

history theatre



The Debutante's Ball
Written by Eric Sumangil
March 21—April 12, 2015



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Study guide published by History Theatre c2015

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A Conversation with Playwright Eric Sumangil

The Debutante's Ball follows the story of a girl who wants to partake in a cultural ritual. Unique to the Twin Cities, the Debutante's Ball is the 'vehicle through which she explores her sense of identity and native culture in the United States.' Below is an interview with playwright Eric "Pogi" Sumangil, in which he discusses the back story and inspiration about the production.

To start off, could you give a brief summary of where you come from? How did you end up in Minneapolis?

I was born in Minneapolis and grew up in the suburbs of the Twin Cities. I attended St. Johns University in Collegeville, MN, and moved back to Minneapolis after college.

What made you interested in playwriting?

I started out my career in the arts as an actor, and have been acting professionally for the last 15 years. Growing up, I didn't see many Asian American role models in the media. After facing some racial discrimination as a kid, I realized how important it is to be represented and to have a voice. As an actor, what you have to work with are the words on the page. And especially for actors of color, you either have to look for (or wait for) roles that are written specifically for someone who looks like you, or find a director who's looking to cast things non-traditionally. So in some ways, I saw playwriting in a self-serving way; creating work for myself, but I also saw that there are still a lot of stories and experiences that aren't seen onstage or in TV and movies. I wanted to create Asian American roles that were focused more on the American than the Asian. I wanted to get away from having to speak with an accent or play into stereotypes, and create engaging stories where the protagonist can be a person of color, and still speak to a universal, or at least American, experience.

What inspired you to write this play?

I was in the middle of the Many Voices fellowship at the Playwright's Center, and I was starting to feel that everything I was writing was kind of impersonal. What I had written up until that point was like sketch comedy; it was topical, commentary-based, but it was never something that made me feel particularly vulnerable. I decided to go back to the reason I wanted to be a theater artist at all: To see people who looked like me on stage, as representatives of the shared American experience. That's really important to me because having grown up in the suburbs of the Twin Cities, I found that I was almost always the only brown kid in any given place, and that can be kind of isolating. So I wanted to write about my experience to demonstrate that our communities are more similar than we give ourselves credit for.

For me, the Debutantes' Ball was one of those experiences that really set me on a path as a teenager. The thing that really clicked for me when I started writing was the idea that teenagers in general are just trying to figure stuff out. And when you layer in Filipino culture, Minnesota culture, and the immigrant experience, you end up talking about some of the hard truths about growing up bi-culturally. It wasn't until I spoke with Ron Peluso about this play that I realized that some of the themes were similar in different immigrant groups. So I hope this play resonates with peoples' experience no matter where they're from.

Is any of Debutante's Ball autobiographical? Are the characters based off anyone particular?

I was actually in the FMA's Debutante's Ball in 1995, 1996, and 1998. Most of the things you see onstage in "The Debutante's Ball" are based off real experiences. The story in the play is not any one person's experience. I'd say all the characters in the play are archetypes based on the different kinds of Debs and Escorts from year to year. My goal was to create characters that could, on one level, be reminiscent for anyone who has participated in the FMA's Debutantes' Ball in the past, and on another level, be relatable both as Filipinos and Americans.



The lead character, Ana, was actually based on family members and friends who emigrated from the Philippines to the United States. They were struggling to find a balance between participating in Filipino culture and the desire to be what they considered to be American. It was hard for some of them at times to see that you can honor your culture of origin while being American at the same time. Specifically, her situation in the play is based on someone I know, whose daughter wanted to participate in the Debutantes' Ball. But instead of supporting her daughter, my friend said, "we're not that kind of Filipino," a line I use in the play. That became the premise of Ana's family dynamic. Obviously, in the play it's much more heightened, but I wanted to question the merits of totally and completely assimilating to American culture, something that is often a subconscious desire of immigrants.

The character of the choreographer, Tita Belinda, is based on my godmother, Carie Evangelista, who helped start the Debutantes' Ball. Like Tita Belinda, my godmother was tough. Most of the kids she choreographed simply thought she was mean, but since she was my godmother, I knew her in a different context. She was tough on us, but it was tough love. As teenagers, I don't think we really appreciated what she was doing for us, but in retrospect, she had a big impact on a lot of us. Tita Belinda represents the older generation of Filipinos who all helped raise my sister and me. They were always around to discipline and keep me on track. They were the epitome of the "It Takes a Village..." idea.

Nationality is a large theme in the play, and a struggle for many adolescences growing up as the minority. Did you come upon any challenges when discussing race and discrimination?

