

"We Can Laugh at Ourselves"

Hawai'i Ethnic Humor, Local Identity, and the Myth of Multiculturalism

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The typical image of Hawai'i is that of the commoditized touristic scene of white sandy beaches, swaying palm trees, picture-perfect sunsets, and highly sexualized hula girls and surfer boys. In large part, the political, economic, and ideological machinery of global tourism produces and heavily markets this image of Hawai'i as "tropical paradise," a tourist playground for rest and relaxation with warm and inviting "natives" who "hang loose" and happily welcome and serve visitors. A complementary image of Hawai'i depends on its much-celebrated multiculturalism and perceived racial/ethnic harmony; the idea of Hawai'i as "racial paradise" and "the most notable instance of a melting-pot of the modern world" (Park 1938, xiv).² This image of groups harmoniously coexisting is derived partially from the fact that there is no numerical majority among the various racial/ethnic groups who have settled in the islands.³ Because there is no numerical majority, there is a widely held misperception that "everyone is a minority" that serves as "living proof" (Grant and Ogawa 1993) of racial tolerance and cultural intermixture where "peoples of different races and creeds can live together, enriching each other, in harmony and democracy" (Fuchs 1961, 449). In other words, there is a general perception that the various groups have "mixed" together and no single racial/ethnic group is politically and economically dominant despite evidence to the contrary—namely, the history of U.S. colonialism and foreign domination; the displacement, dispossession, and population collapse of Native Hawaiians; the exploitation of Asian workers as sources of cheap labor that facilitated the development of U.S. capitalism in Hawai'i and investment in Asia; and the racial and ethnic stratification that positions whites, Japanese, and Chinese as elites, and Native Hawaiians, Filipinos, and Samoans as subordinate (Okamura

1990). Hawai'i as "racial paradise" is also constructed through the widespread promotion of the "Hawai'i Multicultural Model" (Okamura 1998) and its endorsement of Local,⁴ a racialized identity category that indexes a sociopolitically constructed panethnic formation, as the unmarked normative order (Hill 1998) and the mainstream principle for collective identification. The elevation of the Local as the mainstream disguises differential access to wealth and power and frames multiculturalism not merely as a political symbol or ideal, but also as the ideological underpinning of everyday social, cultural, political, and economic realities.

This chapter critiques the idea of Hawai'i as "multicultural paradise" and the production of Local by examining the popular practice of ethnic humor. Like Elaine W. Chun (this volume) I use comedy performances as a focus of sociolinguistic analysis. I argue that Hawai'i ethnic humor is both a space for the production of "Local knowledge(s)" (Chang 1996) and ideologies where identities are constructed and social order and racial hierarchy enacted. While others have focused on the construction of Local as a non-white panethnic formation (Okamura 1994; Takaki 1983) and as a sociopolitical identity set in opposition to Native Hawaiians (Fujikane 2000; Trask 2000), I draw attention to the production of Local as a non-immigrant identity, especially the ways in which Local comedians appropriate the voice of immigrant Filipinos through the use of Mock Filipino (or speaking English with a "Filipino accent"). Mock Filipino is a strategy often employed by Local comedians to differentiate the speakers of Philippine languages from speakers of Pidgin or what most linguists call Hawai'i Creole English, the lingua franca of Local residents. Audience members do not necessarily speak or understand Philippine languages, yet many often recognize individual Filipino words and the shift into Mock Filipino. Although there are approximately one hundred Philippine languages and the national language of the Philippines is officially called "Filipino," the language variety mocked by Local comedians is more of an amalgamation of Ilokano and Tagalog, two of the most commonly spoken Philippine languages in Hawai'i. Similar to the effects of Mock Spanish (Hill 1998) and Mock Asian (Chun, this volume), Mock Filipino produces stigmatizing discourses of immigrant Filipinos. Like Mock Asian, public utterances of Mock Filipino in the continental United States are rather rare outside of the comedy performances of Filipino American comics like Rex Navarrete and Kevin Camia. In Hawai'i, Mock Filipino seems to have more resonance. Filipinos and non-Filipinos are more likely to publicly voice a cautionary "*Halla*," an exasperated "*Ay sus!*" or front a "Filipino accent" in everyday linguistic practice.⁵ These public utterances simultaneously point to discourses of tolerance, inclusivity, and acceptance that reinscribe Hawai'i's mainstream "multiculturalist ideology" (San Juan 2002) and the marking of immigrant Filipino otherness.

In this chapter, I examine the linguistic practices in the comedy performances of Frank DeLima as well as excerpts from *Buckaloose: Shmall Keed Time* (Small Kid Time), a comedy CD by Da Braddahs, a relatively new but tremendously popular comedy duo in Hawai'i. DeLima, who self-identifies as Portuguese, Hawaiian, Chinese, English, Spanish, Scottish, Irish, and French, is a pillar of the local comedy scene and is commonly referred to as the "king of ethnic humor in Hawaii" (Coleman 2003).⁶ Da Braddahs is comprised of two Hawai'i-born and raised raised comics, James Roaché, who is Filipino and Italian, and Tony Silva, who is Hawaiian,

Chinese, Portuguese, and Irish. In *Buckaloose: Shmall Keed Time*, Da Braddahs follows the template of local comedy established by the pioneering comedy team of Booga Booga in the 1970s and 1980s, who performed jokes based on racial/ethnic stereotypes familiar to Hawai'i audiences (e.g., cheap Chinese, dumb Portuguese), used Pidgin as the primary medium of communication, and included song parodies and character sketches involving wild costumes, racial/ethnic caricatures, and overstated accents. In addition to their comedy CD, Da Braddahs have four self-produced videos and four DVDs, a thirty-minute long television show (called "Da Braddahs and Friends") that airs on local cable TV six nights a week, and they host a live weekly comedy show that depicts "the comic underside of contemporary local living" (Berger 2002, D1). Da Braddahs' character sketches play off of long-standing racial/ethnic stereotypes and a review of *Buckaloose: Shmall Keed Time* notes that the "Chinese, Filipino, 'haole,'⁷ and other characters here are staple types" where "the characters and situations are almost all basic Booga/Rap bits that have been used and abused by almost all local comics for the past 20 years" (Berger 1998, D5). Although there are other problematic characters in the videos and on the TV show, like Keoki and Kakio who play on the image of the gay male *kumu hula*⁸ and his *alaka'i*,⁹ Bush and Bully (the mindless Samoan tree-trimmers), and Pocho and Tanda (two Local boys), here I focus on the Filipino character, Tata Cayatmo, who has a more prominent role in the CD, and his interactions with the Local character, Joe.¹⁰ Da Braddahs' Tata Cayatmo functions as the stereotypical elderly male Filipino immigrant whose linguistic incompetence is positioned against Joe's Pidgin, drawing attention to the use of language in the othering of immigrant Filipinos.

