

Screening Subjects: Humanitarian Government and the Politics of Asylum at Palawan

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**Abstract**

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Contemporary humanitarian government of refugee resettlement entails a formative politics of asylum that legally assesses the truth of persecution and thus claims to "refugee" identity. In the Palawan First-Asylum Camp from the early 1980's until 1997, forces of sovereign violence and compassion manifested how international refugee law translated through concrete humanitarian practices of camp education, emergency care, and legal contention. These multi-scalar discursive processes served the basis for resettlement of Vietnamese American. For the latter diasporic Vietnamese community, legal determination of refugee status encountered a limit in the form of hospitality that reconfigured the borders of the Philippines and Vietnam in light of cosmopolitan visions of sanctuary and pastoral care. By highlighting overlapping conditions of refuge, this thesis offers an analysis of refugee narratives and conditional recognition of refugee "identity" in relation to a selective regime of truth addressing "refugees" in contrast to other migrant subjects. A genealogy of Vietnamese-Filipino asylum-seekers underscores the mixed history of humanitarianism delivered by different stakeholders in light of militarized conflict as well as the emergence of peace, a "neoliberal" politics of immigration, welfare reform and market liberalization in the US, Vietnam and the Philippines.



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# Contents

Acknowledgments

Introduction 6

Chapter One: The Politics of Asylum at the Palawan First-Asylum Camp 23

Chapter Two: Humanitarian Disorientations 54

Chapter Three: Pastoral Hospitality 83

Conclusion 113

Notes 123

Works Cited 132

## Introduction: Humanitarian Government at the “Frontier”

Looking back at the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century requires accounting for optimistic developments like the institutional growth of human rights and humanitarianism. These must be regarded in light of the dismal realities these projects attend to. Few other issues during the last century’s final decades troubled the conscience of “global humanity” than the intransigent persistence of forced displacement, violence-generated diasporas, and the recurrent production of refugees. Increasing figures of displacement highlight the limits of the “New World Order” proclaimed in the early 1990’s. Set against the backdrop of international relations among sovereign states, the worldwide population of refugees, internally displaced people, stateless, and other “subjects of concern” has indeed proliferated<sup>1</sup> as patently witnessed in Syria, North and Central Africa, Myanmar (Burma) and Central Asia.

These regional and international problems have required repeated remediation as a seeming symptom of the broader pathological conditions of the “national order of things” (Malkki 1992; Nguyen 2013, 72). Even as the “abnormality” of refugees appears perennial and thereby requires repeated normalizing redress, it must not be forgotten by globally concerned citizens that the very “refugee” developed formally through the international organization of the post-Second World War global order. As one of this order’s formative clients, the refugee has a genealogy that must be critically read, re-contextualized according to the situations of its production, and reformed at different scales. This is so, because despite the sustained assistance of displaced “subjects of concern” in recent years, the very category of “refugee” has significantly decreased in concrete importance. Indeed, the very agency mandated to assist refugees claims:

The number of ‘people of concern’ to UNCHR [the United Nations High Commission for Refugees] increased from 19.2 million to 33.9 million at the start of 2011, the proportion of refugees among them

decreased from 48 per cent to 29 per cent....[the] UNHCR has adapted its operations to respond to the needs of large numbers of internally displaced and stateless people... it can no longer be seen as only a 'refugee' agency (2012, 1)

Whether or not born out of mere “compassion fatigue” by the citizens of resettlement states and individual sponsors, this apparent global retraction has a historical basis in the discourse of refugee law. As a genealogical subject, the “refugee” implies a politics of truth embodied by an increasingly rigorous procedure of testing subjects for their credible persecution based on the accounts they give of themselves.

### ***The Forgotten Ones***

In 1997, a relatively recent law graduate from the University of Melbourne decided to travel abroad in pursuit of something more worthwhile than the safety of his legal job. As Trinh Hoi himself put it, “I was utterly bored with my corporate job in Sydney.”<sup>2</sup> As a Vietnamese refugee born of parents resettled from the “boat people exodus,” Trinh Hoi had a particularly diasporic desire for returning to work on a “few refugee cases in Hong Kong” before these cases were transferred to Chinese jurisdiction; with Hong Kong’s political reintegration with China in 1997, so went Trinh Hoi’s compassionate calling to enact an identity-based moral obligation. On his way returning to Melbourne, he took a trip to the nearby Philippines- a historically and politically adjacent archipelago. When he arrived there his compassionate vocation took a surprising turn. As a young Vietnamese American women of relatively recent relocation to Seattle recounted to me:

He saw two people arguing. One person was arguing in Vietnamese, and one person was arguing in Tagalog. But *he didn't know* what was going on. But he knew he saw someone speaking in Vietnamese. And so he approached that woman afterwards and... asked her, “What’s going on?” “Why are you here?” That’s kind of weird, like nobody really knew about us. Umm- that we’re in the Philippines, because I guess nobody knew.

A peculiar situation of knowledge underpins this account of how a successfully resettled and politically active subject of the Vietnamese diaspora encountered the “forgotten” plight of others



from the “Boat People” diaspora. Since resettlement admissions for this prolonged crisis of displacement ended in the early 2000’s, recounting the Indochina Wars seemed more like a task appropriate to Vietnamese American or multicultural history than living realities of Vietnamese remaining in limbo in the Philippines. These contemporary realities may have been “forgotten” by some members of the diasporic Vietnamese community comfortably settled in countries of resettlement. Such forgetting derives from a cultural location, where an embodied situation of knowledge about the Vietnamese “Boat People” remains tied to the imaginative form of the nation (Haraway 1988; Winichakul 2003). This view of the “forgotten boat people in the Philippines” arose from a perspective effectively shaping the way onlookers from developed, “resettlement” countries understand how this distinct population of Vietnamese came to exist in the Philippines. While revelation of this forgotten Vietnamese population may facilitate a political course of action undertaken by Vietnamese Australian and Vietnamese diasporic subjects of contemporary citizenship and political inclusion in the West, a genealogy of the “forgotten” Vietnamese in the Philippines may also be written to show how they came to live there through historic forms of hospitality and humanitarian compassion figuring different accounts of humanity.

A strange irony accompanies the story of how the refugee turned citizen found another intensity of humane feeling and political mission after becoming “bored out of my brain,”<sup>3</sup> as Trinh Hoi claims. Through what historical lines of descent might forgetfulness accompany the successes of comfortable life in the democratically free country of Australia? As Nietzsche suggests in one of his cruel fables (2000 [1887], 460-63), human conscience and moral sense of “good” values arose out of mundane habit and the boredom of instinctual negation. An odd forgetfulness substitutes conventional life and social mores where competition, antagonism and

hierarchy once was the order of the day.<sup>4</sup> Thus, in contrast to the polite disaffection with corporate law, the journalist Kate Armstrong can write of Trinh:

It is more than good fortune and his background that inspired him to act: "It's almost like an instinctual thing once you get to know the extent of the refugees' problems, once you get to know about the injustice still being done upon the stateless, once you learn what's happening out there, you have no choice but to help" (2000, 35).