My basic concern was not demonizing white people--not making white people the bad guys. It's been done. It's almost expected, and I think it can be a trap that people can easily fall into, especially when you're talking about cultural identity and race. And moreover, I wanted to show how we hold ourselves back sometimes, too. Growing up, I knew Filipinos who were quite biased towards other races, who bought into stereotypes and had solidified opinions about what other races were like.

This made me realize that even within communities of color, we sometimes internalize bias and prejudice. In my experience, I found that the Filipino culture has a sense of racial hierarchy, and that people tend to kind of know where they exist in this hierarchy of race. We often hold ourselves back by clinging to the assumptions we make about how others see us. I wanted to examine this idea. For some Filipinos, it manifests as a desire to completely assimilate to American culture, while others are able to integrate into American culture and still hold on to their Filipino roots. But for many of us Filipino kids, we were constantly being told by older Filipinos that we weren't Filipino enough. And on the flip side, we were going to American schools where we were constantly being reminded that we were different from other American kids. So, yes, the majority culture had its affect on my experience, but I didn't want to portray the stereotypical white man as the bad guy. It's much more complicated than that.

What age range does this show target? And what do you hope audiences take away from this show?

Hopefully everyone. The play is written from the perspective of teenagers, so I hope anybody who has been a teenager and comes to the show can relate to at least some part of it. I think that I'm most nervous for other former debs and escorts to come see it. I think because the play is told through the lens of teenagers, it will definitely resonate with younger people. It's where the story lives, and easy for this generation to understand.

I would love it if people questioned their own assumptions about different cultures, and even different generations. I mean, for my generation, rap and hip-hop was our thing that the older folks didn't understand. For my parents' generation it was rock and roll, Elvis, and the Beatles. So if people walk away realizing that we're all actually more alike than we are different, then I'd be really happy with that.

Thanks so much for your time!

- Abby Hilden is a sophomore at the University of Michigan, where she is pursuing her love for theatre. Originally from Minneapolis, she's happy to be back for the summer, working as a dramaturg for the History Theatre .

Debutante's Ball in the Twin Cities

In the 1970s there were 3 major Filipino Community Organizations in Minnesota: Filipino American Club, Fil-Minnesotan Association (FMA), and Cultural Society of Filipino Americans (CSFA). Each organization had a major community event around Christmas. Recognizing that three organizations were struggling to get attendees to three similar events, the President of the Fil-Minnesotan Association at the time, Nelson Paguyo, decided to move their community event to Valentine's Day, calling it the Valentine's Ball.

In 1977, the FMA President was Ophie Balcos. She wanted to engage the youth of the Filipino community, acknowledging that they were the community's future leaders. So she added a Debutantes' Ball to the Valentine's Ball, and it became the Valentine's Ball and Presentation of Debutantes. With the help of Caridad Evangelista (my godmother and long-time choreographer of the Debutantes' Ball), who chaired the event, the Debutantes' Ball (we call it the Debs Ball) was started and has been an annual event in the Twin Cities ever since.

In the early 80s, there was some discussion between FMA's board members and other members of the community about the Upper Class or High Society roots of the Debut tradition, and some question about why our community here in Minnesota wanted to perpetuate a tradition that was dubbed "elitist." But from the beginning of the FMA's Debs Ball, there were a couple of rules: 1) Anyone could join, regardless of socio-economic status, and 2) all the debutantes wore the same dress, so that all the girls were on equal footing, and wealthier families couldn't show off. These rules are still in effect today.

There's also a scholarship prize that is offered by the FMA to a Debutante and Escort who are both chosen anonymously based on their academics, their extracurricular, and their community service. The annual scholarships are funded by the Balcos family.

--Eric "Pogi" Sumangil, playwright, *Debutante's Ball*

America Coming of Age Ceremonies

Debutante's Ball explores the cultural coming of age ceremony of the Filipino culture in St. Paul. During an interview with playwright Eric "Pogi" Sumangil, he described the history behind the tradition:



“When a girl reaches the age of maturity, her family would organize a Debutante Ball in order to present her to the community as an adult. Historically, this meant that she was eligible to be married, so the Debutante Ball was a way for a family to display their level of wealth and status to the community to ensure that their daughter’s suitors would be of a similar wealth and status. Debutante Balls have a history of being associated with the upper class. They were a way to make sure that wealth stayed within the aristocracy, and to ensure ‘royal’ or ‘pure’ bloodlines. Nowadays, Debutante Balls in America are still celebrated most notably as a part of Southern culture and by some

sororities, in addition to still being a part of Filipino-American culture. The Filipino ‘Debut’ (pronounced deh-BOO) comes from the Spanish tradition, the same tradition that became the *quinceañera* in Mexico. In the Filipino tradition, women have a Debut on or around their 18th birthday, and the number eighteen comes up in a lot of different ways. Some have eighteen attendants, nine boys and nine girls who are partnered up for the Cotillion dance, which is usually a waltz. Some debuts have a ritual around eighteen roses, and/or eighteen candles. It really depends on how extravagant the family (and often times, the girl) wants to make it.”