The use of Mock Filipino in Hawai'i ethnic humor is part of broader racializing and stigmatizing discourses. Although media depictions often criminalize and misrepresent Filipinos as prone to violence (Quemuel 1996) as well as focus on "Filipino male sexual violence" (Fujikane 2000), here I focus on discourses that highlight immigrant Filipino linguistic and cultural difference. Local comedians use Mock Filipino as a "strategy of pejoration" (Hill 1993) to construct discourses that place immigrant Filipinos as cultural and linguistic Others, signifying their subordinate position in the social hierarchy and order. Through Mock Filipino, Local comedians construct the linguistic incompetence and subordinate identity of immigrant Filipinos. Although understood as "innocent" and "harmless" joking in which "we can laugh at ourselves," Hawai'i ethnic humor in general and Mock Filipino in particular simultaneously produce stigmatizing and "racially interested" discourses (Hill 1995) that uphold the positive self-image of Locals, especially their membership in Hawai'i's "racial paradise," while lowering that of immigrant Filipinos. The linguistic practice in the comedy performances are thus identity acts that normalize Local and reinforce Hawai'i's myth of multiculturalism while disseminating ideas about language, culture, and identity.

Local Matters and the Myth of Multiculturalism

The idea of "Local" is crucial for understanding ethnic humor and the politics of identity in Hawai'i. Steffi San Buenaventura (1996) suggests that to understand

Hawai'i "is to know the meaning and nuances of 'local' identity and the continuous contradistinctions that are made between the local and the 'non-local' other" (38, emphasis in original). Although Local operates in a field of ongoing relational oppositions that form a Local/non-Local binary, it is a racialized identity category composed primarily of the various non-white groups that usually trace their entrance into the islands to the plantation era—namely those of Chinese, Japanese, Okinawan, Filipino, and Korean descent. Local is the label for those who are usually classified as "Asian American" or "Asian Pacific American" in the continental United States. For many Hawai'i residents, particularly those of Asian ancestry, Local is the most salient category for political and cultural identification. Various scholars have focused on the cultural (Grant and Ogawa 1993; Ogawa 1978, 1981; Takaki 1983, 1993), structural (Okamura 1980, 1994, 1998), and political (Fujikane 2000; Trask 2000) to examine the nature and dynamics of Local. A common feature among these various approaches is that each locates the emergence and development of Local in Hawai'i's labor history and the shared experiences among the mainly Asian plantation workers.

A key aspect of the emergence of Local is the development of Pidgin, the language that now serves as the lingua franca of those who identify themselves as Local and is often used as the primary marker of Local-ness. Ronald Takaki (1983) argues that Pidgin was the shared language among the non-white plantation workers and facilitated their shift from "sojourners to settlers" and from individual ethnic groups to an overarching panethnic consolidation. Although "standard English," or mainstream U.S. English, continues to be the language of power and prestige, Pidgin has come to function as the language of Locals, enjoying "covert prestige" as a "badge of honor" (Da Pidgin Coup 1999; see also Lum 1998). It is the primary medium of communication for Local comedians. In addition, Pidgin has come to symbolize Hawai'i's multiculturalism and the ideologies of mixing, acceptance, equality, and assimilation. Pidgin is depicted as a reflection of the islands' history of interracial harmony: "Pidgin is inclusive, a reflection of our historical attitudes and the value placed on getting along and trying to find common ground. It is non-hierarchical, and puts people on an even footing" (Da Pidgin Coup 1999). Pidgin epitomizes the "blending process" associated with the development of Local identity and culture. In this way, Pidgin and Local are inseparable, constituting the symbolic, cultural, and linguistic aspect of multiculturalism in Hawai'i. As Local comedian Frank DeLima puts it: "Hawaii is local. Hawaii is Pidgin" (in Coleman 2003, C4).

Political economic changes in Hawai'i since the mid-1960s, including the development on mass tourism and the Native Hawaiian sovereignty movement, have enhanced the continuing salience of Local. In my analysis I foreground the relationality and situatedness of Local. Depending on the sociohistorical context and actors involved, Local can index racialized bodies ('look Local'), cultural identities ('act Local'), linguistic affiliations ('talk Local'), and political positionings.¹¹ In this way, the boundaries of Local are constantly changing and continuously policed through processes of self-definition and othering. In the sections that follow, I examine the ways in which racialized imagery and language practices in Local comedy are used to construct Locals and non-Local Filipinos.¹²

Constructing "Buk Buk"

Hawai'i ethnic humor is an important site for the practice and performance of Local identity and culture. The history of "Local comedy" can be traced to the 1950s and 1960s when Sterling Mossman, Lucky Luck, and Kent Bowman, aka perpetual senatorial candidate K. K. Ka'umanua (pronounced like "cow manure"), were popular comedic performers (Tonouchi 1999). Mossman, dubbed "Hawai'i's First Comedic Entertainer," was a bandleader who combined singing and telling jokes in his comedy routines. Lucky Luck, known as "Hawai'i's Prince of Comedy," was a popular radio personality with his own variety show and children's television show. Bowman, known as "The King of Pidgin English," recorded a half dozen albums that included his stand-up routines and children's stories told in Pidgin. Arguably, the heyday of Hawai'i ethnic humor was the late 1970s and 1980s. During this period, Andy Bumatai, Mel Cabang, and Booga Booga, the pioneering comedy group of James Kawika Piimauna "Rap" Reiplinger, James Grant Benton, and Ed Ka'aehea, set the stage for subsequent local comedians and established the template for contemporary Hawai'i ethnic humor, often referred to as "*Kanaka*"¹³ comedy." Race and ethnicity and the production of Local were crucial to the popularity of Booga Booga. Their comedy sketches played up familiar racial/ethnic stereotypes: "Ethnic identity is the key to their ability to generate material which is universally appealing to local audiences: Ka'aehea as the laid back 'token Hawaiian,' Benton the reserved 'Kabuki type,' Reiplinger more indefinably as the hustler—the 'token Portagee,'¹⁴ perhaps" (Smith 1977, 20–21, in Tonouchi 1999). As Naomi Sodehani observes,

