

Ownership, Access, and Authority: Publishing and Circulating Histories to (Re)Member Community

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Abstract

In gathering and circulating histories, the Filipino American National Historical Society (FANHS) enacts both community publishing and self-publishing models, as they have been defined in literacy studies. As a community institution situated within a larger constellation of counterpublics and dominant publics that have often overlooked, erased, and/or misrepresented their histories, forms of ownership, access, and authority are central to the purpose of FANHS. In this article, I share how two modes of community/self publishing¹, historical tours and archival practices, serve to (re)member community and prompt further community-sponsored self-publishing projects.

Keywords: Community, constellations, Filipinx American, FANHS, counterpublic, archives, place

Every winter, my mother and aunties would shiver from the cold and question why their parents had settled in the Midwest. Coming from the Philippines, entering the U.S. through Seattle, how did they end up in Chicago? (It's so cold here!) Over time, my mother and I have stitched together a historical narrative that has my *Lolo* (grandfather) working his way across the United States to settle in Chicago, which during the early 1900s was considered a hub of educational opportunities for Filipinx who migrated to the U.S. as colonial subjects (Posadas and Guyotte). Our evolving story is based, in part, on evidence that my Lolo was one of the many forgotten Filipino men who helped build the railroad across the western United States. I did not learn about this history from my economic history class, which taught me how important the railroads were to the U.S. economy during the early twentieth century. Nor did I learn about this history from my Lolo, who told us bedtime stories about the Philippines, who spent considerable time with us throughout my elementary school years, and who we lived with during my high school years. I learned this history when I attended—with my mother (and about twenty other members of our extended family)—a community-based history exhibit and laid eyes on a photograph of him working on the railroad in Montana. He was nineteen years old.



Tobias Guinsatao (left) with Florentino Ravelo (right) building the railroad in Bearmouth, Montana, 1920.

If it were not for community-based archivist Estrella Ravelo Alamar² (whose father is also in the photograph) and the tireless commitment she has to collecting and circulating histories of Filipinx Americans in Chicago, we may have never known this part of our family and community history. This photograph, and the community context in which it was “published,” prompted searches for more stories, more possibilities. In this article, I look at methods similar to that 1985 “Just Yesterday” photography exhibit, methods used by the community-based Filipino American National Historical Society (FANHS) to publish histories in ways that

not only extend beyond print publications but also encourage and prompt community-based print publications. Through a discussion of the ways FANHS theorizes and practices forms of publishing through historical tours and archival practices, I argue that FANHS is a community that also operates as an institution—in both tactical and strategic ways (Mathieu).

In gathering and circulating histories, FANHS enacts both community publishing and self-publishing models, as they have been defined in literacy studies. Similar to community publishing models, FANHS has gathered, published, and circulated histories through collaborations with more dominant, traditional institutions (e.g., the State, federal funding agencies, the academy). At the same time, FANHS founders and trustees have continually insisted that community members shape how stories get collected/preserved as well as who owns, has access to, and authorizes these stories, the knowledge made from them, and the ways this knowledge is circulated by and through the FANHS community (much like self-publishers). As a community institution situated within a larger constellation of counterpublics and dominant publics that have often overlooked, erased, and/or misrepresented their histories, these forms of ownership, access, and authority are

central to the purpose of FANHS. In her study of self-publishing zinesters writing from “non-dominant locations,” Adela C. Licona finds that these writers “propagate grassroots literacies meant to effect change through the circulation of information and the production of new practices, perspectives, and knowledges” (2). The self-publishing infrastructures of FANHS—as seen through historical tours and archival practices—propagate similar forms of literacy, including methods of memory work that build and (re)member community, further our histories, and sustain FANHS as a community institution.