Coming of age ceremonies are common in cultures across the world and share much in common with the one presented in *The Debutante's Ball*. There are many ceremonies across the world and the ones presented below are merely a few examples of them. In a brief exploration of common coming of age celebrations, it's easy to see how the transition from youth to adulthood is one many people prize and commemorate.

Bar and Bat Mitzvah – Jewish Culture

Meaning “son” and “daughter of the commandment,” respectively, this celebration is both a coming of age ceremony as well as an entrance into adult religious participation. Jewish children are not obligated to observe the commandments of the Torah, though they are motivated to do so, until they reach the age of 13 for boys and 12 for girls. Bar and bat mitzvahs mark the acceptance of this obligation. Though no large ceremony is necessary, they are popular and a modern trend to celebrate reaching a new milestone and a new status in one’s religious community. Most bar and bat mitzvahs are celebrated with a synagogue ceremony and reception afterwards, though in some Jewish practices, such as Orthodox, women do not participate in religious services the same way as men and the bat mitzvah may simply be a party.

Quinceañera: Latino Culture

Based off of coming of age ceremonies from Mesoamerican tribes, this *fiesta* draws off of the rites of passage for women. Treating the status of becoming a woman as something wonderful and sacred, *quinceañeras* occur at the fifteenth birthday and are linked to the changes that come at puberty. Family, godparents, and friends sponsor the girl and throw a grand party, including music, food, and dresses. Religion is often important and incorporated into the ceremony, including a blessing for the girl at mass.



Confirmation – Christianity

Most commonly known in Roman Catholic Practices, but also included in other Christian denominations such as Lutheran and Presbyterian churches, confirmation is similar to a bar and bat mitzvah, in that it is an official entrance to religious practices. This rite of passage confirms that a baptized person will fulfill their Christian promises and is a sign of full membership into the church community. Confirmation can occur at any age, but certain churches have specific times when confirmation should occur, such as a particular diocese within the Catholic Church. Those going through confirmation attend special classes to teach them about their role in the church and to help answer any questions they have. Most ceremonies take place in churches and are presided over by a religious official, such as a bishop in the Catholic and Anglican churches. Afterwards, personal parties and celebrations may be held on behalf of those who have been confirmed, celebrating their new status and public commitment to their faith.

Debutantes in Western Culture

Debutante balls in the United States are often tied directly with presentation of coming out ceremonies in some European countries. The age for such a debut varied as it was not based on age but on the perceived physical and emotional development. Presented before a selected committee or elite aristocratic crowd, such an affair showed a woman's readiness for marriage and maturity. Today, however, debutant balls are charity events and allow women to meet people from around the world and create career connections. More of a networking event than a chance to meet eligible bachelors, debutant balls have become more sought after for those yearning to build their career prospects. Though certain elements remain – a certain exclusivity, the fancy dress, the ball and banquet aspect – debutant balls, such as the International Debutante Ball at the Waldorf Astoria in New York, have grown into a way for young women, often from a certain socioeconomic background, to have the marketing opportunity of a lifetime and make personal connections in the process.

Debutantes' Ball Tagalog Language

Tagalog is an Austronesian language with about 57 million speakers in the Philippines, particularly in Manila, the central and southern parts of Luzon, on the islands of Lubang, Marinduque, and the northern and eastern parts of Mindoro. Tagalog speakers can also be found in many other countries, including Canada, Guam, Midway Islands, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, UK and USA.

The name Tagalog derives from *tagá-ilog*, which means "resident beside the river". Little is known of the history of the language before the arrival of the Spanish in the Philippines during the 16th century as no earlier written materials have been found.

Although the Tagalog language had Austronesian origins, there are several foreign influences on the Filipino language. These include Sanskrit from India; a result of trade, beginning in the 5th century AD. Followed by Spanish influence, beginning in the 16th century, during which time Catholic missionaries settled in the Philippines. This resulted in Tagalog language being written in Latin alphabet instead of the traditional Tagalog alphabet. The islands were ceded to the United States in 1898 in the Treaty of Paris, which introduced English into the Tagalog language.

The earliest known book in Tagalog is the *Doctrina Cristiana* (Christian Doctrine) which was published in 1593. It was written in Spanish and Tagalog, with the Tagalog text in both Baybayin and the Latin alphabet.

In 1935, Tagalog was selected as the basis of the national language, which is referred to as Filipino. Filipino includes not only Tagalog, but words from the other Philippine languages as well as words derived from foreign influences.