[t]heir whole act was nothing but ethnic jokes and stereotypes: families bickering at home; Hawaiian musicians, busboys, hotel workers having fun while aspiring to be more. They made visible and celebrated a sense of "us-ness" onstage. All spoken in pidgin, not school-mandated 'good English grammar.' (Sodehani 2001, 6)

Booga Booga's "*kanaka comedy*" poked fun at social life in Hawai'i, resonating with the everyday realities of their Local audiences. Although based on problematic racial and ethnic stereotypes, "*kanaka comedy*" and its use of Pidgin, not "school-mandated" English, is integral in the discursive construction of Local and the creation of an "us-ness" among Hawai'i's working-class people. In addition, the comedy group's rise to prominence coincided with the growing legitimization of Pidgin in academic and popular discourse during the 1980s. Furthermore, as Lee Tonouchi suggests, the rise of "*kanaka comedy*" corresponded with the racial/ethnic consciousness-raising of the late 1960s and 1970s and the emergence of "Local nationalism" (Fujikane 1994): "Booga Booga's substantial popularity stems in part from being able to capitalize on dis movement creating separate ethnic identities as well as positing one collective Local identity against da mainland continent" (Tonouchi 1999, 24). The racial/ethnic awareness of this period helped to establish the idea of Local, especially as an identity positioned against "da mainland," producing a Hawai'i/continental U.S. dichotomy. Although the 1990s experienced a lull in the development of "*kanaka comedy*," there has been a recent resurgence with the rise of the next generation of Local comedians, like Lanai and Augie T, Paul Ogata, Greg Hammer, and Da Braddahs.

Filipino jokes are part of the broader "ethnic humor" widely circulated in Local comedy. Filipinos are by no means the only targets of ethnic jokes, but some argue that they bear a disproportionate burden (Quemuel 1996; Revilla 1996). Although there is a wide variety of Filipino jokes, there appear to be two primary types: those that focus on "Filipino vocabulary" (which depend on Mock Filipino) and "Filipino culinary tastes" (specifically dog eating). The Filipino dog-eating jokes are especially prevalent. The following examples are taken from Frank DeLima's *Joke Book* (1991, 68–70):¹⁵

Did you hear about the new Filipino cookbook?
101 Ways to Wok Your Dog.
What do Filipinos call a dogcatcher's truck?
Meals on Wheels.
What's a Filipino's favorite meal?
Mutt loaf.
What do you call a Filipino family without a dog?
Vegetarians.
What do you call a Filipino family with one dog?
A family that doesn't know where its next meal is coming from.
What do you call a Filipino family with five dogs?
Ranchers.

Filipino dog-eating jokes are widely disseminated, in public and in private. As standards in Local comedy routines (Quemuel 1996), Filipino dog-eating jokes move from light talk in private spheres to public joking (Hill 1993) that is both entertainment and the enactment of social hierarchy and order.

In Local comedy, a dominant Filipino character type is the *manong*,¹⁶ the elderly male immigrant who is Fresh Off the Boat (or FOB) or Just Off the Jet (JOJ), eats dog and goats, speaks with a "heavy Filipino accent," and holds multiple low-wage and low-prestige jobs.¹⁷ The *manong* often stumbles over his words, uses awkward expressions, has long pauses when he talks, and has problems with English pronunciation. What is usually belittled in Filipino jokes is the fresh-off-the-boatness and the linguistic, cultural, social, and ideological characteristics associated with recent immigrants, particularly their perceived "heavy Filipino accent," affinity for bright clothes, alien culinary tastes, and their general cultural incompatibility and incompetence. DeLima's "Filipino Purple Danube,"¹⁸ a song parody using a waltz tempo that mimics the music for the *tinikling*, a traditional Filipino folk dance that uses two bamboo poles, is exemplary. DeLima begins the song with the Ilokano greeting "*Kumustakayo*" ('How are you all?') and immediately jumps into Mock Filipino nonsensical sounds that transform into clucking sounds. The lyrics for the song are as follows:

(1) "Filipino Purple Danube"

- 01 what's purple and brown, *buk buk, buk buk*
02 what squats on the ground, *buk buk, buk buk*

- 03 hold knife to your throat, *buk buk, buk buk*
 04 and eats billy goat, *buk buk, buk buk*
 05 who dance with two poles, *buk buk, buk buk*
 06 has hairs on his moles, *buk buk, buk buk*
 07 who eats *bagoong*,¹⁹ all day long
 08 you are right, it's the *manong*
- 09 who drives Cadillac, *buk buk, manong*
 10 light show on the back, *manong, manong*
 11 who wears silver pants, *manong, manong*
 12 goes out disco dance, *manong, manong*
 13 who greases his hair, *manong, manong*
 14 who perfumes the air, *manong, manong*
 15 who mixes *opai*²⁰ with fish eye
 16 you are right, it's the P.I.²¹
 17 you are right, *salamat*²²

In the *Silva Anniversary* version of the song above, DeLima substitutes "who greases his hair/who perfumes the air" (lines 13–14) for "who works on Lanai²³/ whose wife is *hapai*²⁴ and leaves out the entire third verse that appears in his *Joke Book*. The missing verse is more of the same, referring to Filipinos as "Flips" who participate in cockfighting and wear orange socks to go with their purple shirt and silver pants. (I have been told stories about immigrant Filipinos who intentionally avoid wearing these colors for fear of being ridiculed.) "Filipino Purple Danube" helps to construct the identity category of "*buk buk*"²⁵ /*bukbuk*/, which is synonymous with immigrant Filipinos and is the primary marker of linguistic and cultural otherness. DeLima's "Danube" constructs the stereotypical *buk buk* who is dangerous (holds knife to your throat), sexualized (whose wife is *hapai*), wears bright-colored clothes (purple shirt, silver pants, orange socks), conspicuously showy (the entire second verse), and maintains Filipino ethnic signs, primarily culinary tastes (billy goat, *bagoong*, and *opae* with fish eye), cultural behaviors (squats on the ground), and traditions (dance with two poles).²⁶ This stereotypical image can also be found in Local greeting cards. For instance, a belated birthday card has a picture of a "Filipino" man wearing a bright purple shirt who is accompanied by a black dog, goat, and chicken. The "Filipino" man, aghast, has his hands on his face and the caption exclaims "Ay Sus!" The inside of the card reads, "I porgot yo' bertdey." In order to get the joke in the card, the reader must find both the racialized images as well as the Mock Filipino "funny."