Constellating the “Community” of Community/Self Publishing

In rhetoric, composition, and literacy studies, “community publishing” is often paired, understandably so, with disciplinary concerns about first-year writing, service-learning, and building sustainable community partnerships. While often motivated by a commitment to leverage a wide range of resources to support community writing, we might also ask what emerges when we set these concerns aside (even if only temporarily). Beverly Moss reminds us that the “literate activities and behaviors” that happen in “community sites—spaces where people come together based on shared values and goals—provide much needed insight into how individuals, groups, and/or organizations value and use literacy, how they make it their own” (2). Understanding how communities make literacy their own is an essential prerequisite for building responsible community partnerships—but this understanding also offers insight into modes of self-publishing that communities find valuable. In the case of FANHS, community/self publications educate but also prompt, inspire, and make accessible modes of self-publishing that community members can take up (individually or collaboratively) on their own. These self-publications, always collectively-oriented, help sustain a sense of community while also carrying forward the organizational purposes of FANHS. By looking at how FANHS positions itself as a sponsor of community literacy—as a community, a counterpublic, a distinctly Filipinx American space, and as an institution—deeper constellations of community/self publishing come into view.

When we’re focused on students and community-university partnerships, our attention often focuses on the where of community. Where is the community located? Where do community members live, work, gather, collaborate? It becomes necessary, in other words, to locate community in specific geographical locations: a city, neighborhood, community center, or nonprofit organization—and these places are often assumed (or are preferred) to exist beyond the physical boundaries of the university. This model of community often identifies sites where community literacies and, hence, community partnerships might (and do) happen, but it doesn’t always fully account for the constellations of community we’d find around any given community site: the “series of stories, none of which can really be heard without listening for other stories, and all of which impact and are impacted by the relationships between them” (Powell, et al.). Listening for these constellations and relationships of community provides us with greater textures of community that

shape how and why communities take up self-publishing and how they locate and circulate these publications in relationship to others (Reynolds).

Taking the founding and national chapter of FANHS as an example, we could locate this community-based organization in a former elementary school building in the Central District of Seattle. These former classrooms, which house the FANHS National Chapter and other community organizations throughout the building, have long served as a hub of activity for community members. The myriad multimodal literacies that have taken place in this location are core to this community's purpose to "preserve, document, and present Filipino American history and to support scholarly research and artistic works which reflect that rich past" (fanhs-national.org). This particular Seattle location, then, serves as a hub and a node in a larger dynamic network of strategic and tactical organizations that have collaborated, sometimes clashed, but often sponsored one another over time. As the founding chapter, FANHS-National also serves as a hub for FANHS chapters across the U.S., providing an infrastructure for building and sustaining a counter/public³ of collectively-oriented self-publishers across time and space. This constellation also includes the many clusters of community organizations and institutional collaborations surrounding each local FANHS chapter. It is this complex network of community/self publishers that helps sustain the memory of the Filipinx American experience in the United States.

One way this shifting constellation of community relationships has been explained in community literacy studies is through the lens of publics and counterpublics. Elenore Long argues, for example, that "more than any other entity, local publics constitute the *community* of community literacy" (5). Interested in the ways that people "go public," Long uses a public sphere framework to outline several models of community literacy projects, focusing on the relationships local publics have with formal institutions. When we view FANHS through counter/public sphere theory, complex constellations begin to emerge. I've written about FANHS as a counterpublic that emerged when one particular generation of Filipinx Americans, those born before 1946, felt their experiences, histories, and voices were being overlooked and overwritten by other historical narratives (Monberg "Reclaiming"). The emergence of FANHS demonstrates that counterpublics situate themselves not only in relationship to one (or more) dominant publics but may also situate themselves (and their publications) in relationship to other counterpublics. In interviews, publications, and informal conversations, FANHS members have situated their literate activities in relationship to the academy, the Asian American, Filipinx American, Black Power and civil rights movements, Asian American Studies, Filipinx communities in the U.S. and abroad, State-sponsored institutions, and schools. This kind of constellation is not uncommon in broader social movements, Phaedra Pezzullo reminds us, which "are made up of varied groups and forms of activism" and "multiple critiques and actions" for empowerment ("Resisting" 361).