Of course, one must not accept Nietzsche's acerbic account to appreciate the suggestion of how humane values we hold close to heart entail specific origins, "lines of descent," and compromising conditions that produce our "humanitarian" sensibilities and feelings of long-distance responsibility (Haskell 1985). These moral senses of the "good, right, and just" are historically embodied in the resettled refugee's local state of knowledge about those who were not quite so fortunate in both treatment and recognition afforded to them by the "national order of things" (Malkki 1995). In light of this order, the former refugee and now Vietnamese American photographer Brian Doan can write of stateless Vietnamese in the Philippines that: "They are stuck in a backwater... far away from any place where they could lead normal lives- ignored by the free world and even by their luckier compatriots" (2004, 103). In the eyes of diasporic subjects and "global" citizens perceiving the reputedly abnormal, far-fetched, unassimilated and apparently oppressed Vietnamese in the Philippines, these "forgotten" subjects must be publicly revealed. Their plight must be purely denounced. In this regard, it may be claimed that a structurally privileged "pathos of distance" arises from the location of knowledge and all the mediating experiences, social processes, and sense-making conditions that orient the diasporic critic. In order to bypass a amnesiac state of shock at discovering the plight of Vietnamese suffering at the supposed "unjust" hand of the Philippines, I seek writing a historically and ethnographically informed genealogy of Vietnamese subjects who remained living in the Philippines through the closure of the Indochina refugee program.

## **Giving Accounts of the Refugee Self**

A purely negative critique of Vietnamese statelessness in the Philippines risks losing sight of historical preconditions for the Vietnamese's relatively free existence there. An exceptional hospitality was afforded the refugees at Palawan. This came into being on account of the complex workings of humanitarian government. Beyond figuring the refugee within the sovereign discourses of the national order of things, there remain generative lines of questioning the exceptional (Agamben 1998), speechless (Malkki 1992), and pathological characterization of the refugee figure (Nguyen 2013; Ong 2003, 69-121). This critical discourse on biopolitical inclusion of refugees problematizes the compassionate form of admitting damaged subjects solely on the humanitarian basis of principled concern for physical violence and even exceptional disease (Ticktin 2011). Through contrasting representations of normal citizens and "illegal" laboring bodies crossing borders without documentation, this account of the refugee as biopolitical subject offers the basis for criticizing the "apolitical" virtue of humanitarian admissions to migrating subjects. According to this logic of compassion, the refugee is accepted based on a "minimalist biopolitics" that only supports mere human survival without the political dignity, power and equality of citizens (Redfield 2005). Yet other potential avenues for conceptualizing refugees exist when reading the complex figure in a context of transnational politics of human rights and humanitarian discourse.

As a subject of these adjacent discourses (Wilson and Brown 2009), the "refugee" has discrepant legibility with regards to being discursively cast in conflicted relation to the varied forms of government in the Philippines, Vietnam, Southeast Asia and "the West." Drawing from these complex historical modes of "governmentality" (Foucault 2008) offers a richer understanding of how subjectivities are produced in relation to competing discourses of

government such as humanitarianism. In the humanitarian scene of asylum, there are many subjects reflexively created and technically formed. These include refugees and the refugee's others- e.g., the stateless, illegal immigrants, economic migrants, "forgotten" long-stayers, etc. How these distinguished subjects with divergent paths came into being is the concrete problem that I pursue through writing a genealogy of "forgotten" Vietnamese refugees living in the Philippines.

As Trinh Hoi and the photographer Brian Doan who documented "*The Forgotten Ones*" bring to light, there is need for historical explanation of why this remaining group of Vietnamese came to live in the Philippines. Using different methods and theoretical tools than theirs, I pay attention to the discursive constitution of humanitarian subjectivities through the different kinds of accounts victims and humanitarians give of themselves. These may be ethical accounts, testimonies, political narrations, contracts or other biographical narratives presented to other humanitarian subjects. Thus reflexivity and the narrativity remain essential for explaining refugee identity-formation. As Malkki (1992, 1996), Ong (2003) and Nguyen (2013) have shown in their respective accounts, the "refugee" is imaginatively and governmentally produced through taxonomic processes and the contingent construction of subjectivity. Although their contributions to genealogies of refugee subjects are rich, they remain focused on culturally fluid classifications of "refugee-ness"; partially, this arises through Malkki's analogy to horizontal solidarity and imaginative narration of nation-ness. Although both formulations of the nation and refugee forms remain productive in their suggestion of modular production of national and exilic identities, I describe the historical conditions of humanitarian government at the historical interstices imagining the nation and even diasporic ethnicity within the politically qualified population of resettled refugees turned citizens. At the frontiers of the Philippines during the late

1980's, displaced asylum-seekers were required to address themselves as subjects of international refugees law through technical processes of legal identification and governmentally structured narrations of suffering. As Judith Butler may suggest, recounting these procedural conditions that produced "forgotten" refugee subjects keeps in mind a critical basis of reflexivity within genealogies of humanitarian subjects. The anxious, politically charged yet poignant narratives of asylum-seekers undergoing status determination interviews exemplify:

The work on the self... within the context of a set of norms that precede and exceed the subject. These [norms] are invested with power and recalcitrance, setting the limits to what will be considered to be an intelligible formation of the subject within a given historical scheme of things. There is no making of oneself (*poiesis*) outside of a mode of subjectification (*assujettissement*), and, hence, no self-making outside of the norms that orchestrate the possible forms that a subject may take (Butler 2005, 17)

According to this reading of Foucault, who famously recast Nietzsche's approach, a genealogy of refugee subjects offers other grounds for historical critique. This is so because humanitarian subjects- primarily, prospective refugees- undertake a great deal of reflective work on the self through constructing narratives in order to gain both legibility as a documented subject of persecution and thereby possible eligibility as a potential refugee subject of rights.

As a step beyond moral denunciation and revelation of the forgotten truths of refugee identity, a critical genealogy may proceed by analyzing both the norms of recognizing subjects (modes of subjectification) as well as the differentiated subjectivities consequently produced- e.g., the stateless, refugees, asylum-seekers, etc.- through reflexive accounts told of the self. Since this government of subjects through the truth-bearing accounts given remains contingent, critique may operate through exposing, "the limits of the historical scheme of things, the epistemological and ontological horizon within which subjects come to be at all" (Ibid). Exploring the limits of refugee subjectivity, as I attempt below, requires a renewed appreciation of how humanitarian norms, discourses, and policies, which regulate subject-formation, arise historically. These thereby entail subjectivities produced and actively elaborated by

“humanitarian” subjects who contingently embody the power-knowledge relations of transnational humanitarian government (Fassin 2013, 244-5). Through this historical embodiment, different subjects of highly diverse humanitarianism come into being.