DeLima's stereotypical *buk buk* reappears in the comedy of Da Braddahs. In *Shmall Keed Time*, the Filipino character is Tata Cayatmo. The choice of the name is particularly interesting. In Ilokano, *tata* is a term of address that is used for a male parent or uncle, one generation above the speaker. The word "*cayat*" or "*kayat*"²⁷ can mean "to want, like, wish, desire, [or] be willing" (Rubino 2000, 267) and *mo* is a second-person informal singular genitive possessive enclitic. The words combined, *cayatmo*, means 'do you want like, wish, desire, or are you willing?' Thus, the name "Tata Cayatmo" can mean 'old man do you like/want' and with the sexual connota-

tions, it can mean something like 'dirty old man.'²⁸ By all means, Da Braddahs' Tata Cayatmo is *buk buk* and in the context of Filipino representation in Hawai'i, he is an extension of the criminally inclined and sexually predatory men in the Filipino "bachelor societies" of the sugar plantations.²⁹

In *Shmall Keed Time*, Tata Cayatmo takes center stage in the song "We Are Filipino," which is sung with a "Filipino accent." The song is the second track in a two-track sequence involving two characters, Joe and Tata Cayatmo. Throughout the CD, the character Joe is the Local "hero," the protagonist in the sketch who meets up with various ethnic characters. Tata Cayatmo is the Filipino character, an older immigrant Filipino man in his fifties. Tata Cayatmo's status as an immigrant is crucial for the setup of the joke. The song is a form of speech play that heavily depends on Mock Filipino for its humor:

(2) "We Are Filipino"

- 01 ahhhh. I would like to dedicate dis song
 02 to all of my fellow countryman
 03 from the Filifeens
 04 and flease mister DJ
 05 can you flease gib me da good reburb
 06 like da one on ahhh *Hawai'i Stars*³⁰
 07 cause I like to be like da good *kadugo*³¹
 08 everybody put your hand together
 09 and sing wit me the song of my countryman
 10 Jim Shapper, gib me the tunes, boy
- 11 who do you think we are
 12 we have to trabel so dam par
 13 do you understand my accent?
 14 excuse me sir, your change is ah, fifty cent.
 15 *hoy barok*,³² will you like to try some really fresh *kalamunggay*?³³
 16 *barok, naimas kayatmo*?³⁴
 ((The sound of chickens crowing in the background))
 17 everyday my fighting chicken is getting i-stronger
 18 (Joe: Tata, Tata, put the chicken down)

Chorus:

- 19 we are Filifino
 20 we come from the Filifeens
 21 we are Filifino
 22 trabeling with our pamily
 23 we are Filifino
 24 my family name is Tanguan
 25 we are Filifino
 26 my grandfader's your cleaning man
 27 we are a *buk buk*, a *suksok*³⁵
 28 we are a *buk buk*, a *suksok*

- 29 boy, listen
 30 *nataraki la unay dayta, nataraki la unay dayta*
 31 *haan nga babait, haan nga babait na babai dayta, nataraki la unay dayta*³⁶
 32 excuse me, Kalihi³⁷
 33 everyday my pants are getting i-higher

Chorus:

- 34 we are Filifino
 35 we come from the Filifeens
 36 we are Filifino
 37 trabeling with more pamily
 38 we are Filifino
 39 we all squeeze in dat pink house
 40 we are Filifino
 41 I go PI³⁸ for one more spouse
 42 we are a *buk buk*, a *suksok*
 43 we are a *buk buk*, a *suksok*
- 44 ahhh, my hair does not moob all day
 45 because I use goat pomade
 46 working at da bus stop
 47 we buy our clothes from the Body Shop³⁹
 48 working 27 more year
 49 so I can retarded⁴⁰ here
 50 da PI channel⁴¹ is da one por me
 51 so I can watch it on da big TV
 52 everyday my pants are getting i-higher
 ((leafblower sound))
 53 (Joe: Tata, get out of the tree. Tata, come down from the tree)

Chorus:

- 54 we are Filifino
 55 we come from the Filifeens
 56 we are Filifino ((song fades out...))

Like DeLima's "Danube," "We Are Filipino" tells the listeners what it means to be Filipino in Hawai'i. For those unfamiliar with Filipinos in Hawai'i, the song serves as a brief primer on Filipino speech, culture, history, and socioeconomic status. For example, the song illustrates how Filipinos continue to be heavily concentrated in the more readily available, less prestigious, and lower-paying occupations. When Tata Cayatmo says, "Excuse me sir, your change is, ah fifty cent" and later, "my grandfather's your cleaning man," he refers to the fact that Filipinos are occupationally concentrated in the new plantations, the hotels and resorts of the tourism industry, as chambermaids, janitors, and gardeners, as well as workers in the retail and service industries. Thus, it is not surprising to find older Filipinos working at fast-food restaurants or as groundskeepers, Tata Cayatmo's occupation. Even though

the audience may not understand all of the words in the song, they are familiar with the racialized and classed imagery.

Similar to DeLima's use of *hapai* in "Filipino Purple Danube," Da Braddahs also highlight that Filipinos are *suksok*, a sexually laden Ilokano word that means to insert or penetration. This portrayal of Filipinos continues a tradition of media representations that have depicted Filipinos as a "sex danger," criminally inclined, and prone to violence, which have their origins in the plantation era. In the plantation camps, the image of the Filipino was that of an uncontrollable, dangerous, and sexually predatory male:

A well-educated professional of Japanese ancestry ... remembered the stern warning of his parents that children should not wander too close to the Filipino camps lest something awful should befall them. He also recalled that young girls were told to avoid Filipino men because their mere gaze was said to be sufficient to cause pregnancy. (Teodoro 1981, 55-56)

In the song, the character of Tata Cayatmo takes us back to plantation imagery. The reference to the disreputable woman uttered in Ilokano, "*haan nga babait, haan nga babait. nataraki la unay dayta*/she's not virtuous, she's not virtuous, she's very flashy," and the line, "I go PI for one more spouse" only heightens the sexualization and deviation of Tata Cayatmo and the normalization of Joe.