Public sphere theory offers community publishing frameworks a more complex understanding of the many communities, counter/publics, and institutions that may be invested in positively or negatively sponsoring a counter/public's literate activities.

In *Circulating Communities: The Tactics and Strategies of Community Publishing*, Paula Mathieu, Steve Parks, and Tiffany Rousculp investigate the ways “writing and publishing emerge out of a community’s effort to combat the self-interested frameworks of larger institutions” (2). What the history of FANHS shows is that a community’s writing and publishing can also emerge from a need to engage or revise frameworks put forward by other communities and counter/publics similarly situated by larger institutions. In any case, whether engaging a dominant hegemonic institution or an allied counterpublic (or both), community/self-publishers are located within a larger stratified and racialized constellation. Resource disparities, as counter/public sphere theorists have argued, shape formations and the kinds of ownership, access, and authority that community/self-publishers might exercise (or not) (Chay-Nemeth; Squires; Brower). Nancy Fraser, in particular, reminds us of how more dominant (particularly hegemonic) public spheres adhere to a rational logic that stratifies access and authority. These disparities inevitably shape the strategies and tactics that any given community/counterpublic, like FANHS, might utilize to publish and circulate (or even define, encourage, or sponsor) what we might call a self-published text.

While counter/public sphere theory makes more visible the shifting clusters and power dimensions in which community/self-publishers work, it doesn’t sufficiently explain how these publishers make literacy their own (Moss). While FANHS situates its work in alliance, collaboration, or conflict with multiple counter/publics, not all FANHS publications are intended to directly engage or circulate among these counter/publics. It’s true that FANHS members craft different rhetorical strategies/messages for different audiences. And it’s also true that FANHS members use their counter/public space to craft “agitational activities” that can be directed toward wider publics (Fraser; Warner). But it’s also more. In his work on African American hush harbors, Vorris Nunley argues, “Black publics such as hush harbors [are] more than alternative publics or counterpublics” (34). Nunley elaborates, “hush harbors are rhetorical free zones of emancipatory possibility precisely because they are internally directed, working from the terministic screen of African American life and culture rather than being anchored in a concern with countering White or mainstream surveillance” (34). Similarly, FANHS is largely “internally directed.” From a distinctly Filipinx American space, FANHS members often publish the “Filipino American” past in ways that build community and, hence, of those able to contribute to the “rich past” that FANHS works hard to document and preserve. Moreover, FANHS is part of a larger distinctly Filipinx American public and counterpublic sphere, a larger constellation of distinctly Filipinx, Filipinx American, and Asian American communities: past, present, and future.

And, finally, what additional affordances does the concept of *institution* provide us in thinking about community/self publishing? Jeffrey T. Grabill offers the following understanding of an institution: a “well-established, rhetorically constructed design,” (127) a formalized entity that defines and enacts systems “that give literacies existence, meaning, and value” and make “certain practices possible and valuable” (7). Extending this understanding is the community-based practice of conferring

the title “institution” upon an organization or elder to recognize their work and the deep layers of history, memory, rhetorical knowledge, struggle, experience, and wisdom an organization or elder embodies. This meaning of institution resonates with Lisa Lowe’s understanding of community spaces as “richly sedimented.” Because community spaces are continually shaped by shifting constellations and transnational forces, they hold “a repository of layers of historical time, layers of functions, purposes and spheres of activity” (123-125). Both understandings of “institution” hold true for FANHS. As a thirty-five-year-old community-based organization with its own literacy infrastructure for publishing, conferencing, and archiving that parallels and critiques academic knowledge production, FANHS is a community institution. Geographically and rhetorically, FANHS is also a sedimented community space that carries and builds upon strategies and tactics used by previous community members, formations, and community/self publishing projects.