Altogether the forms of subjectification, discourses of knowing the self vis-a-vis others, and the range of governmentally inflected narrations of the self constitute humanitarianism’s contingent “regime of truth” addressing refugees. This epistemologically based management of resettlement and asylum seeks to define and thereby regulate displaced humanitarian subjects insofar as true refugees are distinguished from their “false” others. Localized processes of distinctive identification began to emerge in the late 1980s and operated until the official closure of the Indochinese refugee program in 1996. Foucault suggests that a regime of truth develops historically according to contested relations of power that enable and constrain particular subjects’ actions as “effects” within specific ordered systems of knowledge and power (1984, 74). Particular discourses of knowledge concretely underpin different orchestrations of subjective activity within socio-political objectives- e.g., the prison, asylum, clinic, factory or family. Therefore these settings arrange “specific effects of power attached to the true” (74), subjects and objects of social organization. Yet these “regimes” never gain complete stability *as a settled form*, because regimes of truth encounter challenges through the enactment of knowledge in response to arising problems posed to established techniques and existing remedies given from past problems. In Chapter One, I consider a developing regime of truth addressing refugees, asylum-seekers and displaced subjects from Vietnam (and former “Indochina” in general) since the mid-1980’s until the late 1990’s. This emergent regime of truth offered the generative conditions for some Vietnamese being resettled while others becoming “screened-

out” and “forgotten” by Euro-American societies, including some particularly situated members of the Vietnamese diaspora.

The timely elaboration of a particular humanitarian regime of truth sought to strictly manage the flow of populations suffering from an international order of sovereign states. Transnational governance of precarity- across borders and without preference for ideological, identity-based or political affiliation- has been widely described as offering apolitical responses to the “human” problem of mere survival within states of emergency, catastrophe, political crisis, and “natural” disaster (Feldman 2005; Fassin and Pandolfi 2010; Calhoun 2010). While much has been said regarding the reputedly universal field of bio-medical operations mobilized towards giving relief in large scale terms of the “bare life” of human populations (Agamben 1998; Agier 2010), more focused work on the dispersed workings of what has been aggregately called “humanitarian government” has been undertaken (Fassin 2012, 183-185). This historical and ethnographic research has included analyses shedding light on the effective histories of translating human rights and selective tactics of legal aid (Englund 2006), biopolitical management of refugee spaces (Ong 2003), and welfare supplied through logics of emergency-based humanitarianism (Ticktin 2011; Fassin 2013). Enriched by this varied literature on humanitarian government, my research on the legal, national, and pastoral practices of delivering hospitality seeks to contribute to transnational histories of translation among humanitarian organizations. Through these translations, co-articulate discourses of government address, in particular manners,<sup>5</sup> displaced human subjects who- at times restively- respond to humanitarian actors in return.

Humanitarian government has proliferated a wide variety of transnational representations and entire genres of humanitarian narratives that circulate during field operations in addition to

recent encounters of everyday life in the transnational experiences of “globalization” (Malkki 1996; Calhoun 2010). Wilson and Brown have suggested becoming, “more attentive to the emotive power of humanitarian narratives that generates indignation at the suffering of others... towards a wide array of humanitarian acts” (2009, 19). By mobilizing sympathy, stories of humanitarian good deeds have facilitated the circulation of different kinds of capital and different categories of truth anchoring client subjects within frequently volatile economies of compassion and violence (James 2013). In other words, a complex archive of humanitarian representation exists ranging from salient media coverage, compassionate appeals by aid agencies, human rights reports, bureaucratic documents, truth and reconciliation committees, testimonies by victims, therapeutic exchanges, and academic “expert” witnessing. Each fulfills different aims yet with indeterminate effects. Legal adjudication of refugee status claims has produced distinct narratives of suffering as technically solicited, carefully assessed, and corroborated accounts that identify the subject’s past (Sandvik 2012; Fassin 2007).<sup>6</sup> Heightened demand for credibility in assessing these narratives has set in motion policies of efficiency-minded “accountability.” These find their concrete form in practices seeking to establish the truth of “persecution” with further rigor over the past few decades. Moreover, integration of humanitarian criteria in Euro-American immigration policy have since the end of the Cold War- and even more since 9/11- become interwoven with economic, social welfare, security and criminal justice concerns (Kanstroom 2012; Akram 2000; Germain 2002). Within the overlapping contexts of transnational asylum, humanitarian assistance and refugee resettlement, persuasive narratives of “true” suffering have comprised an increasingly important element within an evolving regime of truth addressing refugees. This arose as the proof of legally legible “persecution” served as a credible investment in shifting economies of compassion during the



end of the Cold War. Yet this legal epistemology of defining the “refugee” came about prior to the post-1989 “New World Order.” Southeast Asian asylum states, Euro-American states of resettlement, intergovernmental and nongovernmental humanitarian organizations, and conflicted states of original persecution made different arguments concerning “who is a refugee” according to different exigencies through the 1980’s. In sum, a regime of truth that produced “forgotten” or “stateless” Vietnamese in the Philippines partially arose during the Cold War. An entangled transnational, national and regional politics of international refugee law set in place specific practices of humanitarian government that were active in the “frontier” of the Philippines.

### **Humanitarian Government at the Interstices of Vietnam and the Philippines**

On a rainy September afternoon in 1980 in South Vietnam... my family received a telegram from America. “Huy and Tuan arrived safely in Palawan.” It was signed by Truong Tan, a cousin in California, telling our family that my brother and his friend were safe at the Palawan refugee camp in the Philippines. We became silent for a moment, then broke out in joyful tears. After several months waiting anxiously, the telegram appeared like a miracle. Ever since then, the word “Palawan” has been recorded in my innocent mind as the land of hope, a land of legend, a paradise for Vietnamese asylum seekers.

In January 2004, almost a quarter century later, I finally entered that “legendary” land, not as a refugee but as a documentary photographer.... Surprisingly, Palawan did not look like the dream land which I had imagined in my childhood.

-Brian Doan (2004, 103)

The mere mention of “Palawan” conjures up images of Eden as well as intense feelings of longing and relief. Palawan embodies a particular place within the imaginative landscape of the Philippines and throughout the Vietnamese diaspora. Situated at the farthest Western extreme of the Philippines, Palawan has served as the Philippines’ “Last Frontier.” Similar to Fredrick Jackson Turner’s mythic conception of the frontier in American civilizational history, Palawan factors particularly within the spatial identity of the Philippines. Palawan connotes, “a new start in life... a land of natural beauty and unspoiled, ecologically significant wilderness” (Eder and Fernandez 1996, 1). From the earlier times of Spanish “first contact”- when Magellan’s

expedition landed in Palawan after the loss of their leader- up to the present-day, Palawan has repeatedly been “rediscovered” as an institutional frontier for successive colonial regimes, national and international programs of government, and development schemes that experiment setting in place innovative as well as “rational scientific” interventions.

