines. Because he worked among the upper class in the Bay Area, he quickly became familiar with the hierarchies of class and race in the United States while taking pride in finding ways to subvert them. In that first job, Frank also worked as the grocery shopper for the family, mediating between Japanese cooks and white employers. He recalled with pleasure the influence he had over the kitchen labor of the household in which he worked:

> The Japanese said, "Do you like fish?" I said, "Sure!" Crab and fish, and for the boss, we give them sometimes pork chop, steak, or chicken. When they smell fish, they all like fish, too! So they said, "Next time, you buy only one kind. If you want fish, give us fish also!" And they were Catholic, so it was fish every Friday! So that was a good job, and the Japanese couple [who worked in the kitchen] were so impressed that I have too much *tamago* [egg]. They said, "Frank-san, it's too much *tamago*." (. . .) That was a very easy job because all I do is take care of the driving and I have my table, I have my meal ready, when my boss ate I ate, and my room was right behind the kitchen, and their room of the cook was way down the hall. And I have my little apartment, my little room, just sleeping, my wash bowl, and so on. And boy, I thought that was neat because the Japanese were superior to the Filipinos but this time I was superior.[23]

Almost immediately, Frank entered a liminal space as a cultural mediator between his white employers and his Japanese colleagues. Within this division of household labor, Frank served as anglophone conduit between the kitchen and the dining room, as chief provisioner of the home's foodways, and as primary connector between the white family and the city. To the interviewer as well, Mancao demonstrates his multi-lingual and intercultural deftness: he calls egg *tamago*, he flits between an ease of speaking to Japanese and

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Anglophone interlocutors, and he claims to embody intercultural mediation par excellence. It is important to note here that this mediation did not necessarily lead to better socio-economic conditions, nor did it lead to a more equitable workplace. Rather, Mancao's role as a mediator smoothed workplace conflict between employers and employees, and through his negotiations, he accumulated social and cultural capital while maintaining the status quo of the household division of labor. This instance of mediation would set the tone for Frank's later career in Reedley. His friendships with, and subversions of, Japanese American authority in Asian America would prove useful during wartime, when white mobs attempted to raid Reedley's Chinatown, where he served as warden. He became trusted among Japanese, Filipino, Latino, and white locals alike, and conscious of his position as mediator, he conducted his daily politics as such.[24]

After two years working as a chauffeur and grocery shopper, and with over $2,000 in savings, Frank made his first trip home to Cebu. That voyage came at the encouragement of his brother, who was also a migrant worker in California. During that return voyage, Frank also started his own independent photography practice, founding Mancao Studios in 1923 in Cebu. He acquired his first studio equipment from a photographer he met on the return voyage, purchasing his first set for 300 pesos. That Japanese photographer met with Frank a few weeks later with more equipment and showed him how to operate the lights and the camera. The business quickly became successful—he recalls earning two or three hundred pesos every Sunday—and for a few years, he resolved to stay in Cebu, despite having some financial assets in San Francisco.

Frank's brother, whom he describes as a financially irresponsible man, quickly returned to the Philippines upon hearing how successful Mancao Studio had become. That brother assisted with the studio, living off of the primary earnings of Frank, who gladly helped him. Frank recalls other forms of assistance he offered his brother, including romantic ones. When Frank's brother attempted to write a love letter not in the regional language but in poor Tagalog, the letter insulted the object of his courtship. Frank was evidently the more eloquent among his siblings, noting that he would speak several languages across his transpacific life. In this case, Frank was able to translate and mediate enough of his brother's Bisaya affect into well-composed Tagalog, and weeks later, his brother and the recipient of the letter were to be wedded. This instance, where Frank acted as an eloquent translator of love and language, would mark much of his career.[25]

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The Cebu return sojourn was successful, but short-lived. The bank in which Frank invested $1,500 went bankrupt, reducing his balance to $900. In order to claim his money, he stated that he needed "to be notary public"[26] to sign off on Wells Fargo's acquisition of his bank. He returned to the United States in 1925 and found a job as a waiter in San Francisco, where he quickly became popular with rich Latinos who frequented the hotel's restaurant because of his Spanish language skills.[27]

In 1932, Frank traveled from San Francisco to Reedley, California in order to take over a failing pool hall business in which his cousin had invested. This town was part of a constellation of cultural hubs all over the San Joaquin Valley where many Filipinos worked. With an entrepreneurial spirit, he quickly established several businesses in Reedley: a grocery store, a Filipino and Mexican labor contracting camp, and a photography studio. At some point after World War II, Frank also sold insurance. While his family continued to operate Mancao Studios in Cebu, he opened his own location in Reedley and became a traveling photographer. Frank brought his camera with him as he escorted Filipino laborers to different agricultural workplaces across California. It is unclear when or how Frank became a labor contractor, but based on his interviews, he appeared to be a very successful one, maintaining this career while pursuing other business ventures across Central California. He sent Filipino workers to several farms in the Reedley area or farther out, and he often needed to mediate between his workers and disgruntled white supervisors. Based on his interviews, he often succeeded in such negotiations, balancing both workers' and employers' tempers, while maintaining the status quo of labor conditions. Thus, he embodied both the role of labor contractor, as a job, and ethnic mediator, as an investment in his own respectable image through social and cultural capital.[28]

While Frank excelled as a mediator, he was also a businessman, and the accumulation of social and cultural capital was important to his bottom line. His enterprises were interlocution and negotiation, and his interest was in the respectable presentation of himself—including the image of ethno-racial and gendered identity, or a positive Pinoy image. Hence, his investment in respectability politics was not simply out of civic duty, but also for personal benefit. Frank was read as Filipino in the United States, and despite his ethnic differences within the community, was nonetheless inextricable from the perceived vices that his *kababayan* (countrypeople) indulged in. But it is important to note that these manifestations of the Pinoy image occur in cities. The visual economy behind this negative Pinoy image must take into

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account the social conditions behind the lifeways of Filipino workers in the American West. According to oral histories, many travelled to the United States for social and economic adventure. A subset of these traveled as *pensionados*, sponsored by the colonial government to study in the United States with some tuition payments. The less monied pensionados lost their means of paying for tuition during the Depression. As a result, Filipino men were known to wander Chinatowns if they could not find work. Therefore, cities, where population density exceeded that of their usual rural and railroad dwellings, were where Filipino workers could be *seen*, but not on the terms of their education or industry. Instead, they were seen in places of economic leisure and inter-racial recreation, which were considered anathema to a violent racial order of the 1930s. What did it mean to be seen in different terms?[29]

INTERLUDE: RESPECTABILITY, CITIZENSHIP, PHOTOGRAPHY

Filipino American respectability politics in community narratives consolidated *after* the Second World War and the Civil Rights Movement (to be discussed later), but its roots can be found in this pre-war moment. A community of Filipino American leaders gained militancy in the 1930s, organizing through transnational labor unions. But not every community leader subscribed to the radical or socialist politics that fomented in the 1930s leftism of the Cultural Front.[30] The Ilokano-Pangasinense writer Carlos Bulosan was among the more radical wings of the Filipino labor movement, but other vocal leaders, such as the Ilokano intellectual Trinidad Rojo, approached Filipino activism from more moderate positions.