As we move to a discussion of FANHS historical tours and archives as community/self publications, I show how these forms of publishing ask community members to take collective responsibility for keeping and forwarding the community not just by sharing the histories they are learning but also by documenting and publishing their own histories.

New Sites for Community/Self Publishing: Touring, Circulating, and Prompting Histories

As a community institution, FANHS members have published a number of community-based texts, including issues of the *FANHS Journal* and a number of books that share the histories of Filipinx Americans from Puget Sound to Chicago to Detroit to Hampton Roads and more (Cordova, D. and FANHS; Alamar and Buhay; Galura and Lawsin; FANHS Hampton Roads). But we might also look at other modes, other sites, of community/self publishing that teach, support, and encourage community members to gather and circulate these histories. One way that FANHS publishes and circulates histories is through historical tours. Founders Dorothy Cordova and the late Fred Cordova have dedicated their lives to not just collecting, documenting, and sharing the history of Filipinx in the U.S., but also to teaching community members how to do the same. These historical tours, like other community publications, are pedagogical for they teach community members the practice of remembering but also the practice of building those memories into histories. Historical tours have been given at every biennial national conference I’ve attended, sharing with conference attendees the history of Filipinx settlements in, for example, Honolulu, Los Angeles, Virginia Beach, St. Louis, and Seattle. For the purposes of this article, I will focus on a historical tour of Seattle that FANHS led in 2010 during one of their biennial conferences. I focus on this Seattle tour, in part, because Seattle is home to the founding and national chapter of FANHS and is therefore particularly illustrative of the kinds of pedagogies that FANHS enacts through their community/self publications.

The tour begins on the campus of Seattle University, the conference location, where five or six yellow school buses are waiting for attendees to board. I’m with

my mother, because to say that FANHS conferences are family-oriented is an understatement and I've taken her to four of the five biennial conferences I've attended. I consciously choose to board the bus led by tour guide Emily Porcincula Lawsin, because Lawsin was born and raised in Seattle, has worked with and been mentored by the Cordovas for over 25 years, and because my mother and I had then known her for about a decade. As the bus pulls out of campus, Lawsin reminds us that Fred and Dorothy Cordova both graduated from Seattle University. We pass by the site of the First Young Filipino Peoples' Far West Convention in 1971 (sometimes referred to as the birthplace of the Filipino American Movement), and we learn that Seattle University was the site of the very first biennial FANHS conference in 1987.

Looking out the window, there is no physical evidence of these groundbreaking events. We can look at these buildings on campus, but there is nothing particularly remarkable about them that we can see; it is the stories Lawsin shares of this place that make it remarkable. In fact, for a long part of the tour, there is nothing to "see" that would signal Filipinx American history or presence, confirming Phaedra Pezzullo's idea that tours are not just about the gaze but also about "the sense of presence or willingness to feel connected to the people and places toured" (31). As we continue to pass by former sites of student gatherings, community clubs and organizations, labor union organizing and violence, and youth empowerment initiatives, what keeps us connected to these places (and increasingly to each other) are the countless stories of Filipinxs struggling, resisting, and persisting in Seattle.

We come to Jose Rizal Park in the Beacon Hill neighborhood, named for Philippine intellectual and national hero Dr. Jose Rizal. The park offers a beautiful view of the city, including Rizal Bridge, which Lawsin tells us connects Beacon Hill and the International District, two neighborhoods with deep Filipinx American histories. Other markers to Filipinx American presence in Seattle include the public art piece "East is West," a double-sided, triptych mosaic mural created by the late artist and former Seattle University professor, Val Laigo, brother of FANHS co-founder and executive director Dorothy Laigo Cordova. At the end of the park sits a monument to Jose Rizal, created by sculptor Anastacio Caedo, then a faculty member at the University of the Philippines School of Fine Arts. Even as tour attendees are amazed that this park, explicitly marked as Filipinx and Filipinx American, exists in Seattle, Lawsin's stories of the collaboration and persistence it took for the community to name this space reminds us of the hidden histories present in both marked *and* unmarked sites of history. The park itself might be considered a community publication when we consider the literacies required to negotiate with the city, the rhetorical work required to coordinate its conception, development, and dedication—and its existence as a reminder of the need to take ownership of our histories and make them accessible, in many forms, to others.