Since any notion of “wilderness” or “frontier” carries ambiguous baggage of historicist progressive valuations and civilizing judgments (Tsing 2005), it should not be forgotten that Palawan has been shaped by at least 50,000 years of human inhabitation (Eder and Fernandez 1996). This includes long-sustained material traffic, commercial trade, and smuggling by Muslim and other traders (Tagliacozzo 2002). What’s more, post-World War II settlement dynamics by migrants from other Filipino provinces has certainly heightened indigenous land struggles, conservation efforts, and conflicts resulting from resource-extractive development schemes of “improvement” (Li 2010; Theriault 2011; Scott 1998). In the mind of colonial administrators, as commonly recalled by Filipinos today, Palawan offered conducive conditions for establishing a secure leper colony at Culion in 1902 and the Iwahig Penal Colony near Puerto Princessa (Ocampo 1996, 35; Anderson 2009). Under American colonial administration in November 1904, the Iwahig penal colony offered a colonial laboratory for experimenting with novel penal reforms before their transplantation to the notorious Sing Sing prison in New York state (Salaman 2009). Keeping in mind this multilayered history of interventions and “rediscoveries of the frontier” makes one more than a little circumspect in analyzing the later 20<sup>th</sup> Century Palawan refugee camp as just another global instance of the space of exception- or the biopolitical camp created by the decisive figure of the sovereign for the subject of homo sacer (Agamben 1998).<sup>7</sup> Although tempting, such a reading subsumes Palawan’s distinctive history of “rediscovery” at the frontier within a Eurocentric philosophical emplotment of the camp for

Agamben and biopolitics for Foucault (2008). Charting out a different history written at the interstices of the colonial and postcolonial nation (Winichakul 2007), Palawan's milieu for institution-formation provokes an alternative question: how do universals- such as international conventions and humanitarian government addressing the experiences of refugees- become engaged, formed, and contested within particular locations of fricative negotiation (Tsing 2005)?

In this study, I pursue similar questions: how did central Palawan become, first, an effective location for building the Vietnamese Refugee Center in 1979, then an internationally mandated first-asylum camp in the mid-1980's, and finally a pastoral sanctuary for rejected refugees? How did a nascently "universal" legal regime addressing the refugee, by offering this figure an international definition, become initially resisted throughout Southeast Asia, except for the Philippines, before becoming implemented at first-asylum camps like Palawan's? Lastly, through discursive procedures of soliciting narrative truths, how did this regime of truth produce other subjects of resistance: screened-out Vietnamese whose claims to refugee status were rejected but whose reflexive and political insistence charted a different history than the story of bare life? Taken in a historically situated international framework of governing transnational subjects in line with varied humanitarian discourses, the "Palawan First Asylum Camp" offered temporary relief to asylum-seekers from "Indochina" who had not yet been granted refugee status. Far from becoming a space of exception in the fashion of a concentration camp as theoretically conceptualized by Agamben (See Redfield 2003; Englund 2006; Fassin 2013), the Palawan asylum camp developed historically as a transnational location for different humanitarian articulations of compassion, legal consciousness, moral values, hospitality and pastoral resistance.

As a location for national, international, humanitarian, state and religious actors to collaborate with each other, the Palawan camp served as a transnational workshop for different forms of government and coexisting economies of practice. Following Foucault's histories of governmentality (2007), Erica James depicts in Haiti how humanitarian government entailed conflicting operations and structurally competing projects ranging from democratization, military intervention in the wake of "failed states," asylum protection, post-conflict recovery, and therapeutic care of trauma. This complex assemblage of humanitarian work shows how transnational government is not confined to principal practices of sovereignty or any single economy of aid, violence, compassionate relief or rights (2013). Similarly, the Palawan First Asylum camp served as a transnational space for political transactions and, by virtue of scarce resources and Filipino as well as international politics, competition of polymorphous forms of government.<sup>8</sup> As James analyzes, vexed yet fluid transactions of political economy and humanitarian assistance evince, "complex cycles of uncertainties, ambiguities, and perils facing aid actors who work the interstitial spaces between... terror and compassion economies" (289). In this vein, I consider in Chapter Two how a biographic accounts by a particular humanitarian subject gives voice to different states of discontent, feeling, and agency amid changing terms of humanitarian regard for Vietnamese "refugees." This affective condition underscores the critical fact that the camp's shared space of exile factored multiple displacements of asylum-seekers, host nationals, and international humanitarians who, to varying degrees, were all new to Palawan.

With these mixed economies and varied arts of government brought together, the very space of their comingling manifests the interstices of both state territorial control and the nation's narrative form. Thongchai Winichakul (2007) productively calls for writing alternative histories

at the *interstices* of the nation. These transnational locations of overlapping histories regularly become marginalized in dominant national histories of colonial and postcolonial discourse. As documented by diverse humanitarian narratives like that of UN volunteer camp educator Eleanor Stewart (Chapter Two), transnational government is carried out by different agents, who mobilize different capacities and different discourses. Similarly, James (2012) describes how within the indeterminate scene of humanitarian politics:

NGOs [nongovernmental organizations] of varied political perspectives... operate at the interstices of government and their citizenry. They are not easily characterized as international, national or local in origin, especially given the diverse individuals in their employment. The ambiguous, liminal position of these institutions and actors provide both flexibility and insecurity when working in a “host” country or challenging the excesses of a state. Their work may be misrepresented and easily misunderstood both inside and outside the aid apparatus (2013, 289).

Humanitarian government intervenes at interstices where the nation’s spatial identity, imagined community, and discursive apparatus of political and social membership appear contested or stretched to levels of emergency. But interstices embody openings for translating other moral values and normative discourses, constructing innovative forms of collective responsibility, and potentially delivering political alternatives. Writing a history of Palawan as a transnational interstice may offer a contextually grounded sense of politics at the limits of a regime of truth that governs humanitarian subjectivity through the refugee’s credibility. An alternative history of transnational government may “provincialize” discourses of the camp in structural relation to sovereignty and overstated claims to the global state of exception that normalizes legal anomie as the basis for some future “form of politics to come.” This task remains all the more pressing as the biopolitical binaries separating the citizen from the refugee has eroded in the light of the overpopulation of humanitarian “subjects of concern.” Although there are risks, uncertainties and undeniable causes for cynicism arising from screening subjects for the truth of their suffering, it is important to insist that the “refugee” remains as an active ambition, a performative

construction, and a figure of freedom subject to politics. Since the “refugee” is an increasingly threatened category (as discussed above), there is also cause for politics in reinvesting in refugee subjectivities that may be taken for granted as a given. Of course, this strategically serves as grounds for diasporic community-formation. But it may risk becoming merely localized citizenship devolving upon the individual subject as a nevertheless privileged participant in the normative horizon of the nation (Campomanes 1997). There are vital grounds for revisiting genealogies of “forgotten” Vietnamese refugees by writing histories of transnational government at the interstices.