Frank Mancao did not serve the role as Filipino community intellectual. However, the many photographs he captured, and the reputation he had as a photographer favorable to workers' visual indulgences, suggests how indispensable he was to masculinist political formations of Filipino America. For later generations, his images were as powerful as Bulosan's artistic legacy (if not more so), even though his name is not well known. Among ethnic community activists after the Civil Rights Era, Mancao's pictures first captured the political imaginations of the archivists Fred and Dorothy Cordova when they founded the Filipino American National Historical Society in 1987, as well as the social historians that followed in their example. Recreating Mancao's life worlds, as well as the conditions around his aesthetic production, provides opportunities not only to understand Filipino American social history, but

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also to gain insight into the particular conditions shaping the photographs that continue to feature prominently in Filipino historical narratives. From his comparatively privileged position as a middle-class Bisaya entrepreneur in America, we might get a glimpse of the pre-war visual conditions that contributed to the heterogeneity of Filipino American politics in the second half of the twentieth century.

Unlike ethnological photographs, which present people as racial types, the character of Frank Mancao's work presents Filipino men explicitly *as workers*. Like his family in Carcar, Mancao ran a Central California photography studio, wherein male Pinoy workers paid to have their portraits taken in their best suits. He also brought his camera out to the fields and frequently asked field hands to pose during breaks or after work hours. Unlike studio portraits, these field photos did not seem to be for profit and were only kept for his files. Taken outside the spaces of the pool hall and the dance hall—broadly, the urban space—the Mancao photographs create a visual scape of the industrious and respectable Filipino man.[31]

It is important to stress the active participation of Filipinos, so that when one speaks of the Mancao photographs, one refers to the archive, as well as the negotiated interactions between Frank Mancao and the subjects of his photographs. We might begin with what Ariella Azoulay calls the *civil contract of photography*, in which participation in a photographic encounter allows the photographed a new civic space of defining themselves, in order to construct alternative terms of citizenship beyond that of the state. While Frank was heavily invested in a visual respectability politics, he also served as an opportunity for workers to be seen on different terms. Through Frank Mancao, his camera, and the negatives that would later circulate as prints, Filipinos could construct themselves and a collective racial identity.[32]

Just as other working-class ethnic populations made identities through technologies of mass communication and mechanical reproduction, Filipino rural workers constituted themselves through the visual economy of photography.[33] Without a child born in the United States, with whose name one could sign for ownership of a house, Filipinos could not own land, as their families did in the Philippines, as a means of expressing capital. In the absence of property rights, these young men could express value through accessories and labor-time, or their appearance and their energy. Posing in front of the camera at different times of the day between work and leisure, or at different points of their racial geography between rural work and urban leisure, offered moments wherein they could arrest an image that they themselves could negotiate and circulate.[34] When Mancao took photographs of men in

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suits, or soon after a work shift, or enhanced dark-skinned features through a photograph, these were visual responses to the several fronts of citizenship claims that the pre-war (and transwar) Filipino community made in the United States. The formal or *legal* status of citizenship for Filipino workers, as US "Nationals," allowed them transpacific mobility until the passage of the Tydings-McDuffie Act in 1934. However, through the 1920s and 1930s, anti-Filipino racisms necessitated the cultivation of a respectable Filipino, in order to mitigate the social violence done to migrant workers.

For Manongs in Mancao's photographs, claims to citizenship would be made to portray them as good race men, through good labor. Broadly, photography made these visual claims along three axes: good economic citizenship as workers, rather than gamblers; good social citizenship, rather than criminals; and good cultural citizenship, as well-dressed and well-groomed men. These modes of respectability politics belie longer histories particular not only to marginalized peoples in the United States, but specifically to labor diasporas from Asia in front of and behind the camera. In the late Spanish colonial Philippines, similar forms of masculine respectability proliferated under bourgeois nationalists such as the *ilustrados*, or children of Philippine elites whose parents sent them to study in Europe. The ilustrados, in some cases, provided some cultural inspiration for Filipino migrant workers in mutual aid societies.[35]

The representations of Manongs as respectable subjects also convey a sense of civility, in opposition to racial stereotypes of Filipino unruliness. In her study of Asian American visual culture, Thy Phu extends Azoulay's notion of photography's civic spaces of citizenship by concretizing how Asian Americans have represented themselves through the specific technics of *civility*. In particular, civility manifests in Asian American visual culture through claims that they are productive and self-sufficient subjects, and thus presentable to a white sensibility and useful to the United States' economic well-being. Phu notes that civility frames the meanings of citizenship, and Asian American engagement with the camera manifests in strategic resistance to exclusion and inclusion in the United States at various legal moments in history.[36]

For Frank Mancao, civility and respectability also belied his own personal ambitions of economic mobility. As a driver in San Francisco, he took pride in his ability to mediate between the class structures of the household he served, proving equally adept at speaking to the Japanese cooks and the white employers. Furthermore, he maintained a sense of transnational entrepreneurship between California and Cebu by funding his family's many ventures: a photography studio in Carcar, a pool hall and a grocery store in Reedley,

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and a traveling photography practice in California (with a studio also based in Reedley). Finally, as a labor contractor, Mancao participated in larger ventures of Philippine labor mobilization, and he profited from his recruitment and management of migrant workers all over California. As a labor contractor, he organized and managed workers, finding jobs for them all over the West Coast. Being Filipino himself, Mancao thus had a personal stake in ensuring that his racial image, disproportionately represented by transient workers, be as respectable as possible, for the sake of maintaining his social capital and his bottom line. His camera could then act as a technology of both documentary access and aesthetic practice across these spaces of class negotiation.

Above, I have outlined the possibilities and limits of Filipino workers' visual respectability politics, as mediated by Frank Mancao's practice. Various features of Mancao's photography are, in their own rights, distinct (but related) ways of laying visual claims against normative American citizenship. These visual claims draw upon a multitude of aesthetic and political traditions, and can be reconstructed at every event of photography.[37] When these subjects are denied myriad forms of citizenship in cultural productions (such as local media, crime reports, popular discourses, and political debates), these denials popularly manifest as stereotype. As the opposite of a respectable image, the stereotype draws upon circulated images that are deployed to reify uneven relations of power. Stereotypes can be understood as visual techniques to justify and reinforce racism. The visual analogies I make for stereotype is not coincidental, since the word stereotype itself, like the term cliché, come from visual and print cultures in the age of mechanical reproduction. Originally printers' terms, the stéréotype or cliché was a solid plate, engraved with an unchanging surface molded from an original. The stereotype was, therefore, a copy to be used for producing and circulating more copies of an unchanging surface image of an original long gone. Cultural historians of Filipino America have shown the potency of stereotypes in propagating the racisms of imperial power. Racial stereotype and photography stem from ethnology and its visual economies; photographs themselves were used to debate the citizenship status of Filipinos across the Pacific.[38] By contrast, Frank Mancao's photography sought to depict Filipino men as upstanding and dignified workers.