“East is West,” a double-sided, triptych mosaic mural by Filipinx American artist Val Laigo. Jose Rizal Park, Beacon Hill, Seattle. July 21, 2010.

Phaedra Pezzullo reminds us that, “tourism has enjoyed a long history as an educational endeavor in the West” (*Toxic* 39). But this FANHS tour is not just an educational tour about historical *places*; it also creates a “constellative, epistemological *space*” (Powell “Stories” 384). Lawsin’s tour, in other words, is a story through which we see/hear Filipinx American Seattle as “a place that has been practiced into being through the acts of storied making, where the past is brought into conscious conversation with the present and where—through those practices of making—a future can be imagined” (Powell “Stories” 388). By retracing unmarked, seemingly mundane sites sedimented with these collective memories of Filipinxs who have lived, gathered, collectively resisted, and, over time, built institutional structures across those sites, the FANHS tour, as a community publication, does more than teach us about the history of Filipinxs in Seattle. It also asks us to recognize and take ownership of the histories we carry with us every day. And in doing so, FANHS is also encouraging us—expecting us even—to self-publish these histories under the many forms of literacy sponsorship that FANHS, as a community institution, has to offer.

This historical tour is educational in content but also method: it performs where, how, and by whom history is made. In doing so, it authorizes the knowledge that tour participants hold of their own personal, family, and community histories. Enacting this embodied movement through Seattle, and the listening required to collect those memories, this historical tour prompts attendees to share or think about stories connected to the cities, towns, neighborhoods, and streets in which they've lived. "Common urban places like union halls, schools, and residences," Dolores Hayden notes, "have the power to evoke visual, social memory" (47). As our own memories of home are evoked, we think of places that might otherwise be considered mundane and begin speaking with other tour participants about sites (of potential historical significance) where our own communities have historically moved through, gathered, and collectively resisted—sharing and prompting those memories with one another. In other words, the tour enacts and prompts different kinds of circulation: the circulation of histories, bodies, other kinds of texts, but also new stories that can lead to new community-sponsored self-publications. We are prompted to both remember community and further a community that remembers.

In her book, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, Diana Taylor argues that indigenous forms like "writing and embodied performance have often worked together to layer the historical memories that constitute community" (18). As a community publication, this FANHS 2010 historical tour performs what I've elsewhere called "recursive spatial movement" ("Writing"), showing us how we might move through geographic places we have been before, encountering people we have met or remembered before, allowing us to gather what an institutional memory of Filipinx community and history in the U.S. might include. In circulating histories of Seattle, this tour both couples and decouples community and geography. That is, we might find community in a particular geographical location (a building, an office, a part of town), but the tour also emphasizes the ways that community members network and move across spaces over time in order to do the rhetorical work of community-based movements, spaces, and causes. Phil Agre notes that "every genre implies a distinctive constellation of relationships: It is supposed to be useful to members of a given community, in activities whose forms and purposes are heavily influenced by relationships with the members of particular *other* communities" (84; emphasis added). The FANHS historical tour makes visible community relationships that are familiar and works to extend these relationships and constellations. In doing so, FANHS strengthens the circuits through which past, present, and future Filipinx American history and community are amplified, crafted, revised, and carried forward.