### **Overview**

Thus the first-asylum camp at Palawan embodied a transnational intersection, an imagined frontier, and a political limit where humanitarian government works indecisively through conflicted processes of subject-formation and distinctive classification. Analyzing these processes as political technologies undertaken at humanitarian frontiers and transnational interstices brings into question how refugees and relief-workers from international and national backgrounds conceive themselves as citizens of nations, citizens of the world, and variably rooted human subjects (Fassin 2013; Malkki 1996, 1992). Accompanying these problems of difficult definitions based on dominant international political organization (Feldman 2007), there are socio-political distinctions and “hierarchies of humanity” during aid interventions that usually become reproduced in the culturally and historically haunted politics of humanitarianism (Fassin 2013, 233-242). In the administrative assessment and legal examination of refugee status claims, distinct *disorientations* appear through the shared interactions of different humanitarian subjects who invoke conflicting discourses of compassion, principles, values, obligations, and laws addressing refugees. By offering a reading of a United Nations education volunteer’s

memoir in Chapter Two, I seek to understand how political subjectivities of overlapping disorientations and indeterminate fates, during asylum-seeker's trials of truth, become legible. A wide range of emotions and "morally pure" denunciation are expressed through redoubled accounts of the self, which include both the camp educator's memoir and her pupils' anxiety-ridden writing. This textual archive remains linked to the functional objectives of the first-asylum camp. Yet writing these accounts also partake in everyday rituals of recreating social order, diasporic Vietnamese, or privileged humanitarian "displacement" as the case for Eleanor Stewart. Although presumably sharing humanitarian space in proximity with the other, this interstitial setting manifested a structure of accounting for a humanitarian self vis-à-vis the benighted other, who as Butler may claim (2007, 38-40, 81) brings the responsible humanitarian into recognizable existence. Thus ethical modes of recounting the responsive self through relation to others at risk configure humanitarian, beneficent subjects as told in narratives of compassion and affected equality.

At the same time, norms of recognizing "genuine refugees" were forged through a regime of truth that historically drew together economies of compassion and discursive classification of *true* persecution. In Chapter One, I outline this regime of truth addressing refugees by considering the international, national, and individual organization of asylum-seeker's accounts of "persecution" in order to ground claims for refugee resettlement. In Chapter Two, I consider Eleanor Stewart's memoir recollecting her work as a "compassionate volunteer" amidst the indeterminacies of shifting legal terms of refuge around 1983. Finally, in Chapter Three, the pastoral power of the Catholic Church in the Philippines offers a different humanitarian transcript for collaboration as well as potent resistance against the strictures of international refugee law as attempted by the sovereign Philippines. As demonstrated in accounts of

international law, camp education and pastoral counsel, the asylum-camp became a site for translation of different narratives, governmental discourses, and moral values among the heterogeneous subjects of humanitarian government.

It must not be overlooked by those concerned with the historical plight of the “forgotten” Vietnamese in the Philippines that the humanitarian apparatus operating in Palawan did not only channel political, economic, discursive and moral support from international, intergovernmental, and national actors- whether Filipino, Vietnamese, or American. But also the camp became a political space for articulating the duel politics of resistance and humanitarian reason even during the authoritarian rule of Ferdinand Marcos (1968-1986). In the concrete experiences of repression and Filipino political struggles against Marcos, against “neocolonial” elite forms of democratic sovereignty, and then against forced repatriation under Fidel Ramos’s administration, humanitarian agents of various political orientations developed different reasons of government born from Vietnamese-Philippines collaborations during colonial missions and postcolonial passages to postcolonial freedom (Chapter Three). Bringing these intertwined, postcolonial Catholic histories to light offers an alternative basis for considering resistance and transnational politics in the interstitial space of humanitarian asylum. Analyzing this site as a setting for collaboration and at times restive politics may seek to offer more relief and potential guidance than an account of the processes of humanitarian space as minimally operating on the ‘secret solidarity’ of sacred life (Agamben 1998, ). In contrast, the timely assistance of Sister Pascale Le Thi Trieu and Bishop Ramon Arguelles of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines decisively supported the initially 2,355 Vietnamese who had been “screened-out” in status-determination processes and subsequently refused to be repatriated. Against an international politics of asylum that sought for greater accountability and credibility in adjudicating



resettlement claims based on asylum-seeker's narrative accounts of themselves (Chapter One), the pastoral power of the Church and the flock it carefully tended to manifested a different government of souls, albeit one not based on rights. Through sacrificing personally and joining as witnesses to the 'forgotten' Vietnamese struggle, leading members of the Church offered a pastoral form of hospitality. This conditional solution offered an alternative to a problem that had been couched in state-centered terms of secular refugee law. The sovereign right of the Philippines to carry out repatriation, with backing from the UNHCR, became stymied (Davies 2007; Freeman and Nguyen 2003 12-17; Robinson 1998, 281). And this combined effort in unison with the remaining Vietnamese drew from longer historical relationships than those understood through political determinations of the contemporary nation or the territorial state.

Vietnamese *experiences of suffering* passed through an international register of refugee law only to be translated into a sanctified order of compassion. Much like humanitarian government considered more broadly, this pastoral promise of cosmopolitan government without borders, entitlements of citizenship, or rights based on national membership altogether formed another incomplete regime of truth that had to confront remaining problems of "statelessness." Thus, the limited regime of truth addressing refugees formed other humanitarian subjectivities at the limits of sovereignty, the nation, and even the refugee. Offering a genealogy of the "forgotten" Vietnamese in the Philippines sheds light on the fragile norms of recognition that, to some extent, govern subjects through potent narratives told at humanitarian frontiers.

## Chapter One: The Politics of Asylum at the Palawan First-Asylum Camp

The refugee comes to us in his pristine vulnerability. His is the most poignant of all human sufferings and deprivations: for he has lost a country. We may say that he has no rights in the legal sense; but in the human sense, he has every right to our justice and compassion.... We Asians and Filipinos... know how it feels to be strangers in our own land. Generations of Asians have suffered the brutalities of colonization, exploitation and oppression. And so, as we gaze at the refugees, we see our very own faces. We see the faces of disorder, conflict, despair.