Just as establishing the visual field of racial stereotypes mobilized colonial labor, making visual counterclaims against a stereotype is also a laborious undertaking. They can take place within the image, among those who pose for photographs. This labor can also be undertaken by the photographer, in the

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negotiations between photographer and photographed, or in the darkroom through post-processing.[39] This social and labor relation can be understood by means of Roland Barthes's distribution of participants at the moment of photography.[40] In many of the pictures examined in this article, the three participant groups of these moments are as follows: Frank Mancao (the photographer, or Operator), the workers (the Subject), and the camera (the instrument and conduit of the image). The photographer provided the service and opportunity to pose for a picture, into which the photographed enter its visual economy by various means. In the case of these portraits, they pay through cash and the work of posing for a photograph. The camera's technological limitations—lens, film, exposure (to be discussed later)—set the limits of the image composition. Through technical manipulation, both at the moment of photography and in the darkroom, the Operator layers his claims within the politics of respectability. Frank Mancao, as Operator and as intercultural mediator with his own political agendas, mediated the Subjects' images with his own conversations with them, and with his own investment into compositional technique.

A fourth unspoken participant in this moment of photography is also present: the future viewer, or the Spectator. In the case of the racial stereotype, the Spectator is not politically neutral. Mancao, like the Filipino community in the American West, knew that they were to be seen by Spectators primed with a wealth of racist imagery produced for Americans since 1898. Every presentation of a photographed Pinoy required the mutual participation of the Operator, the instrument, the Subject, and the Spectator. These visual conversations, or what cultural theorist Susan Buck-Morss calls dialectics of seeing, are constantly made at every moment and object of photography. Through co-constitutive encounters around the camera, each Mancao photograph could redefine the Filipino on terms that responded to the negative "Pinoy image."[41]

How might we read each photograph for its visual claims to citizenship? Most photographs in the Mancao collection are unmarked and undated. We might be able to reconstruct the approximate dates from how they are grouped together (in archival practice, or aesthetically), or otherwise from conversations with the archivist, Dorothy Cordova, through whom the collection was amassed. I deploy both modes of dating equally, and when possible, identify individuals and locales from conversations with Cordova. This cooperative practice of dating and locating—identifying gazes in conversation with the memory of a community archivist and long-time local activist—is the most accurate practice I could deploy, since most of the photographs acquired were

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prints rather than negatives. Echoing historian Martha Sandweiss, unmarked photographs can only evoke rather than didactically tell, and we must describe these evocations the best we can on the photographs' own indexical terms.[42] Furthermore, until later in the twentieth century, many of these photographs circulated in private economies, both locally in the American West and to the Visayas. The first batch of the Mancao collection was donated by Frank Mancao himself to Fred and Dorothy Cordova. Along with the full rights to Mancao's works, the second batch were acquired soon after his death and exchanged between Mancao's daughter and Dorothy Cordova. Reading these photographs requires an attempt to reconstruct the social conditions (including the social circles and personal tendencies) of the participants as closely as possible. Fortunately, at the Filipino American National Historical Society, two supplementary resources are available: a lengthy oral history with Frank Mancao conducted in 1980, and an archivist who called Mr. Mancao a family friend and community elder. Again, at the expense of dative precision, I bring these photographs in conversation with these two knowledge sources and conduct readings as closely within the Filipino diasporic community contexts as possible.[43]

REMAKING URBAN PINOYS

The Pinoy image to which Frank Mancao responded was that of unproductive men wandering around and loitering in urban spaces. In other words, this was an image of a racialized, intolerably transgressive dandy, more akin to the zoot suit urban youth than the Victorian wanderers that captured European writers' imaginations.[44] Manongs were policed not simply into jails, but more specifically, *to get out of town*—in other words, to be expelled as an economic, social, and cultural nuisance to an urban order. Frank recalled one such incidence at his pool hall:

> When the cop came through the door, I just put my hand on my hair like this, then the cop just touch the guy I was talking to, that he wants to talk outside of the store. And his advice to these people is not to set the sun on them here in Reedley. They should not be here after dark. So that was it, the first move. When they keep coming the following week, they came again, so we call the cop again this time, they in town again with different bands of people, with my time it was the leader, Felimon. So I call the cop again, and this time they are really giving them "their kind are not welcome in town" because they write that they have information that they are the safe-cracker, the pick-

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> pocket people, and they were just gambling and living on the Chinese gambling-houses. And that's what they make the money on, uh, their trip. And they were driving the Cadillac car with the super—oh, they were really big shot among the Filipino.[45]

As cultural mediator, Mancao cooperated with local law enforcement while maintaining rapport with Filipino workers who passed through his establishment. What marked these Filipino gangs was the capital they audaciously wore and the violations they made against orderly acquisitions of capital. The offenses that predisposed "their kind" to patrolling were safe-cracking, pickpocketing, and gambling. If Filipinos were racialized as cheap workers, then these contraband means of making money violated the terms of their economic citizenship. Furthermore, having a Cadillac symbolized mobility, but on one's own terms, and with visible conspicuous consumption. In other words, these men were considered big shots with cars because they could travel openly and freely while being seen in spectacular ways. Armed with the potency of racial stereotype, local law enforcement, with Frank Mancao as collaborator, sought to expel—rather than incarcerate—Filipinos from the city. The deviant reputation of Filipino men was well-known not just in Reedley, but in other West Coast cities as well. This reputation would also inform the negative Depression-era Pinoy image that other cultural productions drew upon. Carlos Bulosan, the novelist, noted the deviant reputation of the Manongs in the stories he compiled, and he wrote them into Allos, his protagonist in *America Is in the Heart*. Mancao's political project of re-visualizing the Filipino needed to mediate, as well as refute, these potent stereotypes.

Portraiture and group photographs enacted challenges to the racialized vagrancy of Manongs, or the racist manifestations of that urban visual interlocution at the core of dandyism. While Manongs were seen as dandies in cities, Mancao mediated the figure's more negative registers by controlling the particular scenes in which their fashion was presented. By traveling to and taking pictures at their sites of work, Mancao could accentuate the capital that they wore—their clothes and gelled hair—while recontextualizing their adorned bodies (well-viewed to the urban dweller around Western Chinatowns) out of the context of their vagrant dandyism.

In the photograph on the next page, the compositional focus is the three men, and the photograph is taken at a tripod height aimed at making them look tall and resolute. The background is blurred by *bokeh* (farther layers of the scene, or the "background," rendered out by the lens' shallow depth of field). Without evident wide-angle or telephoto distortion, the lens chosen was

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Figures 3 and 4. Photographer: Frank Mancao. Courtesy of FANHS.

most likely a 35mm or a 50mm focal length lens (most likely prime), ideal for portrait photography with a wide aperture to neatly blur out the background. The man in the middle appears in several photographs, meaning that he must have paid for several sessions with Frank; he was particularly photogenic and