Citing New Sources for Community/Self Publishing: Authoring the Archives

A consistent move in the genre of museum tours is to have participants exit through the gift shop as purchases of gift store items have shown to be profitable and contribute to the sustainment of these organizations. In a similar (but very different) move, the 2010 FANHS tour of Seattle ends in the FANHS National Office and its community-based National Pinoy Archives (NPA).⁴ Because the tour circulated histories and prompted our own community stories and memories, exiting the

tour through the archives encourages us to add these stories to the archives. As tour participants and members of the imagined Filipinx community in the U.S., we are now asked if we'd like FANHS to start a file under our name. We are not just authorizing FANHS to collect data related to our histories; FANHS is also authorizing *us* as having historically significant lives and communities, our basements full of important documents, photographs, newspapers/magazine clippings, and other artifacts that might describe or document our lives and the lives of our communities. Following the tour, which reminded us that “history and memory are constantly collecting around stories and objects in our everyday lives” (Narayan), we are individually and collectively asked to take a first step in publishing our own histories. Unlike the museum visitor who purchases items in the gift shop, however, the FANHS tourist is asked to become part of the institution and assume some responsibility for sustaining it.

It is significant that we come to this space as a collective. As numerous scholars have written, archival spaces are designed to protect and seal off knowledge; they are often described as cold, intimidating institutional spaces designed to exclude (Shimabukuro; Driskill; Powell “Dreaming”). Archival spaces—often housed in libraries and other formal institutions that “keep” knowledge—tend to privilege “individual, quiet study” rather than collaborative study and the knowledge work that happens in the process of socializing with others (Brooks, et al.). By prompting us to think about the histories we might each contribute and the histories we might contribute collectively, this introduction to the NPA emphasizes the archives as “sedimented space” (Lowe). Building on the pedagogies of the tour, our introduction to the archives marks them as “an emblem for history as excavation rather than projection, simultaneity rather than sequential time, and collective geography rather than individual biography” (Lowe 124).

The technical structure of the archive is also notable in its connection to community. Consistent with the idea of FANHS as a community institution—a sedimented space of past and present communities consistently positioning themselves to work against the many enduring legacies of colonization—gathering and preserving archival materials has been a priority for the Cordovas even before the founding of FANHS. But consistent with the formal structures of an institution, FANHS marks 1987 as the year when the National Pinoy Archives were formally organized “to provide a repository and storage for research and gathered materials’ as mandated in the FANHS Articles of Incorporation” (NPA pamphlet). The NPA pamphlet continues to outline the scope of the collection, how materials can be accessed, finding aids, volunteer and intern opportunities, the availability of public programming and services, how/what to donate, and an acknowledgement of past donations. The values of community ownership, access, and authority are emphasized throughout. Of particular note is how the pamphlet both encourages local chapters and communities to establish their own archives and provides them a future vision for connecting these “NPA satellites.”

Jacques Derrida argues, “archivization produces as much as it records” (17). The FANHS archives not only record Filipinx American history and community, they

also produce it. The late Fred Cordova, founding president and creator of the NPA, continually referred to the archives as a collection that was (and would continue to be) built by, owned by, and accessible to the community. When I interviewed him in 1998, Cordova explained that non-academic researchers and students were the primary contributors to the FANHS archives. And, as an archive built by community, he was also adamant that the community would continue to have control over the archives as the contents of the NPA have become of interest to academics, librarians, and professional archivists. He explained:

It's also community-based in that we've refused at this point, we—that possessive pronoun—that it is the policy so far of FANHS, that all of this stuff is not going to go to the University of Washington, although they've been here scouting. It's not going to go to the Library of Congress, because my Indonesian brother has been here and would love to get their hands on this. Or, it will not go to the Smithsonian. For whatever we may have, for artifacts and everything. It's going to be community-based and regardless of whether it'll remain here in Seattle or elsewhere, it will always be accessible to the community. Some of the things in that file were done by fifth-graders. What happens if some of these fifth-graders do not go to college? If [the archives] went to an educational institution, you have to have a card, you have to have an identity kind of thing, to be able to have access to the files. So. Community-based. When we first started the majority of our trustees and everything else were basically laypersons who were just interested in history. (Personal interview)