In 1946, the Republic of the Philippines was established, ending U.S. rule, but English words continued to be added to the Filipino language. Today the Baybayin alphabet is used mainly for decorative purposes and the Latin alphabet is used to write to Tagalog.

The kundiman music presented in The Debutantes' Ball is a Philippine musical genre, written in Tagalog lyrics, expressing love and romance. The love interests of these serenades were symbolic of love for the country. This genre came about in the late 19th - early 20th centuries as a way for Filipinos to honor their country and heritage in reaction to Spanish and American pressure discouraging nationalism.

The Baybayin alphabet

a	ba	ka	da	ga	ha	la	ma	na	nga	pa	sa	ta	wa	ya
e, i	be/bi	ke/ki	de/di	ge/gi	he/hi	le/li	me/mi	ne/ni	nge/ngi	pe/pi	se/si	te/ti	we/wi	y/yi
o, u	bo/bu	ko/ku	do/du	go/gu	ho/hu	lo/lu	mo/mu	no/nu	ngo/ngu	po/pu	so/su	to/tu	wo/wu	yo/yu

History of Filipino Americans

Timeline (condensed) brief history

- 1587** First Filipinos set foot in North America arrive in Morro Bay, California on board the Manila-built galleon ship Nuestra Senora de Esperanza under the command of Spanish Captain.
- 1720** Gaspar Molina, a Filipino from Pampanga province, oversees the construction of El Triunfo de la Cruz, the first ship built in California.
- 1763** First permanent Filipino settlements established in North America near Barataria Bay in southern Louisiana.
- 1781** Antonio Miranda Rodriguez is in the first group of settlers to establish the City of Los Angeles, California.
- 1870** Filipinos studying in New Orleans form the first Filipino Association in the United States, the "Sociedad de Beneficencia de los Hispanos Filipinos."
- 1899—1902** Spanish American War. First large influx of Filipinos immigrate to America.
- 1902** Philippine Bill of 1902 passed by the U.S. Congress.
- 1903** Filipinos invited to attend college on government scholarships, arrive.
- 1906** Filipino laborers migrate to the United States to work on farms.
- 1920s** Filipino labor leaders organize unions and strategic strikes to improve working and living conditions.
- 1924** Filipino Workers' Union (FLU) shuts down 16 of 25 sugar plantations.
- 1927** Anti-Filipino riots occur in the Yakima Valley, Washington.



Pedro Flores

1928 Filipino Businessman Pedro Flores opens Flores yo-yos, which is credited with starting the yo-yo craze in the United States. His company went on to become the foundation of which would later become the Duncan yo-yo company.

1930 Anti-Filipino riots break out in Watsonville and other California rural communities, in part because of Filipino men and white women relationships, which was in violation of the California anti-miscegenation laws enacted during that time.

1934 The Tydings–McDuffie Act, limited Filipino immigration to the U.S. to 50 persons a year (not to apply to persons coming or seeking to come to the Territory of Hawaii).

1941 Washington Supreme Court rules unconstitutional the Anti-Alien Land Law of 1937 which banned Filipino Americans from owning land.

April 1942 First and Second Filipino Regiments formed in the U.S. composed of Filipino agricultural workers.

May 1942 After the fall of Bataan and Coregidor to the Japanese, the US Congress passes a law which grants US citizenship to Filipinos and other aliens who served under the U.S. Armed Forces.

February 1946 President Truman signs the Rescission Act of 1946, taking away the veterans benefits pledged to Filipino service members during world War II. Only four thousand service members were able to gain citizenship during this period.

1946 Filipino Naturalization Act allows naturalization of Filipino Americans, granted citizenship to those who arrived prior to March 1943.

1955 Peter Aduja becomes first Filipino American elected to office, becoming a member of the Hawaii State House of Representatives.

1956 Bobby Balcena becomes first Filipino American to play Major League baseball, playing for the Cincinnati Reds.

1965 Congress passes Immigration and Nationality Act which facilitated ease of entry for skilled Filipino laborers, raises quota of Eastern Hemisphere countries, including the Philippines, to 20,000 a year.

1965 Delano grape strike begins when members of Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee led by Philip Vera Cruz, Larry Dulay Itliong, Benjamin Gines, Andy Imutan and Pete Velasco with mostly Filipino farm workers.



Philip Vera Cruz, Pete Velasco, Larry Dulay Itliong and Andy Imutan

1973 Larry Asera becomes the first Filipino American elected in the continental United States.



Silme Domingo and Gene Viernes

1981 Filipino American labor activists Silme Domingo and Gene Viernes are both assassinated June 1, 1981 inside a Seattle downtown union hall.

1987 Benjamin J. Cayetano becomes the first Filipino American and second Asian American elected Lt. Governor of a state of the Union.

