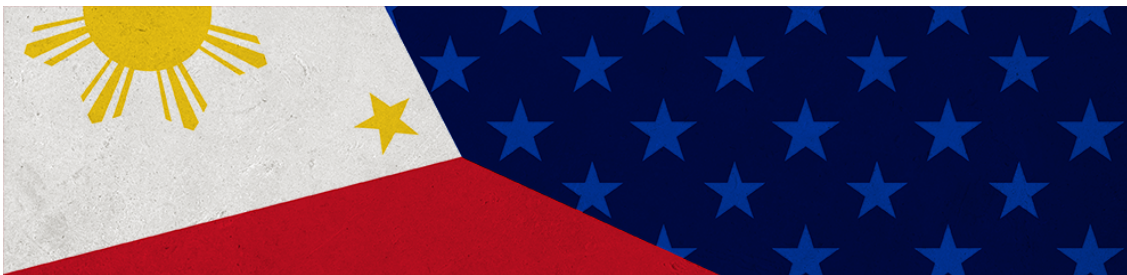


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Engl 110: Writing and Rhetoric
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When thinking about how language and literacy play a role in our daily lives, I always come back to thinking about my own cultural identity. I was born in the Philippines, but I was raised in the States as a child. Therefore, I always felt detached from the rest of my family who grew up in my home country. Being Filipino-American meant constantly questioning where I came from or where to call home.



Unfortunately, I never got the privilege of being taught my dialect by my parents. Though it allowed me to speak in the tongues of white American men, my lack of fluency in my own native dialect made me feel disconnected.

In 2018, my parents made the decision of going back home to Cebu. I visited the Philippines a few years back, but considering how young I was, the memories are all foggy. So, during this trip, I became more self-aware of the separation caused by my Filipino-American identity.

Though, my parents seemed to be welcomed with open arms back home. My sibling and I were left to venture through an unknown city we call home.

However, my sibling, and I still understood our own dialect, but we were never fluent enough to confidently converse. Still, we could have contributed to conversations spoken in our dialect. It

was interesting, to say the least, to watch the code-switching happen right in front of us. As a person of color, it was instinct to code-switch when speaking to anyone, especially with non-people of color. The routine was to set yourself up to be called well-spoken, even though I was fluent in English; there was still something I had to prove to the American people. I understood the commotion of continuously having to prove yourself to a system built against you. Yet, my 14-year-old self was appalled at the walls I faced in the Philippines; what did I have to prove to my own community?

Language and literacy help shape our identities; it allows for our desires to manifest themselves around us. Yet, my trip to the Philippines forced me to wonder how my lack of literacy impacted my sense of self. How did cultural disconnection, my American tongue produce my identity.