The obstacles to access that Cordova refers to have been confirmed by scholars like Mira Shimabukuro. Reflecting on her own work in the archives, she links access to both the space and the “discourses of the repository.” Shimabukuro writes: “Always recognized as a site of official history, the university-based archives I attended required multiple forms, agreements, signatures, ‘certain restrictions on availability and use,’ ‘permissions,’ ‘adequate’ identification, ‘prohibitions,’ lockers, passing through locked doors, pre-paged boxes, notarized photocopies, inspected laptops. Parking is difficult. Material must be recalled from off-site. Knowledge protected, sealed off, contained” (31). Cordova’s insistence on community accessibility is a refusal of the enduring colonial legacies that set the standards against which the value of our knowledge is measured, often before this knowledge is given time to accumulate. Knowledge that is collected and categorized in patterns determined outside of the community risks further erasure and makes it difficult for community members to use this knowledge, continue to build upon it, and further the remembering.

Cordova’s comment about fifth-graders contributing to the archives deserves further unpacking. By authorizing knowledge produced by Filipinx American youth, Cordova works against the imperial archive by using the archive to publish community knowledge, shifting what counts as research, as knowledge, and material worthy of archiving. These contributions to the archives are published further as

they enter the circulation of documents, texts, tours, public programming, research, and artistic work that FANHS promotes. Moreover, Cordova mentored students who visited or contributed to the archives, calling upon them to envision future possibilities. Cordova recalled instances when students (familiar with the formal structures of educational libraries) would ask, “How come it’s not in microfilm? How come it’s not in microfiche?” His answers consistently imparted ownership and a responsibility to further the community. Cordova explained, “especially students, you know what I say to them? I’m waiting for you to get your degree. I’m waiting for you to get your degree in librarianship, so that you can put all of this stuff in a professional manner. I’m waiting for you to become a businessman, so you can give us money. I’m waiting for you to become the researcher, the historian, so you can begin to really put good stuff in here, and the research and all. All this is just the beginning” (Personal interview). Cordova theorizes and enacts what Powell articulates about her own view of archives: “History isn’t a dead and remembered object; it is alive and it speaks to us. We are obligated not just to our ancestors out of whose lives we ‘make’ that history but also to the places and spaces, and the living things therein who remember them and—through them—remember us” (“Dreaming” 122).

The archives are a form of community publishing. As a living publication that resists closure and is always open to re/vision, the archives allow the community to tell their stories, listen to the stories of others, name patterns, identify new paths for research, determine what is worthy of archiving, researching, and circulating. Mathieu, Parks, and Rousculp argue that “community publishing requires a new category, writing *by* the community” (13). Cordova’s theory of archival work proposes another new category: writing *as* the community. The FANHS archives encourage collective ownership, access, and authority. The process of building an archive is also the process of building community. And this building happens not just once but repeatedly over time, enacting a form of engagement with community/self publishing that Jacqueline Jones Royster and Gesa E. Kirsch call *social circulation*. These archival practices emphasize how the community/self publishing traditions of FANHS are accessible and open to revision as they “are carried on, changed, reinvented, and reused when they pass from one generation to the next” (Royster and Kirsch 101). This is the rhetorical power of owning and authorizing knowledge production.

An Institutional, Horizontal Circuitry for Self-Publishing: (Re)Membering Community

A “central fact of community publishing,” Mathieu, Parks, and Rousculp write, is this: “What might begin as the simple act of putting pen to paper, fingers to the keyboard, and, perhaps, voice to tape, upon publication, becomes enmeshed in locally created systems of circulation that intend for these voices to become part of a collective attempt to understand the past and to project a future” (1). The tours and archives are two forms of community/self publishing that build foundations and make visible an infrastructure for others to self-publish as the community. While I’ve focused here on historical tours and the National Pinoy Archives, FANHS chapters and members have also produced a number of books, journals, and other print publications. These

different forms of community/self publishing work in tandem. As Taylor argues, “the telling is as important as the writing, the doing as central as the recording. Memory paths and documented records might retain what the other ‘forgot.’ These systems sustain and mutually produce each other—neither is outside or antithetical to the logic of the other” (19). These forms of community/self publishing enacted by FANHS and its members make up what Agre calls the “institutional circuitry” of FANHS, and these circuits call forth and further the community.