1990 Immigration reform Act of 1990 is passed by the U.S. Congress granting U.S. citizenship to Filipino World War II veterans resulting in 20,000 Filipino veterans take oath of citizenship.

1991 Seattle's Gene Canque Liddell becomes first Filipino American woman to be elected mayor serving the suburb of Lacey City.

1994 Benjamin J. Cayetano becomes the first Filipino American and second Asian American elected Governor of a state of the Union.

1999 First permanent museum display honoring a Filipino American opens in Seattle's Eastern Hotel honoring Filipino American literary great Carlos Bulosan.



Carlos Bulosan

2000 Robert Bunda elected Hawaii Senate President and Simeon R. Acoba, Jr. appointed Hawaii State Supreme Court Justice.

2003 Citizenship Retention and Re-Acquisition Act of 2003 allows natural-born Filipinos naturalized in the United States and their unmarried minor children to reclaim Filipino nationality and hold dual citizenship.

2006 Congress passes legislation that commemorates the 100 Years of Filipino Migration to the United States.



Chief Justice Cantil-Sakauye

2010 Tani Cantil-Sakauye becomes the Chief Justice in the state of California.

Filipino Immigration to Minnesota



The Philippines were a Spanish colony from the 1500s to 1898. During the Spanish-American War, the United States took control and the Philippines became a U.S. territory until 1935. This connection with the United States paved the way for immigration, which began in the early 20th century. Primarily men, these immigrants came as migrant workers or university students sent to the U.S. to gain education and skills that they could bring home to the Philippines. From 1907 to 1934, workers were recruited by the Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association, drawing many immigrants to Hawaii. Due to this involvement, Filipinos became a large part of the labor movement in California and Hawaii as well as in the Farm Workers' Union. Workers continued to immigrate from the Philippines in through the twenties, mostly settling along the West Coast, but others moved further east to states such as Minnesota.

In 1965, Immigration Act was passed and allowed for Asian Americans to be arriving in the U.S. in larger numbers. This especially effected Filipinos, who before had faced a strict immigration quota since 1934. While Filipinos had continued to arrive in Minnesota in the 1930s and 40s, they came from other states in the U.S. rather than directly immigrating from the Philippines, as immigration virtually stopped during the Great Depression and World War II. During the war, they worked on farms, taking the place of Japanese workers who had been sent to internment camps. After 1965, a large number of immigrants were professionals who received their education in the Philippines and had started careers there that they planned on continuing in the U.S. Many were health professionals and, due to shortages in such career fields in states such as Minnesota and Wisconsin, these individuals were actively recruited to come to the Midwest. Unlike the earlier immigrants who were primarily individual men, this wave came in large family groups. Immigration rates rose further in the 1970s and early 1980s due to the rise of dictator Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines, causing many to flee the severity of his regime.



The United States is home to about 2.3 million Filipino immigrants, around 15,660 of which live in Minnesota. Due to the prevalence and history of Western culture and language in the Philippines, Filipinos have an easier time assimilating to American culture than some other Asian groups. English has been taught in Philippine schools

since the annexation by the United States, and because the Philippines have many different native languages, most Filipinos now living in the States speak English to communicate with one another and few carried the use of their native languages into second generations of Americans. However, other cultural traditions have been taught in preserved through participation in local community groups.

Despite some ease with assimilation, Filipinos did face many hardships in immigrating. In 1925, the U.S. Supreme Court decision *Toyota v. United States* declared that only white people or people of African descent were entitled to citizenship. Unless they had served in the U.S. military, Filipinos were denied citizenship until 1946. This limited the professions they had access to as well as giving them no political representation. Also, during the Depression years, they were unable to qualify for federal relief since they were not citizens.



While the Filipino population in Minnesota is smaller compared to cities such as New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Honolulu, Filipinos are on the largest growing immigrant groups in the state. Social and cultural organizations have strengthened their community, beginning with

church congregations, student groups at universities, and local clubs in the 1920s. The Fil-Minnesotan Association (FMA), organized in 1954, became a group joined by professionals to promote Filipino culture, educate Filipino youth with their heritage, and provide social activities in the community, as well as creating a dance group and youth group. In 1971, another group formed after a conflict with this organization named the Cultural Society of the Filipino Americans (CSFA), with a similar focus and promoting activities such as banquets, dances, and picnics. Organizations with a career-oriented focus also arose in the 1970s, such as the Philippine Medical Association of Minnesota and the Philippine Nurses Association. While many felt reluctance to voice opposition against Marco in the 1970s and 1980s due to the fears of how it might affect family still in the Philippines, Filipino organizations have recently voiced political matters involving



Filipino independence. One group requested that the memorial in Minnesota for the Spanish-American War be changed so that it emphasizes the war was fought to defeat Spain, not free the Filipinos, as Filipinos fought unsuccessfully for this independence against the United States. Some elder immigrants, focused on the success of their children in American society, have felt ambivalence about preserving their Filipino culture and identity, but a strong identity to such culture has formed in the second generation of newer immigrants.