-Imelda Romualdez Marcos<sup>1</sup>

Refugees seem purely defined as human tragedies. Yet they participate in politics. Global conflicts and antagonisms among complex actors set the *humanitarian* scene of displacement and rescue.<sup>9</sup> Figures such as *the killing fields* and *the boat people* appear as spatially given emblems of collective vulnerability. For the most part, these figures have been conceived in sovereign terms of human subjects caught in states of emergency, aberrant dislocation, and expulsion from the territorial order of nation-states (Malkki 1992; Arendt 1966). Thus the stateless appear to demand immediate relief and remedial inclusion through re-classification to counter the violence of expulsion. Effectively *displaced* populations result from particular states mobilizing complex agencies towards waging and regulating overlapping hostilities like the Indochina Wars.<sup>10</sup> For some, this paradox of state production of “statelessness” runs with and against tendencies of ‘globalization’ and capitalist “deterritorialization,” in which the superfluity of populations and symbolic representations readily circulate through flows of public culture including humanitarian advocacy (Appadurai 1996). Yet the field of visible images offers partial depictions that have consequentially mixed humanitarian effects. Apprehension of “emergencies” remains largely structured by political mediation and limited visibility even as perceptions of distant suffering

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<sup>1</sup> “Keynote Address,” *Round Table of Asian Experts on Current Problems in The International Protection of Refugees and Displaced Persons* (1980)

can embody cosmopolitan humanitarian regard (Boltanski 1999). Yet by virtue of selective mediation, visible suffering remains vulnerable to appropriation.<sup>11</sup> Even as tragedies like the Cambodian “killing fields” may illuminate global humanitarian problems in order to deliver timely responses and morally imperative reductions of human suffering regardless of political affiliation, ideological alignment or borders (Fassin 2011; Redfield 2011), such transnational representations of “tragedy” can serve reasons of state. For instance, Jean-Paul Dumont (1995) witnessed, during Martial Law in the Philippines, how a particular symbol of tragedy may also support the denial of socially prevalent inequality and abuse under the authoritarian rule of Ferdinand Marcos. Dumont noted how this “structural violence” found its hegemonic form through screening of *The Killing Fields* (film), “in preparation for the elections of February 7, 1986” that served as botched plebiscite leading to Marcos’ fall from power (273).

After the upheavals of the 1960’s, Indochinese “boat people” appeared as primary subjects of dislocation, victims to sovereign violence, and exclusion by Communist states. Some have noted how the humanitarian discourses signaled a shift towards principled practices of “neutral” compassion and *apolitical* relief of “victims” who are regarded as worthy of universal care regardless of rights, affiliation, or state membership (Ticktin 2013; Curtis 2011). According to these commentators, this shift towards a consensual neoliberal politics of compassion gave birth to a transnational project of modern humanitarianism after the promises of Third World liberation and Maoist-Leninist utopias precipitated disasters such as post-war Vietnamese unification, the radical “humanist” remaking of Socialist revolutions, collectivization, and killing fields. Thus immediate responses by figures like Bernard Kouchner, by organizations like Medicines Sans Frontières, and by an organized pragmatics of “humane care” appeared as best hope for non-ideological, moral politics of humanitarian compassion. But this perception of

immediately presentable suffering nevertheless facilitated more capacious terms for saving those traveling by boat when compared to land-based asylum-seekers who were deemed “illegal immigrants” or “internally displaced persons,” (Davies 2007, 161; Robinson 1996, 74-79). These characterizations were made to describe, within Southeast Asia, those fleeing the Khmer Rouge along the Thai border and- if we venture to thinking contrapuntally- those fleeing anti-Communist persecution in Central America and Haiti (Bon Tempo 2008, 187-191). What seemed apparent through a transnational *humanitarian* imaginary of displacement was a sensible ordering of who would come to be identified as “refugees” and, thus, which precarious populations could be discursively regarded as human (Sandvik 2009; Butler 2003). Based on this symbolic identification of *prima facie* refugees, only some subjects were granted access to resettlement through rights-based international mobility.

Delineations cast displaced figures according to alignments pitting “Communists” and merely “economic migrants” against “genuine” refugee subjects of freedom friendly to liberalism. Refugees were defined and valued within an evolving regime of international refugee management and law that was open to political negotiations. Certain refugees had to be defined legally and organized governmentally beyond those representations regularly portraying ‘them’ as dehistoricized figures of powerlessness and bare vulnerability (Malkki 1996, 344; Espiritu 2006; cf. Agamben 1998). In contrast to those “still-life” images of “the miserable ‘sea of humanity,’” depicting displacement under the rubric of, “universal collectivity of suffering” (Malkki 1996; Knudsen 1993), the suffering of those fleeing were subject to exacting specification of past experiences or motives. Narratives of suffering became solicited by technical regime of truth addressing refugees. Before offering relief through resettlement *as refugees*, an ensemble of legal assessments and “soft” practices of care functioned integrally as a

governmental apparatus of power. This transnational, interstitial government “descended” from transnational entities and humanitarian networks (e.g., UNHCR) all the way through “capillary” relations of power within the practical contexts of camps and holding centers. Successive refugee flights hampered regional and global systems of providing asylum and offering refugee resettlement. Thus a network of voluntary, private, faith- and state-based agencies was cast to offer forms of humanitarian assistance according to “credible” practices and “accountable” programs in managing displaced populations (Sandvik 2009; Stein 2008). As an emergency response to post-Vietnam War problems of displacement from the “family of nations” (Malkki 1992), a practical field of compassionate action, technical discourses, and accounts of the truth of refugees had to form through the “mobilization of NGOs” and state agencies after the cessation of military aggression.

After 1978, flights of displaced “Indochinese” populations- most famously, South Vietnamese “Boat People,” Laotian, Cambodian and ethnic minorities from this region- exhausted the political wherewithal and public patience of countries of asylum and resettlement. Although initial waves of refugees were offered refuge according to exceptional ad hoc measures, this motley management of displacement of the “Indochinese refugee crisis” became stressed to the point of becoming a “crisis” for international and Southeast Asian states questioning the very “refugee” category and definitional basis for further humanitarian assistance. In 1979, the “Indochinese United Nations conference... convened in Geneva to address this broad set of human problems facing not only the immediate region of East Asia, but also most of the West” (Knudsen 1983, 35). These negotiations lead in, “that same year, the Philippines government [to] establish the Vietnamese Refugee Camp, with an original handling capacity of 2,000 Vietnamese refugees” (Ibid). As this crisis lingered, the camp’s initial capacity

more than tripled. With renewed scrutiny of asylum policies, it would be renamed the “Palawan First-Asylum Camp” for a renewed function of handling asylum-seekers- not *bonafide* refugees.

Only by interacting with this emergent system of legislation and refugee administration could displaced refuge-seekers address themselves as “refugees.” As a particular “humanitarian” ensemble of governmental processes and discursive forms, this system of legality and relief implied an “ethical” form of narrating the self through status determination processes. These screening processes figure relations of power that binds individual subjects to the truths of a given identity according to a “law” of individual identity (Foucault 1994, 130). This ethical relation, legal structure and its politically elaborated screening process may embody a method of subject-formation and practical means of governing subjects through the truths they present about themselves. Technically, this procedure took place in first-asylum camps. Thus the PFAC served as a domain in which to manage “floating,” deterritorialized Indochinese refugees whom are incompletely identified by states yet supported by a humanitarian apparatus.