We also find out in the chorus of the song that Filipinos are largely an immigrant community: "we are Filifino, we come from the Filifeens, we are Filifino, trabeling with more pamily." Since the 1970s Filipinos have constituted the majority of immigrants who arrive annually in Hawai'i. The focus on Filipino immigrants in Local comedy helps to create a social cleavage between Locals and immigrants: "One effect [of these negative stereotypes and jokes] is that we have young Filipinos who are ashamed of being Filipino. Local Filipinos distance themselves from immigrant Filipinos because many of the jokes and stereotypes are based upon immigrant Filipino behaviors, like the accent" (Revilla 1996, 9). In this way, the constant flow of Filipino immigrants and their marked visibility, reproduced in ethnic humor, have led many Local Filipinos to dissociate themselves from their immigrant counterparts, drawing attention to their Local rather than "Philippine" identity (Revilla 1997). Da Braddahs' song elicits laughter because the imagery resonates with their largely Local audience. As Roaché notes, "[P]eople can relate to us and say ... 'I have a cousin who's like that'" (in Coleon 2001, F5). In this particular case, "like that" refers to a cousin who is "*buk buk*." The assertion "I have a cousin who's like that" also makes the evaluative claim that "I'm not like my cousin" thereby creating a Local/immigrant dichotomy and constructing immigrant Filipinos as Others.

Mocking Filipino

Eduardo went to UH⁴² to learn English. First, he learned vocabulary. The teacher said, "Please use 'tenacious' in a sentence."

Eduardo thought for a minute, scratched his head. Then he said, "Ebery morning, before I go to school, I bend down and tie my ten-ay-shoos."

The teacher next asked Eduardo to use the word "window" in a sentence.

Eduardo got that right away and said, "Win do we eat?"

Finally, the teacher said, "Please (sic) use the following four words in a sentence: 'deduct ... defense ... defeat ... and detail.'"

Eduardo was quiet for a long time and finally he said, "De duck jumped ober de fence, de feet before de tail."⁴³

An important feature in Local comedy is the use of exaggerated accents to differentiate the speech of Locals and non-Locals. Exaggerated accents are a form of speech play that rely on "the manipulation of elements and components of language in relation to one another, in relation to the social and cultural contexts of language use, and against the backdrop of other verbal possibilities in which it is not foregrounded" (Sherzer 2002, 1). In Local comedy, Mock Filipino depends on the intentional disjunctive use of puns, miscommunication, and the manipulation of sound patterns in the formulation of perceived linguistic differences. Furthermore, Mock Filipino and "Filipino vocabulary" jokes (like the example above) depend on phonological and prosodic differences between pidgin (or "standard English," as is the case above) and Tagalog and Ilokano and the ensuing communicative confusion in order for the jokes to be perceived as humorous. For example, in order for the joke above to work, Eduardo's speech must be done in Mock Filipino style. In other words, Eduardo, who is typified as an immigrant Filipino, must speak with a "Filipino accent"; he must "sound" *buk buk*. This "accent" is indicated by certain phonological substitutions: the bilabialization of labiodentals /v/ → /b/ (<every> /evəri/ → /ɛbəri/; <over> /ovər/ → /obər/) and the alveolarization of interdental /ð/ → /d/ (<the> /ðə/ → /də/). In addition, Eduardo confuses syllable stress: <tenacious> /tə'neʃəs/ → /'te'ne'ʃus/ ('tennis shoes'); <window> /'wɪndə/ → /'wɪn'do/ ('when do'); <deduct> /də'dʌkt/ → /'di'dʌk/ ('the duck'); <defense> /'dɪfens/ → /'di'fens/ ('the fence'); <defeat> /də'fi:t/ → /'di'fi:t/ ('the feet'); and <detail> /'di:təl/ → /'di'tel/ ('the tail'). In many "Filipino vocabulary" jokes, the punch line or what elicits laughter is not so much what is said, but *how* it is said (i.e., the pronunciation); that is to say "Filipino" linguistic practices and the speakers associated with them are the objects of derision.

In Local comedy, what is considered humorous about Filipino jokes is that they highlight the different linguistic practices of Locals and immigrant Filipinos and the communicative misunderstandings that arise. In the following excerpts from *Buckaloose: Small Keed Time*, mispronunciation leads to linguistic mix-ups and miscommunication between Joe and Tata Cayatmo. Throughout the CD Joe is authenticated as the pidgin speaker and it is his linguistic practices that are privileged. The first excerpt centers on the differences between the words "retired" and "retarded."

(3) "Retarded/Retired"⁴⁴

01 TC: Imagine dis one *kadugu*, twenty sheben more year.
Imagine this, my friend, twenty-seven more years.

02 J: Rait, rait.
Right, right.

- 03 TC: I'm to going to be retarded.
I'm going to be retarded.
- 04 J: Nou nou nou nou nou. Yu min ritai:ad.
No, no, no, no, no. You mean retired.
- 05 TC: It is to be working poreber. [No? What are you sfeaking tired?
I'll be working forever. [No! What are you talking about, tired?
- 06 J: [NO::U(h) Not- Ho?
[No! Not. What?
- 07 TC: My pamily is working two hundred shebenty sheben hours a week
My family works two hundred seventy-seven hours a week
- 08 J: Tu handred seventi seven?
Two hundred seventy-seven?

(lines 9-19 are omitted)
- 20 J: Hau *old* yu Tawtaw Kayats.
How old are you Tata Kayats?
- 21 TC: Nga in January I'm going to be making fifty-seven.
Ahh, in January I'm going to be fifty-seven
- 22 J: Lem mi si. lem mi si. Faiv seven tu, kaeri da wan
Lemme see. Lemme see. Five, seven, two, carry the one.
- 23 TC: Yas.
Yes.
- 24 J: Ho- HOU
Ho!
- 25 TC: Das da good one. Eighty-pour
That's the good one. Eighty-four
- 26 J: Das eiti for wen u ritai. E daes nuts maen.
That's eighty-four when you retire. Hey, that's nuts, man.
- 27 TC: Eighty-pour. Ay, dat age is perfect to be ritarded.
Eighty-four. Hey, that age is perfect to be retarded.
- 28 J: *Ritaiad*. Tawtaw. *Ritaiad*.
Retired, Tata. *Retired*.