Today, the two largest cultural organizations in Minnesota continue to be the CSFA and FMA. The CSFA, focused on preserving, promoting, and sharing valued Filipino traditions through cultural, educational, social, and philanthropic work, is involved in charitable work such as providing assistance to local food shelves and to disaster victims through their

Disaster Relief Fund. They also support activities such as the annual Philippine Day celebration in St. Paul, the Festival of Nations, and the Philippine Children’s Camp. The FMA is dedicated to providing socio-civic, educational, cultural, and artistic opportunities to the community and offers events such as Tagalog classes, parent-youth seminars, consular services, volunteer opportunities, health fairs and blood banks, and support to local charities such as The Children’s Heart Fund and MN Food Shelf. They also sponsor several annual cultural events including Easterfest, the Valentine’s Ball and Presentation of Debutantes, sport and leisure tournaments, and art and culture showcases.

Notable Filipino Minnesotans

Other than a few university students in the 1920s and 30s, there were only three women in the Filipino community during this time. However, all three greatly influenced Filipino culture in the Twin Cities. Many men immigrated on their own and started families in their new homes or, in later years, brought their families with them. Some of these men and their families had a great influence on the Minnesota Filipino community.

Basilisa Garcia Epperly lived in Manila where she met her husband Samuel Epperly. He had been a soldier in the Missouri Volunteers serving in the Philippines during Spanish – American War and stayed in Manila to teach. He taught in the high school where Basilisa was a student. The two married in 1903 and lived in Manila until Samuel caught tuberculosis, causing the two to go to US with their eldest son. They moved to Mille Lacs County and then later to Minneapolis. Basilisa's house became a center for Filipinos in the Twin Cities and several students roomed at the home. On weekends, Basilisa would host dinners and parties for Filipino friends.

Clara Balbuena traveled from Philippines with husband Filemon to Montgomery in 1929. During the summer she helped her husband manage a company restaurant serving Filipino food. Clara was only 21 years old when she arrived in the US and believed she and her husband would just visit friends and return to the Philippines. However, as the Depression worsened, it became difficult to save money for return trip. Though Clara longed to return home, she became a leader in the Minnesota Filipino community and interpreter of its culture to other Twin Cities residents. She opened her St. Paul home to new immigrants and took part in social activities. Clara also took classes at Hamline and joined the Women's Institute of St. Paul, playing an important role in organizing Filipino dance programs and exhibits for the Festival of Nations in Minnesota.

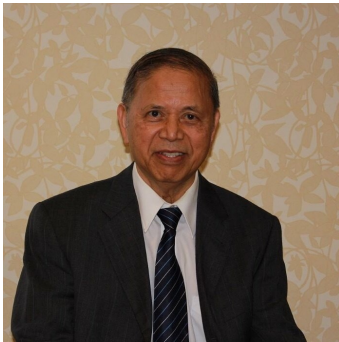
Petra P. Rigucera came to the Twin Cities in 1930 to marry her fiancé, Miguel F Custodio. Like Clara, Petra believed her stay in US would be temporary. During first winter Petra and her husband shared a house with the Balbuenas. Petra contributed talents and energy to Festival of Nations as well as Filipino American Club and regularly invited young Filipinos working downtown to her house for music, food, and companionship.



Benigno Andrada was married to an American in pre-war years and to a Filipina in post war years. His son, Virgil, was born in Minneapolis after he immigrated in 1928. Virgil's mother was a daughter of Norwegian immigrants and as Benigno, who worked as a chauffeur and butler for well-to-do family, was often away from home for extended

periods of time to travel with the family on their vacations, Virgil spent much of time with mother's family and learning Norwegian traditions.

Virgil's two half-sisters, Marietta and Cristeta Paz Andrada were the daughters of Benigno and his second wife Belen Martinez Santos whom Benigno married after Virgil's mother died. Marietta and Cristeta were born in Minnesota and with their parents' common heritage and mother's work encouraging second generation of immigrants to get involved in organizations, Marietta and Cristeta became more involved with their heritage. Both women participated in programs for teenagers and Marietta took on an active role in Fil-American Youth Group as well as helping survey the needs of elderly Filipinos in the Twin Cities.