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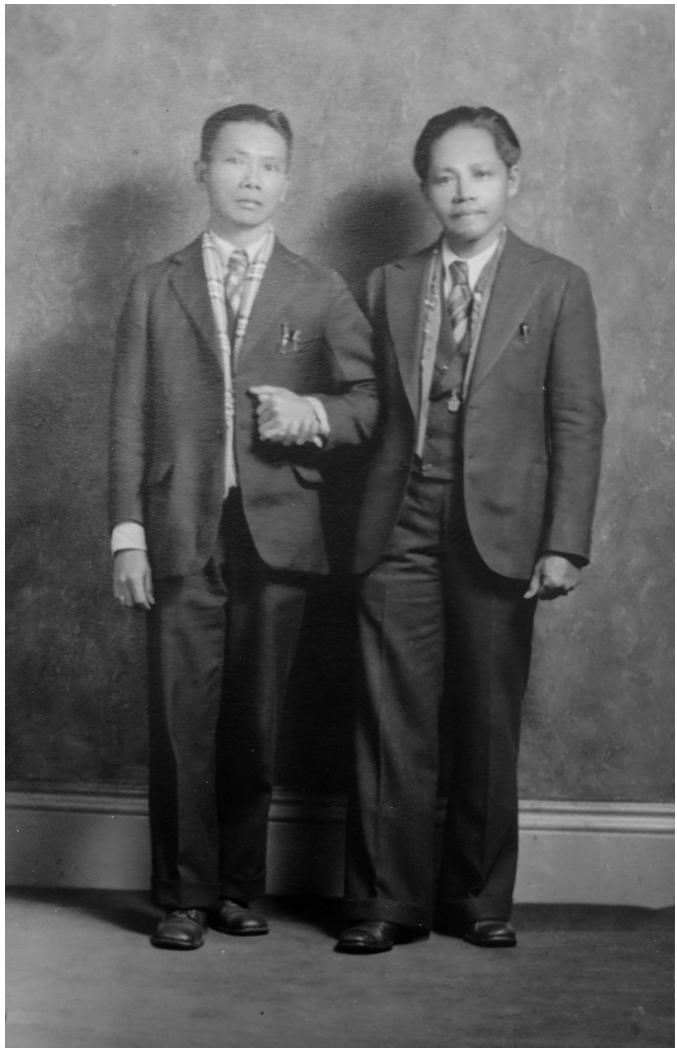

perhaps a local favorite among this labor camp. Alternatively, for the folks he wanted to send these portraits to, it would give him some cultural capital to show the magnitude of his kinships among his group.

In the second photograph, the portrait takes place against good wallpaper in a house parlor. It is not known to whom this home belongs, and it may have

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been the employer's house, or possibly shared living accommodations that many Manongs arranged for themselves.[46] Likely, noting that the backdrop seems to hang somewhat along the wall, this may have been Mancao's studio. Furthermore, the suits that the two men wear look cheap, and are perhaps quickly tailored off-the-rack suits, or lent to the men by Mancao himself: the blazers are well-fitting around the shoulders, but the trousers are quite loose. The trouser bottoms look folded or loosely hemmed. Unlike other subjects in the Mancao collection, they are not wearing zoot suits, as they would in recreational stints in cities.

One detail in this second photograph deserves some unpacking: they are holding hands. While I am tempted to apply an analysis of queer kinship, to which other Manongs' testimonies attest, this photograph belies an even more pragmatic reason to hold hands.[47] The left elbow of the man on the left is bent at a right angle, and his companion seems to lean against it while putting weight on his left foot. The right leg of the man on the right seems slightly bent, concealed by the bagginess of the pants. He is being held up by the man on the left, and his fingers are cupped underneath in order to exert as little energy as possible. The photograph nonetheless evokes a homosocial kinship, but one predicated on recuperating this Pinoy's upright image from a physical disability. Thanks to his companion, the man on the right is able to stand straight, and although his tightened mouth and left fist suggest some discomfort, the photograph has been taken for circulation.

These two photographs provide evidence of a dialectical politics of respectability that took place at these moments of photography. First, pulled out of the urban and recreational context, these portraits depict the well-groomed Filipino man in a domestic parlor or near the outdoor non-urban spaces of work. Second, the fact that the subjects themselves commissioned these photographs suggests that workers wanted their money to speak visually as well, beyond the gambling-house and the taxi dance hall—sites of grey economies and perceived racial deviance. Finally, by virtue of the height of the camera in the first picture, and the assisted posture in the second picture, these portraits cultivate a respectable Filipino as one who can *dress well*, *stand up*, and *look the viewer squarely in the eye*. This visual claim responds to the cultivated stereotype of the rural farmworker from the Philippines to Hawai'i and across the Pacific, which depended on racializing stoop labor.[48] Thus, these portraits cultivated an upright, well-dressed, well-kempt, and visually demanding Filipino farmworker, whose bodies commanded a camera's attention.

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COUNTERPASTORAL PINOYS

Photographing Pinoy dandies was only one aspect of Frank Mancao's work. Since dandyism was inherently a non-productive livelihood, cultivating a Filipino respectability politics also needed images of the industrious worker. Following labor camps into the fields, Mancao was known for not being able to withhold his shutterbug tendencies until the studio setup. He took photos on the fields, while Filipinos were at work, or soon after their shifts were complete.[49] In photos of field labor, another visual challenge manifested for the Pinoy image of the American Western urban imagination, mediated by Frank's position as a middle-class Filipino entrepreneur.

As a labor contractor, Frank faced a Pinoy image that measured Filipinos according to labor discipline and productivity under industrial time. Frank recalled one incident in which Siki, a local gang leader, asked him to house some of the workers he contracted, which became a saga of negotiating money, crops, and time:

> [When] sixty-two people were assigned to Mr Villy's packinghouse to pick two carload a day, after they took out fifteen hours. But Mr Villy, the packinghouse boss, other two old men supervising with these sixty-two pickers, [these men said] that [the boys] were slackers. The old men found one boy sleeping under the vine. But only about ten o'clock in the morning. So he kicked this guy and said, "Why don't you go home? Don't sleep on the company's time wages." And boy, that was a member of Siki's gang, and then they hitted the two men anyway, so all they did was say, "Siki, this old man wanted us to go home." And the olds strike right away.[50]

Based on this interview, the distribution of labor on the described California grape farm in the 1920s and 1930s in the Central Valley was as follows: Mr. Villy served as the boss who distributed financial and human resources; two old men served as the disciplinary and corporate gazes as overseers; Frank was the labor contractor and ethnic mediator; and the workers were in direct contact with the crops and therefore set the pace of labor. Since contract workers were paid by the hour, the most immediate logic to evaluate labor was activity over a given period of time. Hence, the old man's reprimand—"don't sleep on the company's time wages"—suggests a labor logic predicated on efficient work (speed and activity, the dependent variable) over prescribed blocks of industrial time (hours, the independent variable). In his negotiations, Frank's remedy was to change the independent variable

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into material output, while consolidating payment over time (twenty-five cents for ten hours).