In her reading of Jessica Hagedorn’s novel *Dogeaters*, set in the Marcos era of the Philippines, Lisa Lowe privileges *tsismis* (gossip) as a “popular discourse” that disrupts and displaces “official representational regimes” of history (112). Hagedorn’s use of *tsismis* throughout the novel, Lowe argues, highlights forms of telling that rely on horizontal networks to carry forward these alternative histories in the face of institutionalized, colonizing histories that attempt to hide, forget, appropriate, and overwrite these stories in form, content, and methods of distribution and circulation.⁵ *Tsismis* circulates, migrates, has trade routes. As such, *tsismis* and other forms of horizontal telling become living archives of history and collective memory. These stories (*kuwentos*) travel with/through people as they move among other people and across time, space, and place. And over time, the accumulation of stories and circulatory routes builds rhetorical infrastructures: networks, communities, resistance movements, alternative institutions. The FANHS tour that exits through the archive prompts a similar form of horizontal telling and accumulation. These forms of community/self publishing do the work of (re)membering community: they bring members into the community while also asking them to remember the stories that have traveled with them through these horizontal circuits.

In his work on DIY publishing, Jason Luther observes that conversations around community publishing in literacy studies often exclude communities with sufficient “material and social resources” to “publish without university sponsorship” (19). As a community institution, FANHS has been able to garner resources that help sustain FANHS and its commitment to community ownership, access, and authority. And this is why (re)membering community is so crucial. Seeing that photograph of my Lolo at the 1985 “Just Yesterday” exhibit was the first time we saw our family history connected to more formal histories about the railroads that are circulated in textbooks and in PBS documentaries. And I have seen other community members feel this connection at FANHS conferences, on tours, and in the archives. FANHS brings us into the community; we become important members of the constellation, the horizontal network, the material and social resources that carry FANHS forward. We are inspired, encouraged, asked to publish our histories, start our own archives, develop our own historical tours, and participate in the work of (re)membering community.

Notes

1 Throughout this piece, I use the term *community/self* consciously as a single adjective that modifies publishing. While I acknowledge the distinction between community publishing and self-publishing as these terms have been used in literacy studies, I am hesitant to use the term “self-publishing” in relationship to FANHS because their publishing projects are almost always collaboratively produced and are always family, community, or collectively sponsored/oriented. The *community/self* adjective also recognizes that FANHS enacts both models of publishing with an emphasis on community ownership, access, and authority.

2 Estrella Ravelo Alamar is co-founder and president of the Filipino American Historical Society of Chicago (FAHSC), an affiliate organization of FANHS.

3 I use the term *counter/public* here and throughout to move away from a dichotomous conception of publics and counterpublics. My use of the term *counter/public* is also meant to recognize that the concept of public or counterpublic might shift with context, over time, or where in the larger constellation we are focusing.

4 Consistent with Fred Cordova’s love of puns, the acronym for the National Pinoy Archives, NPA, is also the acronym for the New Peoples Army, a member organization of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP).

The National Pinoy Archives houses the largest collection on Filipinx American history in the U.S. and is a treasured resource by the community, which would not exist if it were not for the Cordovas. The NPA has also proven to be a valuable resource to scholars, including Barbara M. Posadas, Dorothy B. Fujita Rony, and Ronald T. Takaki.

5 While Lowe cautions against the assumption that *tsismis* is, by definition, “intrinsically progressive or subversive,” she also likens gossip to the notion of “rumor” theorized in subaltern studies: “a public form of discourse in colonized societies in which relations of rule force popular modes of social organization (from subcultures to insurgency) into unsanctioned sites and discourses” (114).

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