Tito Sumangil came to Minnesota in 1969 with his wife, Becky. He studied accounting in the Philippines and was the Chief Financial Officer of Columbia Park Medical Group in Fridley. Involved with the Fil-Minnesotan Association for the past 45 years, he was the president of the association from 1980 to 1981. He has also been an officer, board member, chairperson of various committees, editor of the FMA newsletter, fundraiser and performer in the FMA Dance and Drama group, and serves today as an adviser. Tito was

fundamental in the creation of a plaque that corrected the commemoration of Minnesota's involvement in the Spanish-American War. After approaching the Minnesota Historical Society to create a more in-depth discussion of the different interpretations of the war, no action was taken until a corrective plaque was installed through the collective work of the Filipino organizations. Tito has also written a book titled *How the Philippines Became the First Colony of the United States*, published in 1976.

Class Activities

My Family, My Home Culture

Students will

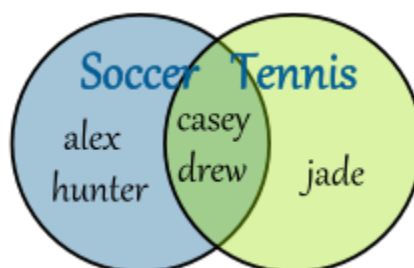
Interview family members to gather information about their family background
Share family cultural practices, traditions or events.

Activity One—Family Traditions

1. Engage students in a discussion about their families interests and what makes them special.
2. Have the student pair up with another student. Ask students to think about some practices, traditions, activities and events their families do. Have students pair-share their thoughts on the following:
 - A. Who are the members that make a family?
 - B. Who are the people in your family?
 - C. What are some things that you like to do with your family?
 - D. Can you name your ethnicities? Which does your family mostly identify with? (this may be different than what the student identifies with)
 - E. What types of cultural practices does your family enjoy doing?
3. Students will draw or write down 3 cultural practices, activities, special events or traditions their family enjoys doing together. They will share these with their partner.
4. Using a Venn Diagram, partners discuss and write the differences and similarities of their pictures/writings.
5. Each student then writes a short essay on the similarities and differences about the cultural practices and traditions of their pair-share partners.