> Boy, when I came back eleven hour after the strike, Mr. Villy called me in a hurry, very rushed, and I went to him, and [he] told me all about the—it cost $250 per day per car, standing on the road, and lose money if that car is not fill up everyday. So I said, "Well I don't know about the boys . . . I'm going to see in the camps what happened," you know, after I learned from Mr. Villy. So I called the boys in the dining room and they went and listened to me, and I listened first, what were they striking for. Why? So Siki told me all about that they hit him, the old men assigned watch them, and they kick one of the boys that were sleeping, because he was playing all night in the poker games. So I uh, after I heard the brief, I announced proudly to them, I said, "Alright. If any of you wants to go back there to pick two carload a day, no matter how or what time to finish, no matter if it's only 5 or 10 o'clock or 11 o'clock, we call it ten hours.[51]

Having earned the trust of Mr. Villy, Siki the gang leader, and the workers under his management, Frank was able to make a confident negotiation that compromised time for final output. Not all the boys returned into the field, but the results were immediate. The workers in Mancao's camp regularly finished before noon in order to take an extended break for the rest of the day. They became revered by Mr. Villy as hyper-efficient workers, to the point where Mr. Villy would have to stop them from picking more than he could pay them. By substituting time metrics (wage earnings) for actual realized output, Frank Mancao ensured that earnings were maintained while his racialized workers were evaluated under more favorable metrics. Respectable material output, as opposed to racial deviance out of deviations in time, established a value economy for workers under Mancao's management, according to the efficiency and amounts they produced. While challenging the racial logics of temporal discipline, Mancao re-embodied Filipino abstract labor according to the successful profits of the California commodity empire. They became valuable as the abstract labor behind profit, rather than simply as volatile expenses on a payroll sheet. In doing so, Mancao created a labor agreement in which Manongs would self-discipline, producing a reputation for quantifiable hard work. Therefore, Mancao replicated the racialization of the rural Filipino as an industrious peasant.[52]

Frank would make these same mediated claims in visual terms as well. Through his photography, Mancao mediated industrial time in terms of respectability. In the dandy photographs, pulling the terms of his Pinoy image

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away from the cities or the studio expanded upon traditional forms of portraiture, by depicting his subjects as dignified in their places of work. By bringing his camera into the fields, Frank could, with more direct interventions, craft a respectable image predicated on the visual representation of hard work.

We return to the photograph in the grape field. From the scene, it is implied that the workers are on break or have just finished a shift. The latter option is most likely, since Frank Mancao—if he was indeed this group's labor contractor—often arranged for his camps to get paid the hour equivalents for the day's bucket-loads, in order to mediate his workers' tendencies to slow down labor in rebellion. Many of the workers in this photograph are lounging, holding their knees and spreading their legs in postures that suggest a hard day's work. The grape field photograph evokes negotiations made with industrial time. Ontologically, as a photograph, it arrests a moment of time into a scene. Taken at the end of a work shift, the photo's subjects are seen partaking in well-earned leisure. Standing in the middle of a road, the workers arrest the car traffic that lines up behind them, waiting for them to clear out of the way. This image evokes a seasonal labor force wanting to

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be seen beyond the field, but integral to its seasonal health. Since the grape fields are being cleared, no visible fruit is seen, but the field looks like a work in progress; the workers are inextricable parts of this agricultural landscape.

Frank Mancao himself is in this photograph. Subtly, he stands apart: his galoshes, his sweater, and his brimmed hat resting on the car are distinct from the fieldworkers' attire. He includes himself among the other Pinoys, almost assimilable into this group, save for his boots. He is only identifiable if an onlooker recognizes him; this is a respectable enough scene of Filipino industry for him to include himself. While there are no harvests immediately visible in this photograph, evidence of crops-to-be, or productive output, is implicit. While Mancao is not present in many other group photos, such as the ones that follow, he brings these sensibilities into them nonetheless.

The first photograph depicts a Filipino labor camp in an onion farm in the San Joaquin Valley. Eighteen men stand in a row, in the middle of a work day, as they harvest onions into large baskets. The caption ("Onion Farming, Lodi") is carved into the emulsion of the film negative, readily available for redistribution. Two arrows identify men in the middle, perhaps for private distribution among families to account for their lives as migrant workers. This image acts as evidence of Filipinos at work, in a specific agricultural industry that contributes to the Californian economy. They stand between rows, with baskets laid out, emphasizing the material fruits of productive output.

The second photograph presents workers with the oranges they were brought to harvest. The boxes are filled to the brim with abundance. Their tilt suggests that Frank and the workers angled them deliberately to display agricultural bounty and the integral role that Filipinos claim within America's commodity empire. Several men even hold oranges in their hands, more than their palms can fit, as if to display their natural—even playful—propensity for agricultural labor. Orange picking comes easily to them, and the future Spectator shall bear witness to the fruits of their labor. Furthermore, the composition of this photograph is reminiscent of Carcar's school photos, with which Frank worked as a photographer in his hometown. Whereas the education of the Filipino in Cebu necessitated the neat presentation of orderly and learned subjects, the education of the Filipino in American industry was to be accounted for as well.

These two photographs portray Mancao's Pinoy image as integral to commodity production, rather than as workers measured by hourly performance. Standing in the middle of the fields or posed as a group, their upright postures suggest an implicit pride in the work being done. As counterpastoral

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Figures 5 and 6. Photographer: Frank Mancao, circa 1920s–1930s. Courtesy of FANHS.

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photographs, they speak back to the pastoral racialization of the Filipino rural worker, but these claims are limited. The claims to citizenship made in these counterpastoral photographs are not radical, but rather, they affirm settler colonialism and capitalism in the American West.[53] *We produce for you, therefore we belong*. In being unsettled, the men depicted in Mancao's photographs remain migratory workers but lay claims to dignity as necessary resources to agriculture and extractive industries in the twentieth century. This counterpastoral Filipino circulates around workplaces in the rural West, and that circulation gives currency to their utility as cheap precarious workers. Through labor negotiations and field photographs, Frank Mancao insisted that his Filipino subjects be measured according to the commodity output of their work, rather than their conformity with hours and energy. The resultant visual field is double-edged: he afforded some measure of dignity in regimes of industrial time but reified the violent systems of resource extraction. The field photographs rendered Filipino workers inextricable with agricultural bounty, whether the crop be grape, onion, or orange. Filipinos in Mancao's photographs could not simply be respected on the terms of good citizenship; they became the smiling faces of American capitalism.

EXPOSURES

Frank Mancao was trained primarily in portraiture. Working in Carcar's Mancao Studio, as well as his business in Reedley, he gained a respectable reputation as a community leader and ethnic photographer. Both incredibly democratic and strictly middle-class in practice, studio portraiture could take time controlling lighting conditions and could adjust the objects in the scene to produce an optimal frame. Outside of the studio, light conditions were much more difficult to predict. Scenes like the San Joaquin Valley grape fields (at the beginning of this essay) could be developed with exquisite detail precisely because it was a cloudy day. The sunlight diffused across the clouds, lending texture to the skies and spreading even light to the figures on the fields. However, these favorable light conditions were the exceptions to the rule in Mancao photographs outside of the studio.

Ironically, one of the most democratic features of Mancao's photography can be surmised from his *bad* photographs. Or at the very least, from composition limitations even in his finer studio photographs. Sunny days, lighter shaded fabrics, and Caucasian skin tended to be overexposed in Mancao photographs, despite much evidence of trial and error. Simply put: Frank was terrible at photographing whiteness.

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Figures 7 and 8. Courtesy of FANHS.

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The same wooded parking lot scene is captured between two photographs. The bright skies, too, are blown out, indicating the likelihood of a clear and sunny day. Since the cars are bright and their bodies seem to be metallic, the reflection from direct sunlight renders them overexposed to the camera. The second attempt captures the woods in exquisite detail, with leaves and branches visible in deep relief—the clear focus of his composition. Both images, likely one taken after the other, are examples of bad photographs. The parked vehicles were in the way of a good view of the trees, and the bright sky suggests that the camera lacked a polarizing filter to tame the sunny conditions. The high elevation of the camera's vantage point suggests that the tripod was most likely mounted on top of a platform, or—as in the photograph in California's wine country—on a car. However, the parking lot and the bright reflections from the vehicle bodies could not be overcome. In the second attempt, Mancao responded, at the moment of photography, to the lighting conditions at hand, and rendered the trees more visible. In the darkroom, one could also "fix" photographs, as a means of modifying, accentuating, or recovering details otherwise not made clear from the inscribed emulsion produced at the moment of photography, but post-production treatment was still limited. Some detail can be added to the development (and indeed, these photographs appear as prints, not negatives), but overexposure is not recoverable.