Here, Joe and Tata Cayatmo are talking about Cayatmo's age, the type and amount of work he does, and when he plans on retiring. In Cayatmo's first turn, Joe acknowledges mutual intelligibility when he says, "right, right" (line 2). In addition to Cayatmo's phonological substitutions (alveolarization of interdental /ðs/ → /dts/, and alveo-palatalization of alveolars and bilabialization of labiodentals /sevən/ → /ʃebən/ in line 1) what's perceived to be humorous arises in Cayatmo's second turn. He tells Joe that he plans to retire in twenty-seven years when he is eighty-four years old but instead of saying that he is going to be retired, he says "I'm to going to be retarded" in line 3 and again in line 27, "dat age is perfect to be ritarted." In much the same way that Eduardo's "deduct" becomes "the duck," Cayatmo is not "retired," he's "retarded." Both times Joe picks up on the mispronunciation and corrects Cayatmo (line 4 and line 28), a correction done in pidgin. In line 4 Joe says, "Nou nou nou nou. yu min ritai:ad/No, no, no, no, no. You mean retired." Rather than using standard English, Joe uses the r-less pidgin form, "ritai:ad." Even with Joe's correction, miscommunication still occurs as Cayatmo misconstrues Joe's "ritai:ad" for "tired" and is offended by the insinuation that he's lazy and not hardworking (line 5). Joe repeats this correction in line 28 in a more definitive and emphatic way: "*Ritai:ad. Tawtaw. Ritai:ad. Retired, Tata. Retired.*"

Tata Cayatmo's inability to differentiate between "retired" and "retarded" points to his linguistic incompetence, which becomes an explicit point of communicative confusion. Is Cayatmo "retired" or "retarded"? Joe's corrections in line 4 and line 28 help to position Cayatmo as linguistically inferior and Pidgin as the linguistic norm; he speaks neither the overtly prestigious "Standard English" nor the highly regarded Pidgin. Joe's corrections and Cayatmo's inability to pick up on them suggests that perhaps Cayatmo is indeed "retarded," at least linguistically.

In the next excerpt, Cayatmo's linguistic ineptitude is the unambiguous site of misunderstanding. The confusion is over the inconsistency of the phonological substitutions /f/ → /p/ and /p/ → /f/ as Joe wants to clarify who is "fat" and who is "Pat."

(4) "So hard to understand"

- 01 J: Yur bradas waif Paet Imelda
Your brother's wife Pat Imelda
- 02 TC: Yah, she sure is
Yes, she sure is.
- 03 J: Shis wat, Paet or Imelda
She's what, Pat or Imelda?
- 04 TC: She's Imelda
She's Imelda.

- 05 J: Den hus Paet?
Then who's Pat?
- 06 TC: Imelda. Imelda is Pat.
Imelda. Imelda is Pat
- 07 J: Ou fac:t? Imelda is fac:t. (hhhh)
Oh, fat. Imelda is fat. ((laughs))
- 08 TC: Yes Imelda Fat Josefina Kabina Cayatmo. But not now because they are
diborced.
Yes, Imelda Fat Josefina Kabina Kayatmo. But not now because
they are divorced.
- 09 J: Sou hawd fo andastaend. I get om, I get om. Okei okei. Sou yur pis awr
efs aend yur efs awr pis end yur bis awr vis aend yur vis awr bis.
So hard to understand. I get 'em. I get 'em. Okay, okay.
So your Ps are Fs and your Fs are Ps and your Bs are
Vs and your Vs are Bs.
- 10 TC: Pinally, you pigure out my boice.
Finally, you figure out my voice.

In their first three turns, Joe and Tata Cayatmo are confused over who exactly is "Pat" and who is "fat." Although Joe and Tata Cayatmo arrive at some type of communicative resolution in lines 7–9, Joe expresses his frustration in line 9 when he says, "Sou hawd fo andastaend/So hard to understand." More specifically, for the Pidgin speaker, Philippine languages are "sou hawd fo andastaend/so hard to understand" because the phonological substitutions make it difficult to figure out if Imelda is named "Pat" or if she is "fat." Joe's frustrated "sou hawd fo andastaend/so hard to understand" is an "active distancing" (Hill 1993) from Tata Cayatmo and speakers of Philippine languages. Joe's arrival at some phonological clarity in line 9 illustrates common linguistic practices of native Filipino speakers who are second language learners of English, namely the substitution of consonant sounds (Ramos n.d.): bilabialization of labiodentals /f/ → /p/ (/fæt/ → /pæt/); /v/ → /b/ (/vɔjs/ → /bɔjs/); and the labiodentalization of bilabials /p/ → /f/ (/pæt/ → /fæt/) and /b/ → /v/.⁴⁵ Cayatmo affirms Joe's understanding of his pronunciation miscues and phonological substitutions in line 10: "Pinally, you pigure out my boice/ Finally, you figure out my voice." In the end, the interactions between Joe and Tata Cayatmo in the excerpts, "retarded/retired" and "sou hawd fo andastaend/so hard to understand," establish the following sets of oppositions: Local/immigrant, Local/"Filipino," Pidgin/Mock Filipino, and insider/outsider. Joe is the young, cool Local while Tata Cayatmo is the flip side, the elderly Filipino immigrant who is linguistically and culturally the object of ridicule.

Conclusion

On the Mainland, you can't do ethnic jokes, people get all offended. . . . But us local people, we live on an island, we real open, we share everything. We can look at all the dumbness of our lives and talk about it. And that's the beauty of Hawai'i. We can laugh at ourselves.