The Palawan First Asylum Camp (PFAC) became, in short, a constitute space for subjects seeking to find refuge through processes of determination. By offering relief from uncertainty, natural asperities, hunger, and threats of violence from pirates and other refuge-seekers, this asylum camp offered a vital milieu for informing and orienting refugees. As a social milieu, the PFAC like other asylum camps served as a locus for balancing certain risks of continued conflict, biological threats, and prolonged detention with humane demands for securing the rights and lives of bona fide refugees given contingencies of unforeseen events (Foucault 2007, 7-14). These objectives and risks placed the Palawan first-asylum camp centrally within a broader strategy of securing and sustaining persecuted lives with limited means, during a period from 1979 to the early 1990’s of economic hardship, budgetary “austerity,” and

neoliberal governmental reform. In addition to PFAC's serving as a formative site for making asylum-seekers re-figure themselves by making claims to status as political refugees, this camp functioned and elaborated an "art of government" geared towards sorting refugee-seeker's status within a political context setting more restrictive terms for acceptable refugees. Yet, even given this calculation of care and refugee admissions, diverging demands- including humanitarian ones- were made that channeled political antagonisms articulate at different scales of international politics, domestic affairs, transnational governance, and subjectivities themselves.<sup>12</sup>

As a process of translating *the experience of suffering* through technical discourse of refugee law, screening procedures for preliminary assessment of case-merit and status determination introduced their own indeterminacies. This essay seeks to critically consider the contingent conditions that shape, unsettle and reform the process of screening refugees for their status as subjects of potential resettlement and future freedom. Mapping this political configuration requires exploring how communicative interactions within the screening process- such as the initial interview, the counsel session and even the legal appeal- remain marked not merely by socio-cultural difference, such dislocated social systems of grounding trust (Knudsen 1992) , but also by a vexing politics of insufficient rigor and credible assessments of suffering. Screening interviews embody transactions that partially form subjectivity through discursive relays. These structured interactions factor "distortions" spawning suspicions of corruption, patronage, even occult machinations among most involved parties (James 2009, ). These accusations and contestations show how the procedural medium of screening claimants for refugee status is irreducible to ideal-speech situations, with its communicative model of ideologically distorted or free speech (Habermas 1971). Instead, accounting for oneself as a "refugee" always remains conflicted, marked by temporality, and contingent structures of

address that socially constrain and enable forms of legally recognized subjectivity (Butler 2007). Accounting for oneself as a refugee at the interstices of nation-states necessitates giving an iterative yet verifiable account of technically legible “persecution.” Supplying these accounts as proper discursive “inputs” draws from the mixed economies of compassion and also competition within the nervous conditions of asylum settings. Thus accounts of persecution are contextually configured as informed articulations by asylum-seekers who hope to offer persuasive, convincing, and truthful presentations of the persecuted self. Disclosures of the self arise through complex camp relationships to networked actors including humanitarian care-givers and not least other stateless claimants who also prepare narratives of the persecuted self. These contingent relations place a camp such as the Palawan First-Asylum Camp at the heart of elaborating a genealogy of present “refugee” subjects, whether they fortunately inhabit resettlement countries, persist in states of asylum, have been repatriated voluntarily, or deported<sup>13</sup> to their “countries of origin.”

### **“Mass Influx”: Accounting for Context**

From the anti-colonial wars of the 1950’s through the emergence of “liberal peace” in the late 1970s and 1980’s, Southeast Asia became a primary region for originating and managing human displacements. Although aggregate data made available by regional and international agencies may detail this as part of an Asian crisis of almost seven million refugees as late as 1990 (Vithit 1992, 19), the period from 1975 to 1996 regionally saw overall, “more than three million people leave their homes in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, many with their lives in obvious peril and others fleeing fear, hunger, and uncertainty” (Robinson 1998, 2). Of this total about 2.5 million were resettled, and another half million were repatriated (Ibid).<sup>14</sup> While this depicts numerically the magnitude of displacement through statistics, what remains abstract in



this information are the minute details comprising of sensible particularities and political dealings regarding both the formation of these refugees as subjects of aid and the administration of their embodied existence within camps. Under this focus, refugees had to become classified and identified through subjectifying screening-processes that drew from contingent refugee policies and international politics. Identifying refugees from Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos presented their own difficulties. Different waves from 1975-1996 entailed diverse backgrounds consisting of political experiences of alignment or hostility as well as particular accounts of identity including class, ethnic, gender and religion. These variables “objectively” structure both “subjective” experiences of suffered violence and an elicited account of persecution, insofar as social capital (such as education, linguistic capacities, and profession) facilitate offering an account. But the process of screening subjects for a claimant’s background must also unpack a different constellation of power and knowledge about a refugee subject. Mapping what underpins a refugee “rescue” narrative requires critically considering what forces serve as the formative grounds for offering humanitarian rescue and camps designated for processes of categorizing, identifying and rehabilitating refuge-seekers. Two questions qualify this consideration. First, how are refuge-seeker’s cast in relation to humanitarians and some future sociality of potential freedom and resettlement? Citing Lila Abu-Lughod, Mimi Nguyen problematizes what she calls the politically wounding “gift of freedom” offered through refugee rescue operations during the Cold War. Similar to the “total social fact” of Marcel Mauss’s conception of the gift (1954), delivering the gift entails a non-individuated relay of exchange and reception. Each transaction of giving and receiving gift-objects set reciprocal terms and obligations that “wound”- to invoke Mary Douglass’s provocative reading (1954) - the individual into recharged relations of debt and gratitude. Within refugee politics, what political terms of temporal limitations, available care,

and strategic integration are established as the basis for rescuing refugees? Giving liberty to subjects in flight presents the civilizing benefits, risks and dangers of delivery:

When you save someone, you imply that you are saving her *from* something. You are also saving her to something. What violence is entailed in this transformation, and what presumptions are being made about the superiority of that to which you are saving her? (Abu-Lughod cited in Nguyen 2012, 15).

A conflicted liberal normativity (or alternatively, “will to improve”) lies at the root of rescuing and restoring refugees as potential subjects of resettled freedom. By considering these wounding terms of asymmetric power-relations, what may find articulation through the demands of refugee self-narration seem to be well-intended yet vexed and contested specters of colonial and racializing attempts to rehabilitate displaced subjects from some prior violence.