However, Mancao's overexposed renditions of whiteness in photographs do not simply indicate a lack of proficiency as a photographer. Like his family's studio in Carcar, his technical limitations actually signal a different priority altogether: he sought to render dark skin as richly as possible. While the above scenes are an extreme example of Mancao's issue of overexposure, quieter manifestations can be teased out from his photographs with human subjects.

We return to this photograph. The choice of lens and the clarity of the faces attest to the reasonable training of the photographer. However, watch the faces and the appendages of these men: they are dark-skinned, yet the details in their jawlines and fingers are rendered in great detail, at the expense of a clear rendering of the lighter features of their clothing. The collars of the men at the left and the center are overexposed, but the contours of their faces are well-defined by favorable light and on-site camera manipulation, to accentuate the main subject of this photograph: the workers' faces.

As in the photograph above, in the subsequent image the lighter features of the subjects' clothes are overexposed. The trousers on the man on the left

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are completely washed out, while all three of their faces receive the focus of the camera, in exposure and composition. Their jawlines and eyes are accentuated by the angle of the daylight, enough of which illuminates their features without obstructing their ability to keep their eyes open. The neatness of these facial contours suggest Mancao's choice in lighting to optimize their faces, even (as above) at the expense of the expensive clothes the workers ironed out to take this photograph. From the blur of the tree behind them,

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there seems to have been a breeze or a gust of wind that obliterated individual leaves from the image. However, this is testament to another technique that Mancao may have used to render out the faces in as much detail as possible. If the leaves were blurred out, this portrait must have been a long exposure photograph. With a slower shutter speed, the aperture would have been closed

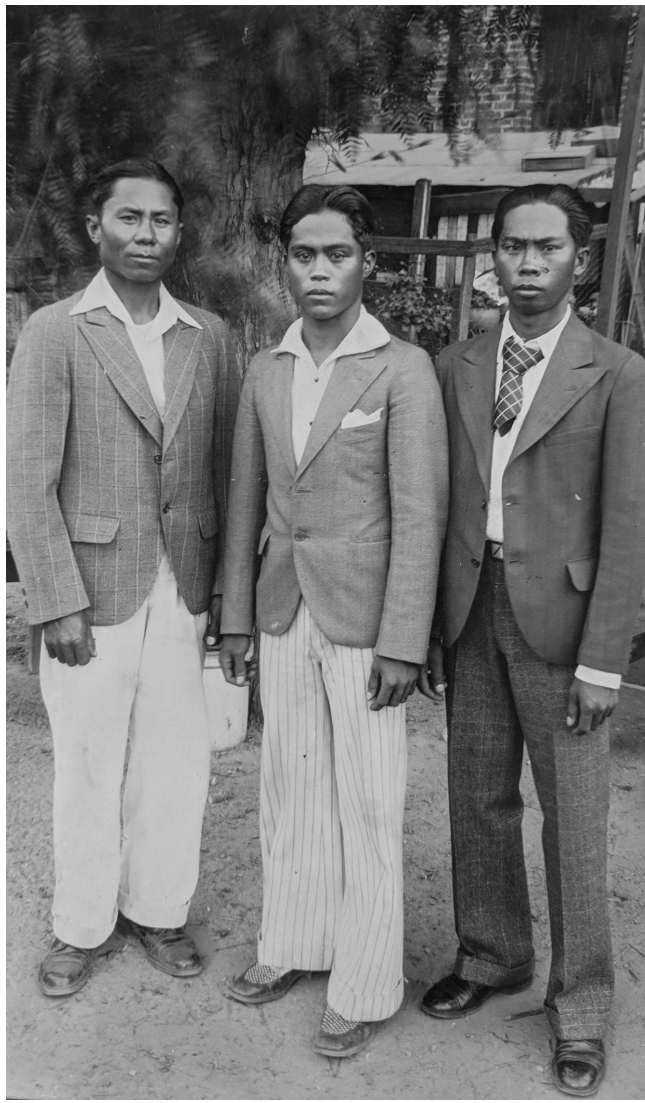

Figure 9. Photographer: Frank Mancao, undated (est. 1930s). Courtesy of FANHS.

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tighter in order to compensate for the amount of light entering the lens. (For instance, if it were an f/2.0 fast lens, Mancao may have tightened the aperture to an f/8, if the lens made it possible). The clarity of the wooden fence in the background, as opposed to being blurred out by bokeh, is evidence of this aperture adjustment.

These technical choices may have been made in order to compensate for the film available to Mancao at the time. Since these photographs were most likely taken in the 1930s, the most affordable film rolls (35mm or 120 film, widely distributed by Kodak) would have been orthochromatic film, not yet adjusted to accommodate darker features. In the service of producing more detailed images of melanin-rich Filipino skin, Mancao's emphasis on dark skin rendering is particularly striking at a time when preferred film types were catered to lighter skin. The few negatives I was able to retrieve from the Mancao collection were post–WWII camera film (e.g., Kodak panchromatic), and while color correction for darker hues (especially fleshy reds) was certainly better than mass-produced orthochromatic film when Mancao likely worked, it was still not ideal for darker skin. Through his manipulative work, we can see that Frank Mancao's photographic practice, including its limitations, reveals how political the act of technical tinkering can be.[54]

The subtle overexposure in these photographs reflect the non-white ethnic photographer's attempts to overcome a racist limitation in photo technology at the time. More equitable film technology would not be made available on the consumer market until the 1980s, and the ethnic photographer would have had to excel at camera, lens, and lighting manipulation on a constant basis. The above examples suggest a positive effect of Mancao's respectability politics and the work behind representation. Not only did he account for dark skin tones as faithfully as possible, but across his Manong portraits, the focal detail of each photograph draws the gaze exclusively to the workers' faces. By paying the photography fee and posing in their best suits, Filipino workers entered into a visual economy of respectability. Frank Mancao added currency to that political act by composing a *demand* that the identificatory gaze respects each subject's face.[55]

CONCLUSION: AFTERLIVES OF MANCAO'S CAMERA

Before the 1960s, most photographs in the Mancao collection circulated between private spaces. By the 1970s and 1980s, Frank Mancao donated some of his photographs to the Demonstration Project for Asian Americans, led

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by Dorothy Cordova. Soon after his death, a second round of acquisitions took place when his family invited Dorothy Cordova to take some photos and negatives. The third and final acquisition period came through one of Mancao's grandchildren, who donated a box of postcard prints and letters, most of which were from Mancao Studios in Cebu. Except for several negatives that were discarded by the family, and some photographs that community members failed to return over the years, the Mancao collection is found entirely within the National Pinoy Archives at the Filipino American National Historical Society in Seattle.[56]