Augie T^o

Hawai'i ethnic humor depends on a shared set of assumptions and ideologies about linguistic practice, cultural identity, and Hawai'i society. These "ideologies of legitimacy" (Chun, this volume) hinge on pluralist ideals of racial harmony and the notion that "we can laugh at ourselves." The "we can laugh at ourselves" ideology is understood as a celebration of the islands' racial diversity and cultural differences ("all the dumbness of our lives") and positions the supposed "uniqueness" of Hawai'i against the volatile race relations on the "mainland." Hawai'i is understood as having gone beyond the "melting pot" and "salad bowl" models of race/ethnic relations and is instead an Asian-inspired "chop suey nation." As DeLima explains:

Here in Hawaii, we laugh at ourselves more than most people do in other places. Hawaii is a chop suey nation—Portagee, Pake, Buddha Head, Sole, Yobo, Kanaka, Haole,⁴⁷ all mixed up. Nobody is the majority here. We are all part of at least one minority group. Some of us are part of several minority groups. And we all laugh at ourselves. This is healthy. (DeLima 1991, v)

The "chop suey nation" that DeLima imagines perpetuates the illusion of Hawai'i as a racial paradise (Okamura 1998) where "nobody is the majority," everyone is racially/ethnically "all mixed up," and "we all laugh at ourselves." But who is the "we" that is laughing and who is being laughed at? When "we laugh at ourselves" do "we" acquiesce to the extant structures and systems of white and Local domination while reducing ethnic groups to stigmatizing stereotypes? Or is "laughing at ourselves" a way to maintain the zones of intimacy and friendliness that were initially developed in response to *haole* domination?

For many in Hawai'i, ethnic jokes "represent a powerful link to our past that we hate to lose" (Sodetani 2001, 6). But what is "our past" and who actually is included in "our past"? Are ethnic jokes still the glue that binds the "people of Hawai'i"? Are ethnic jokes nostalgic residues of a much-celebrated originary past that provided the conditions for Native dispossession and displacement and the exploitation of Asian workers? Depictions of Filipinos in Local comedy foreground broader issues of politics and representation, especially who can represent whom and the effects of such representations. Ethnic humor is embedded in a network of social relations and underscored by political contests between and within racial/ethnic groups. Ethnic humor involves questions about who rightfully belongs to the islands, what criteria are used to determine belonging, and, ultimately, who can legitimately laugh at themselves. Who makes the jokes, who is made fun of, and who laughs involves discourses of inclusion and exclusion. Jokes can effectively

tell us who belongs and in the process, they construct an order and hierarchy invariably linked to struggles for power.

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NOTES

1. Following standard practice, I use the *'okina* (or glottal stop) whenever appropriate, as in "Hawai'i," unless the word appears in a quote or name where it is absent. Also in some cases, I do not use the *'okina* in English-language-derived words, like "Hawaiian."

2. For early work on "the racial melting-pot of the Pacific" see Adams (1937), Lind (1938), and Park (1926, 1937). For more recent discussions of Hawai'i as "multicultural, multiethnic society," see Okamura (1998) and Rosa (2001).

3. The islands' population statistics are sharply different from the rest of the United States. According to the 2004 Hawai'i State Department of Health Survey, Caucasians constitute 26.0 percent of the approximately 1.2 million total population, Japanese 21.6 percent, Native Hawaiians 19.9 percent, Filipinos 15.0 percent, Chinese 5.9 percent, and Other (mostly Pacific Islanders) 11.6 percent.

4. Following convention applied to other racial/ethnic categories such as "Asian American" or "Pacific Islander," here I use the term "Local" with a capital "L." My use of "local" with a lower-case "l" refers to the more general use of the term, which, in this case, points to the relatedness, situatedness, and/or typicality of an object and/or phenomenon to Hawai'i.

5. Outside of Local comedy, examples of Mock Filipino can also be found in local greeting cards (Da Kine Cards) and heard in various morning radio shows in which deejays tell jokes using a "Filipino accent."

6. DeLima began doing "Local comedy" in the late 1970s and since then, his Filipino song parodies (particularly those that include depictions of Filipinos as dog-eaters) have prompted lively public discussion in the Filipino community newspapers. DeLima's critics claim that his song parodies are part of a decades-old stigmatizing discourse that perpetuates lingering negative stereotypes of Filipinos. Supporters of DeLima claimed that his representations are nothing more than part of the Hawai'i tradition of ethnic humor that has a defined target audience and a specific target of ridicule. To this end, the *Hawaii Filipino Chronicle* noted that DeLima "argues that immigrant Filipinos, not local Filipinos, are the ones who object to his jokes" (1995, 5).

7. "Foreigner" in Hawaiian, but refers to "white" in its more racialized contemporary usage.

8. In Hawaiian, *kumu* means 'foundation,' 'source,' 'tree,' or 'teacher.' In this sense, *kumu hula* means 'hula teacher.'

9. In Hawaiian, *alaka'i* means 'leader' or 'to lead.'

10. It is also interesting to note that in their videos and on the TV show, Da Braddahs also have a character named "The Governor," a caricature of the former governor of Hawai'i, Benjamin Cayetano. Cayetano is a Filipino American who by most standards speaks Mainstream American English, but has a "Filipino accent" in the sketches.

11. From a political perspective, Local also points to the islands' history of Native subordination and settler domination. According to Haunani-Kay Trask (2000), Local is the name children of Asian settlers call themselves and it locates Asians outside of the white/"settler" category, eliding Asian participation in the islands' settler history of foreign domination and Native subordination. In this perspective, the use of Local obscures the history of Hawai'i's indigenous people while asserting a competing claim of rightful belonging to the islands. Local also espouses a "land of immigrants" rhetoric that depends on a multiculturalist ideology and purports an ethos of racial diversity, heterogeneity, tolerance, and harmony.

12. Jonathan Okamura (1994) notes that non-Locals usually include *haole*, immigrants, the military, tourists, and foreign investors.

13. *Kanaka* means 'person' or 'human' in Hawaiian, but in contemporary usage it has come to connote 'Native Hawaiian.'

14. 'Portuguese' in pidgin.

15. For more recent examples, see Paul Ogata's (1998) comedy CD, *Mental Oriental*, especially "Dr. Ay Seuss, parts 1 & 2" which employs Mock Filipino and caricatures the "Filipino" preference for eating black dog.

16. A kin term that means 'older brother' but in Local usage refers to 'older Filipino man.' The Localized pronunciation of the term places the accent on the second syllable rather than the first as it is pronounced in Ilokano.

17. This is often the evidence used in "positive" stereotypes of Filipinos which characterize them as hardworking and industrious.