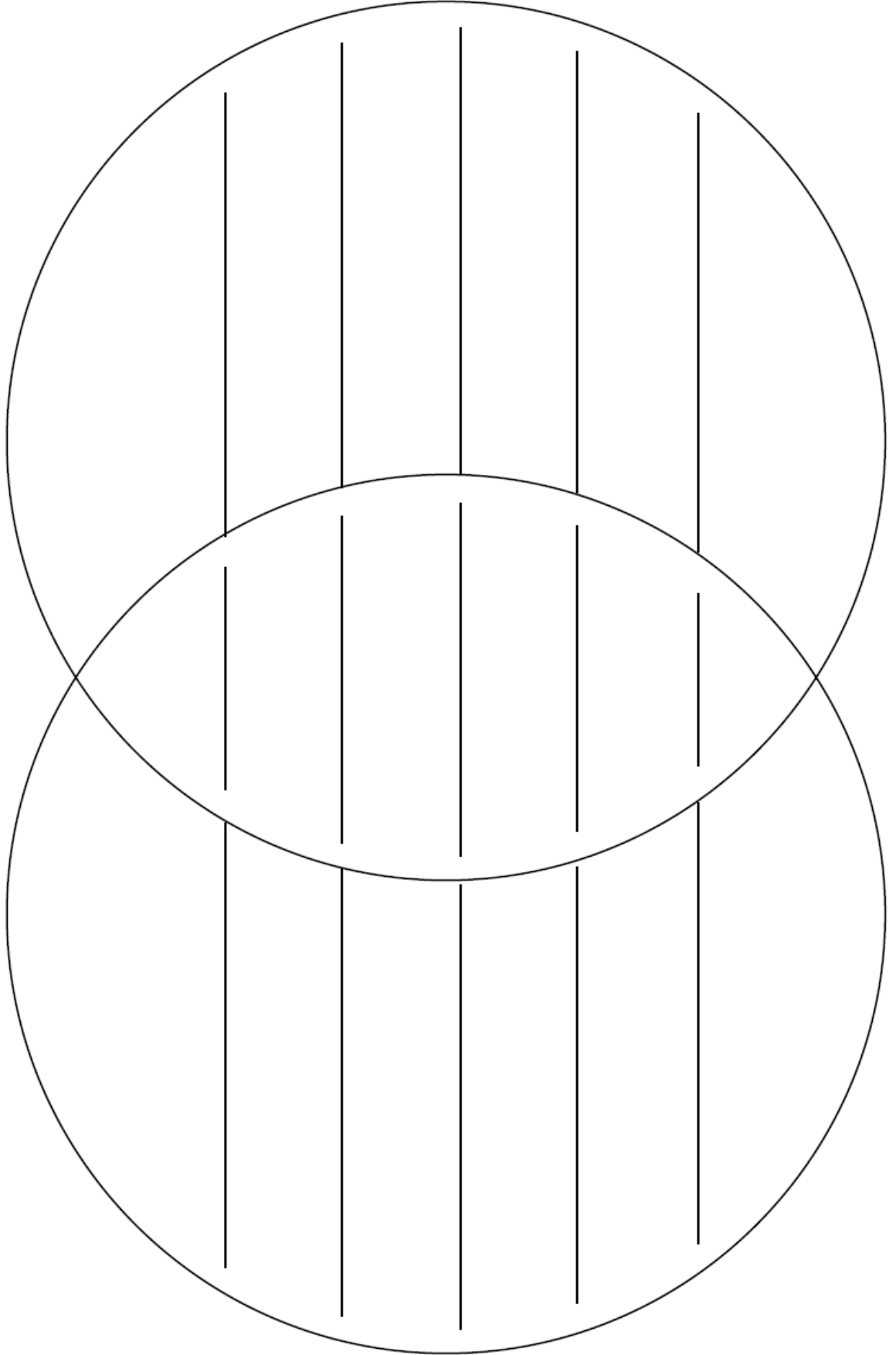
Venn Diagram

A Venn diagram is a great tool for brainstorming and creating a comparison between two or more objects, events, or people. Simply draw two (or three) large circles and give each circle a title, reflecting each person or object you are comparing. Inside the intersection of the two circles (overlapping area) write all the traits that the objects have in common. You will refer to these traits when you *compare* similar characteristics. In the areas outside the overlapping section you will write all of the traits that are specific to that particular object or person. For example: one circle is titled SOCCER the other Tennis. In each circle would be a list of students who play each sport. In the overlapping area would be the students who play both sports.



Subject: _____

Subject: _____



Activity Two—Where are you from—a mapping activity

Ask students - Where are you from?

- A. Discuss what implications such a question might raise do to immigration, racism, national policies, nurture v nature and what constitutes a family.
- B. Brainstorm with the students questions that should be asked to find out where they are from.
- C. Have student ask their family about their families migratory pattern.
- D. The students will write a short essay on their own families migratory pattern.
- E. Have a discussion with the class regarding interesting items they found out about their families.
- E. Give each student a map of the world. Have the students map the immigration of their family.
- F. Have students get into small groups to discuss their maps. Look for similarities and differences.
- G. Have a class discussion on the group findings.

Activity Three—Immigration timeline—a mapping activity

This activity is a continuation of activity two.

1. Place a large piece of butcher paper on the wall with a line down the middle of the page. Have benchmark dates on the dateline.
2. Have the students brainstorm events that happened within this timeline.
3. Hand out post it notes to each student. Have each student pick one event from their families migration to place on the timeline.
4. Each student will place their post it on the timeline telling the class the about the event they are placing on the timeline.
5. Have a classroom discussion regarding what the timeline tells us about our class. This should be an open ended discussion. However discussion starters could be about the similarities and differences regarding immigration, family, or community.

Equal Resources

Students will examine people's attitudes toward and expectations of people with different economic backgrounds.

Materials needed: Five large zip lock bags with the following art supplies for each five groups

Group #1: Regular pencils and one colored pencil

Group #2: Regular pencils, colored pencils, crayons, assorted colored construction paper.

Group #3 & #4: Regular pencils, colored pencils, crayons, assorted colored construction paper, scissors, colored markers, glue.

Group #5: Regular pencils, colored pencils, crayons, assorted colored construction paper, scissors, colored markers, glue, tape, and anything you can add to help this group.

Procedure

1. Split the students into 5 groups.
2. Tell each group that they will make a poster to celebrate a special occasion. You as the teacher can decide what this will be according to the time of the year or you can have the class decide on the occasion.
3. Inform the students that they will receive a bag of supplies to use in making their posters. They can use only the supplies given to their group and they cannot borrow supplies from other groups. They will have 20 minutes to finish their poster.
4. Give each group a large sheet of poster paper. Have the bags of supplies in view for all to see. If participants ask why the contents are different, just say that these are the supplies available for your group. That is the way it is.
5. Give participants a five minute warning to the end of the project time.
6. One at a time, call each group to come up to the front of the room to display and explain their poster.

Discussion

1. How did you feel when you noticed that some people had more materials than you did?
2. How did you feel when you noticed that some people had fewer materials than you did?
3. In what ways did resources affect your project?
4. How would you have felt if I had judged your final products for a prize? Would that be fair? Why or why not?
5. If other people saw your posters and were asked to pick the most talented student, would the posters be a fair assessment of what all of you can do?
6. In what other situations do people have advantages over others? Provide examples.
7. Is it important to consider individual circumstances and opportunities before judging a person's capabilities? Why or why not?

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