The first major project produced on Filipino American community history used Mancao photographs liberally. One of the major products of the Demonstration Project for Asian Americans (the precursor of the Filipino American National Historical Society) was a book entitled *Filipinos, Forgotten Asian Americans: A Pictoral Essay, 1763–circa 1963*. The cover photograph is a Mancao image, of his wife and daughters with Filipino farmworkers in the 1930s:

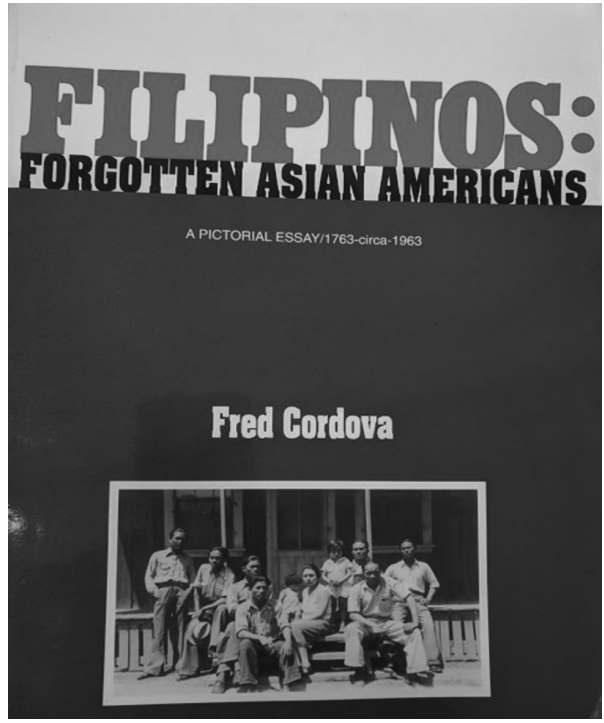

Figure 10. Courtesy of FANHS.

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When I asked her why this cover photograph was chosen, Dorothy Cordova tells me that one of her sisters selected the image very close to the publication deadline. "She thought it looked nice," Cordova recalls. Mancao photographs appear in this book twenty-nine times. Most of them are of California farmworkers, and some others depict community events. These photographs have been reused many times over in local history events. In January 2018, they appeared in the Little Manila Center in Stockton, California, as a part of a FANHS exhibit on Filipino American history. These photographs have become the go-to images for ethnic community storytelling, frequently cited as examples of Manongs or agricultural work and often chosen because of how pleasing the representations of Filipinos appear to be.

That aesthetic pleasure arises from the politics of respectability. Frank's photographic labor attempted to challenge the prevalent "Pinoy image" but reified a hardworking ethic as a means for the Pinoy to be respectable. Decades after the height of Mancao's photographic work, his visual respectability politics has continued to prove useful among middle-class Filipino Americans. Because of the power of ethnic respectability politics, Filipino American studies continues to grapple with this double-edged sword. In the age of mechanical (and digital) reproduction, Mancao's photographs of workers would become the Filipino American story.

NOTES

Thank you to Suzanne Sinke and the anonymous reviewers for the generous feedback. My gratitude to the volunteers at the National Pinoy Archives for helping access and sort the disparate materials for what would become the Frank Mancao photography collection. A special thanks to Dorothy Cordova for her mentorship and ongoing collaboration, and for any and all biographical insight into the Reedley community of the mid-twentieth century. Thank you to audiences in the Western History Association, the University of Washington, the Wing Luke Museum, the Newberry Library, the University of Chicago, and the University of Illinois at Chicago for early feedback, particularly Vicente Rafael, Madison Heslop, Roneva Keel, Anna Nguyen, Walter Benn Michaels, and Kenneth Warren. And finally, for the reading suggestions and looking over the many drafts of this piece over the three years it took to write: Takashi Fujitani, Kevin Coleman, Siobhan Angus, Wesley Attewell, and Christine Noelle Peralta.

1. Cassette D/CC81-FIL-001(A)AF, National Pinoy Archives, Filipino American National Historical Society.

2. Dorothy Fujita-Rony, *American Workers, Colonial Power: Philippine Seattle and the Making of the Transpacific West, 1919–1941* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Linda España-Maram, *Creating Masculinity in Los Angeles's Little Manila: Working-Class Filipinos and Popular Culture, 1920s–1950s* (New York: Columbia University

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Press, 2006); Rick Baldoz, *The Third Asiatic Invasion: Empire and Migration in Filipino America* (New York: New York University Press, 2011).

3. "Manong," an Ilokano adaptation of the Spanish word *hermano* (brother), is the popular name for migrant men in the American West from the Philippines before World War II. This arose during the aftermath of the Civil Rights movement, during which Asian American young people began to advocate for the curriculum that would become Asian American studies. Writing Filipino American history allowed Filipino activists such as Fred and Dorothy Cordova to ascribe community terms of kinship to historical populations. Hence, the "Manong" emerged, and I use it in this study in the same way. See: Fujita-Rony, *American Workers, Colonial Power*; España-Maram, *Creating Masculinity in Los Angeles's Little Manila*; Lucy Mae San Pablo Burns, *Puro Arte: Filipinos on the Stages of Empire* (New York: New York University Press, 2012).

4. Fred and Dorothy Cordova, *Filipinos, Forgotten Asian Americans: A Pictorial Essay, 1763-circa-1963* (Seattle: Demonstration Project for Asian Americans, 1983).

5. Joseph Bernardo, "Chapter Two: Discourses of Filipino Assimilation." In "From 'Little Brown Brothers' to 'Forgotten Asian Americans': Race, Space, and Empire in Filipino Los Angeles" (PhD diss., Department of History, University of Washington, 2014), 86–138.

6. Interview with Dorothy Cordova, January 2018.

7. Much of what is known about Frank Mancao can be surmised through his single oral history interview at the Filipino American National Historical Society, or from personal anecdotes from Dorothy Cordova, its executive director. I center the knowledge from oral sources in order to carve out the life worlds of Filipino America.

8. Deborah Poole, *Vision, Race, Modernity: A Visual Economy of the Andean Image World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997).

9. Most recently, historians in the "Photography and Work" issue of *Radical History Review* (2018) have deployed visual studies in historical inquiry, from labor studies to histories of capitalism and politics. See: Kevin Coleman, Daniel James, and Jayeeta Sharma, "Introduction: Photography and Work," *Radical History Review* 132 (2018): 1–22.

10. For a historical and contemporary sociology of the Philippine system of exporting migrant workers, see: Robyn Magalit Rodriguez, *Migrants for Export: How the Philippine State Brokers Labor to the World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

11. Gary Okihiro, *Cane Fires: The Anti-Japanese Movement in Hawaii* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991); JoAnna Poblete, *Islanders in the Empire: Filipino and Puerto Rican Laborers in Hawai'i* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2014).

12. "California's Labor Situation in a Nutshell," *Los Angeles Times*, May 27, 1917; "Growers' Convention Votes to Import Filipino Labor," *Los Angeles Times*, May 17, 1917; "May Solve Labor Problem in Valley," *Los Angeles Times*, March 15, 1918. For an overview of Filipino labor migration in Central California, see Baldoz, *The Third Asiatic Invation*; Dawn Bohulano Mabalon, *Little Manila Is in the Heart: The Making of the Filipinalo American Community in Stockton, California* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013).