18. The song originally appears in *Frank DeLima's Joke Book* (1991) as "The Purple Danube." The song lyrics that I transcribe here are taken from a more recent version that appears in DeLima's *Silva Anniversary* (2001).

19. This is equivalent to the Ilokano term, *bugguong*, which is "salted fermented fish or shrimps used to season food" (Rubino 2000, 124) and is known for its pungent odor.

20. In Hawaiian, *opae* are 'small shrimp' (see Simonson et al. 1981).

21. P.I. refers to the Philippine Islands, but is often used alongside terms like *buk buk*, *manong*, and Flip to refer to Filipinos.

22. *Salamat* means 'thank you' in Tagalog.

23. One of the Hawaiian islands that is heavily dependent on the tourism industry and has a large Filipino population.

24. A Hawaiian term that means 'to carry,' but refers to being pregnant.

25. The term "*buk buk*" is derived from a Tagalog term, "*bukbok*," which means 'to rot' and refers to something rotten (Alcantara 1981, 165). In Ilokano, "*bukbok*" is a type of woodworm and also means 'cavity (of teeth)' (Rubino 2000, 125; see also DeLima 1991, 67). The common onomatopoeic explanation for the term "*buk buk*" is that it mimics the clucking sound of chickens, pointing to how Filipinos are closely associated with fighting chickens. Take, for example, the following joke taken from DeLima (1991, 71): "Official Filipino bird: Fighting chicken."

26. Representations of Filipino subordination have their historical origins in the plantation era (Okamura 1996, 3). Despite the large numbers of pre-World War II Filipino immigrants, the community was mostly composed of single men; it was a "bachelor society." At the height of Filipino immigration to Hawai'i, the male to female ratio was 3 to 1 in 1923 and 9 to 1 in 1927 (San Buenaventura 1995).

27. The /k/ is usually preferred in contemporary standard Ilokano orthography.

28. Cayatmo could also be a play on "Cayetano," referring to the former Filipino American governor of Hawai'i.

29. Recent depictions of Filipino male sexual violence also appear in Local literature, particularly in the works of Lois-Ann Yamanaka. For a textual analysis of Yamanaka's most controversial work, *Blu's Hanging*, see Fujikane (2000).

30. For nearly a decade, *Hawai'i Stars* aired weekly on local TV. The half-hour show was a judged karaoke-style singing competition that showcased the singing talents of people from the islands.

31. *Kadugo* is an Ilokano term that can be translated as 'family member' or 'relative.'

32. *Barok* is an Ilokano term that can be translated as 'young man.'

33. *Kalamunggay* is the Tagalog term for a vegetable often used in Filipino dishes. *Marunggay* is the Ilokano equivalent.

34. The Ilokano phrase "*naimas kayatmo*" can be translated as 'It's delicious, do you want some?'

35. In Ilokano, "*suksok*" is loosely translated as 'insertion' or 'penetration.'

36. In Ilokano, this phrase can be loosely translated as 'that girl is not respectable.'

37. A multiethnic, urban, working-class neighborhood on the island of O'ahu that has a high concentration of immigrant Filipino residents.

38. A reference to the Philippines, "PI" = 'Philippine Islands.'

39. This is a local clothing store.

40. I discuss this idea of "retarded/retired" further below.

41. This is a reference to TFC (The Filipino Channel), a twenty-four-hour Philippine-language channel available on cable TV. TFC broadcasts a wide range of programs from the Philippines, including news, entertainment, music, feature films, soap operas, and so on.

42. "UH" refers to the University of Hawai'i.

43. DeLima (1991, 72).

44. Here, I use the Odo orthography to represent pidgin and Mock Filipino (see Odo 1975, 1977; Sakoda and Siegel 2003; Talmy, this volume). Other transcription conventions include:

-	sudden cut-off
<i>italic</i>	Emphasis (pitch, amplitude)
:	Lengthening
.	Falling contour
?	Rising contour
((comments))	Transcriber comments
(h)	Breathiness, laughter
[word	Onset of overlapping talk

45. The /b/ → /v/ labiodentalization does not occur in this particular example, but it is an important feature of Mock Filipino and appears in other parts of the CD.

46. Augie Tulba is a popular Local comedian who is Portuguese, Irish, and Filipino. This quote is taken from an article by Naomi Sodetani (2001, 5) titled "Local Humor and the New World Order," which appears in the *Honolulu Weekly*.

47. These are race/ethnic labels commonly used in pidgin: "Portagee" = Portuguese, "Pake" = Chinese, "Buddha Head" = Japanese, "Sole" = Samoan, "Yobo" = Korean, "Kanaka" = Native Hawaiian, and "Haole" = white.

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Reel to Real

Desi Teens' Linguistic Engagements with Bollywood

Shalini Shankar

Increasingly, scholars have paid attention to the social life of media in diasporic contexts, especially its role in fostering bonds of community and mediating identity while enabling connections to homeland and other diasporic locales. Often a backgrounded theme, language and the linguistic aspects of media consumption can be important dimensions of this process (Spitulnik 1996). Topics of intertextuality, indexicality, bivalency, and, more broadly, identity formation have been sociolinguistically examined in the lives of youth, but seldom with explicit attention to the pervasive role of media in shaping language practices. In this chapter I explore Desi (South Asian American)¹ teens' social and linguistic engagements with "Bollywood" movies. Bollywood, the world's most prolific film industry, produces films that are widely viewed in South Asia and beyond. Once a tongue-in-cheek name used by the English language media in India (Ganti 2004), the term "Bollywood" is now used worldwide to refer to Hindi-language films made in Bombay (renamed Mumbai in 1995). Serving simultaneously as visual culture, a social institution, as well as a linguistic resource for many diasporic youth, Bollywood films have deeply affected the everyday social lives of South Asians in the subcontinent and worldwide. Even Desi teens who may have limited communicative competence in Hindi—the language of most Bollywood films—nonetheless draw linguistically on this rich and multifaceted medium.

Occupying a prime position in many teenagers' worlds, Bollywood films provide a linguistic resource that youth draw on in their everyday speech practices. Richard Bauman and Charles Briggs (1992) examine the notion of "intertextuality" with special regard to genre. Building on work by Mikhail Bakhtin (1981) and Pierre

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