13. Fujita-Rony, *American Workers, Colonial Power*; Mabalon, *Little Manila Is in the Heart*.

14. Fujita-Rony, *American Workers, Colonial Power*.

15. Mabalon, *Little Manila Is in the Heart*.

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16. Linda España-Maram, *Creating Masculinity in Los Angeles's Little Manila*; San Pablo Burns, *Puro Arte*.

17. Mabalon, *Little Manila Is in the Heart*.

18. Nayan Shah, "Chapter 2: Policing Strangers and Borderlands," in *Stranger Intimacy: Contesting Race, Sexuality and the Law in the American West* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 53–89; Baldoz, *The Third Asiatic Invation*.

19. España-Maram, *Creating Masculinity in Los Angeles's Little Manila*, 7.

20. "Filipino American Struggle from Submergence to Emergence," 1937, Box 1, Folder 3, Trinidad Rojo Collection, University of Washington Special Collections.

21. On cultures (including visual cultures) of Spanish and US imperialism, see Vicente Rafael, *White Love and Other Events in Filipino History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000); Laura Wexler, *Tender Violence: Domestic Visions in an Age of U.S. Imperialism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Amy Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002); David Brody, *Visualizing American Empire: Orientalism and Imperialism in the Philippines* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010); Caroline Hau, *Recuerdos de Patay and Other Stories* (Manila: University of the Philippines Press, 2015); Nerissa Balce, *Body Parts of Empire: Visual Abjection, Filipino Images, and the American Archive* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016).

22. Vicente Rafael, "The Undead: Notes on Photography in the Philippines, 1898–1920s," in *White Love and Other Events in Filipino History*.

23. Tape 1, Side II.

24. I draw upon Pierre Bourdieu in my understanding of Mancao as cultural mediator, through which he also found possibilities for profit. His social and cultural capital depended on his counterimages of punitive and derogatory stereotypes of Filipino men; in here, I locate his work as a photographer and negotiator. See "The Forms of Capital," in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. John Richardson (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1986), 241–58.

25. Tape 1, Side II.

26. Tape 1, Side II.

27. In his oral history interviews, Mancao does not state which hotel nor which restaurant.

28. On ethnic mediators and labor contractors, see Poblete, *Islanders in the Empire*, Chapters 5 and 6.

29. Carlos Bulosan, *America Is in the Heart: A Personal History* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2014); España-Maram, *Creating Masculinity in Los Angeles's Little Manila*.

30. Michael Denning, *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century* (London: Verso Books, 1998); Matthew Briones, *Jim and Jap Crow: A Cultural History of 1940s Interracial America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013).

31. Kevin Coleman, *A Camera in the Garden of Eden: The Self-Forging of a Banana Republic* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2016). Coleman develops subaltern workers' modes of self-representation against the United Fruit Company in Honduras. In *Displaying Filipinos: Photography and Colonialism in Early 20th-Century Philippines* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1995), Benito Vergara traces the history of ethnological

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photographers of native peoples from the Philippines, and how representations of "racial types" effaced the violence of American conquest.

32. Ariella Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography* (Cambridge, MA: Zone Books, 2008).

33. Examples abound across the hemisphere from Chicago to Latin America. See: Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919–1939* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Coleman, *A Camera in the Garden of Eden*.

34. On the politics of representing the self in front of a camera, see: Kevin Coleman, "A Camera in the Garden of Eden," *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 20, no. 1 (March 2011): 63–96.

35. On the *ilustrados*, see Megan C. Thomas, *Orientalists, Propagandists, and Ilustrados: Filipino Scholarship at the End of Spanish Colonialism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012). I expand on the afterlife of the ilustrados in Filipino communities in my article, "Transpacific Rizalistas: Portrait Photography and the Filipino Becoming-Subject," *Trans Asia Photography* (Spring 2021).

36. Thy Phu, *Picturing Model Citizens: Civility in Asian American Visual Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011). Lisa Lowe also notes the ambivalent place of the Asian immigrant in notions of American citizenship and the ways in which Asian American cultural productions both challenge and reify white liberal notions of citizenship in the United States. We might extrapolate, then, that the social technics of civility affirms the double bind of Asian American cultural production that Lowe identifies. See: *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995). Other minoritized communities express similar forms of ambivalence and tensions between visuality and respectability. Among Black subjects of photography, see Tina Campt, *Image Matters: Archive, Photography, and the African Diaspora in Europe* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012).

37. Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photograph*.

38. Vergara, *Displaying Filipinos*; Rafael, *White Love and Other Events in Filipino History*; Paul Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, and the Philippines* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Mark Rice, *Dean Worcester's Fantasy Islands: Photography, Film, and the Colonial Philippines* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2014); Adrian De Leon, "Working the Kodak Zone: The Labor Relations of Race and Photography in the Philippine Cordilleras, 1887–1914," *Radical History Review* 128 (October 2018).

39. De Leon, " Working the Kodak Zone"; Lily Cho, "Darkroom Material: Race and the Chromogenic Film," *Postmodern Culture* 28, no. 2 (2017).

40. Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill & Wang, 1980), 9–15.

41. Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1989).

42. Martha A. Sandweiss, *Print the Legend: Photography and the American West* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004).

43. Working with Dean Worcester's photographs, the anthropologist Analyn Salvador-Amores returns ethnological images to the Bontoc community where many elders recognized their ancestors. In circulation to the home community, Salvador-Amores provides other analytical techniques for Philippine photography. See "Afterlives of Dean C.

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Worcester's Colonial Photographs: Visualizing Igorot Material Culture, from Archives to Anthropological Fieldwork in Northern Luzon," *Visual Anthropology* 29, no. 1 (2016): 54–80.

44. Luis Alvarez, *The Power of the Zoot: Youth Culture and Resistance during World War II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

45. Cassette D/CC81-FIL-001(A)AF, National Pinoy Archives, Filipino American National Historical Society.

46. For example, Sinforoso Ordoña from Bauang, La Union, noted the common practice of shared living, in which young men pitched in to purchase houses that served as home bases for migrant workers. Cassette PNW81-FIL-015NK, National Pinoy Archives, Filipino American National Historical Society.

47. Coleman, "A Camera in the Garden of Eden" (2011) enacts such a reading.

48. Poblete, *Islanders in the Empire*; Roderick N. Labrador, *Building Filipino Hawai'i* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015); Adrian De Leon, "Sugarcane *Sakadas*: The Corporate Production of the Filipino on a Hawai'i Plantation," *Amerasia Journal* (2019).

49. Interview with Dorothy Cordova, January 2018.

50. Cassette D/CC81-FIL-001(A)AF, National Pinoy Archives, Filipino American National Historical Society.

51. Interview with Frank Mancao, FANHS.

52. Cassette D/CC81-FIL-001(A)AF, National Pinoy Archives, Filipino American National Historical Society.

53. Sandweiss, *Print the Legend*.

54. On the history of photography, film, and race, see: Lorna Roth, "Looking at Shirley, the Ultimate Norm: Colour Balance, Image Technologies, and Cognitive Equity," *Canadian Journal of Communication* 34, no. 1 (2009): 111–36.

55. Coleman, "A Camera in the Garden of Eden" (2011).

56. Conversations with Dorothy Cordova, January–February 2018.

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