A structural question thus accompanies this civilizational trope of saving the dislocated, deprived and politically denuded: what violence and “critical event” precipitated such attempts at delivering refugees along the passage to reputedly better lands of pure freedom? As Yen Le Espiritu stresses (2006), any attempt at studying post-war Vietnamese refugee “experience” must critically situate,

Refugee flight within its global political-economic and cultural context. Indeed, all of the nation-states from which the largest numbers of US refugees originate- El Salvador, Cuba, Guatemala, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Somalia- have been deeply disrupted by US ‘counterinsurgency’ actions, anticommunist insurgencies, terrorism counteraction and peacekeeping operations. As such the stories of Vietnamese refugee flight must begin with this history of US military, economic, and political intervention in Southeast Asia (423)

This alternative mapping may be seen not merely as offering an exposition of historical background. More importantly, Espiritu insists on connecting strategic causality and culpable responsibility to the very policies and practices that produced refugee subjects requiring rescue, rehabilitation and re-territorialization within resettlement countries. Accounting for figures of displacement, refugee flows, and even the interior psychic experiences of refugees as they are cast “pathologically” in dislocation, exile and trauma must thereby seek to explain “outside” relations of violence generating humanitarian “externalities” like displacement to planned

military policies. Suturing these past external forces and projected futures of refuge serves as the contested grounds producing the heterogeneous subjectivities of rescued refugees. Clearly, this perspective offers a break from imagined “freedom fighters” delivered to the free world. It is only in light of tying this politically caused collective suffering within individual asylum-claimant’s accounts that critical refugee studies may proceed in destabilizing the moralism of enacting humanitarian care without calculation, allegiances, partiality or political biases.

From inter-class conflict during socialist revolutionary transformations to these liberal causes realized as explicit warfare, various kinds of upheaval receive uneven and often destabilizing humanitarian responses. Based on these temporal dynamics of meeting emergencies with asynchronic exceptional time, epistemic instabilities accompany the drive towards developing both aggregate and individual claimant’s narrative testimonies as sufficient accounts of formative violence. The period from 1975 and 1978 figured key years of political change and the reigniting of conflicts among regional powers including wars between China and Vietnam as well as Democratic Kampuchea with the latter. Yet even this period only partially depicts the levels and qualities of prior displacements such as those produced through preceding anti-colonial struggles and civil wars within Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. Although during the mid-1970’s from the latter two countries garnered the most media and policy attention, these dislocations appear as linked to a prolonged history of displacements. Yet each periodic episode factors limits in response, reception and policy capacities. Since South Vietnam alone saw from 1954 to 1975 more than 10 million people displaced (Robinson, 7), the states that exercised the most responsibility and political investment in these displacements- the US and France- responded through invoking national mechanisms of accommodating executive admissions, as opposed to international conventions wholesale (discussed below).<sup>15</sup> In contrast, it took some

time (1975-1979) and problematic countenance of risks in hypocritical outrage (Loescher et al 1986, 147-160), before the Khmer Rouge would become commonly vilified enemies of liberalism, in the wake of US intervention and an international Left's disinclination to further military intervene- even if of a humanitarian nature (Ibid. 151). Added to sheer volume of these displacements internally and across borders,<sup>16</sup> reception provided to incoming refuge-seekers remained limited by both public attention and the possibilities availed by ad hoc measures used in responding to collective yet specifically caused dislocations.

Figures representing 'regional' displacement thereby cast from view some of the complex political conditions producing these overlapping displacements. In addition to well-documented strategic ties of counter-insurgency and regime-support for "liberal" governments supporting the polarized efforts in the US-Vietnamese War, Cold War geopolitics played a primary role in fomenting opposition in other related political situations, such as struggles in the Philippines between Marcos and opposition movements such as the Communist Party of the Philippines and Muslim independence movement. In Cambodia, more beguiling complications led both US and Soviet policies to support forces in the conflict between the Khmer Rouge and the Khmer Republic.<sup>17</sup> While the former's radical plan for social revolution consumed nearly 2 million people, the price for forging the grounds for peace in the US-Vietnamese war in 1973 came arguably in intensified bombing and violence both within and beyond the borders of South Vietnam (Chan 2006, 53-55). Selective dealings with ideologically agreeable "collaborators" and more forceful interventions, including US invasions of Laos and Cambodia in the late 1960's, created conditions for other political actors to emerge- including the Khmer Rouge.<sup>18</sup> More than statistical representations, individual narratives, and popular images of boat people can depict, the specific context of US military aggression and related liberal imperial formations, including

selective humanitarian operations, constituted the overarching “containment” strategy and overlapping preconditions for displacing salvable subjects of humanitarian concern, potential freedom, and legal specificity as refugees and asylum-seekers after the American-Vietnam War’s end in 1975.

### **Domesticating Refugee Law: Local Articulations and Legitimacy Under Martial Law**

The Filipino Experience of recent times... has prepared us for the task that we have undertaken on behalf of the refugees.... Only seven years ago, we were on the brink of the very same calamity that has befallen our Vietnamese, Cambodian and other human brothers. It was, perhaps, only a matter of months before our country would have been fragmented by internal and external war. The historic decision of President Marcos to proclaim Martial Law and establish *a crisis government saved us from the disaster whose victims... we now have in our midst*. These refugees, then, are living testaments to what might have been and what had been.

-Imelda R. Marcos (my emphasis)

According to Francisco Benitez, the hospitality offered by Ferdinand Marcos, from 1975 until his loss of power, stood as a shining moment for Marcos in the eyes of both domestic and international audiences otherwise concerned with his regime’s increasing human rights violations.<sup>19</sup> However, offering refuge to selective subjects of special humanitarian concern remains a political undertaking within contradictory sets of policies, programs and aggressions undertaken by Marcos and his allies, before and after his pronouncement of Martial Law in 1972. Extending Yen Le Espiritu’s critical genealogy of refugee subjects, it remains important to trace the refugee’s emergence within relational histories and the porous political contexts these detail.

After signing the Paris Peace Agreement in 1973, the population of uprooted “Indochinese”<sup>20</sup> proliferated to a degree only exceeded at that time by the two million people displaced by World War II (Anker et al. 1999, 6). Incidentally, it was in the wake of the Second World War<sup>21</sup> that the international community responded to massive dislocation by forming an international legal regime concerning refugees. Responding to dislocations experienced after World War I, when the burden of weighed heavily on those minorities and displaced populations

themselves (Arendt 1966, 267-273), a political alternative was formulated. In addition to the Fourth Geneva Convention, this emergent regime of norms adjudicating and managing refugee matters found its central legal instrument in the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (Anker 6). However, its practical implementation remained dispersed both according to the group of ratifying states in addition to the contingent politics of the newly formed interstate agencies comprising the United Nations.<sup>22</sup> While this management system still retained spatio-temporal limitations pertaining to areas within the borders of Europe for the period prior to 1951, this convention provided a legal definition of the refugee (Vithit 1992, 163-185). Also it established an infrastructure for determining and acting on refugee status. This included means for providing immediate material protections, such as “Welfare,” “Education,” and “Social Security.” Altogether these elements realize specific means for defining, handling and vitally preserving subjects fleeing their countries of origin based on a “well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion” (Article 1.2; Ibid). But this definition of the “refugee” had to find subsequent supplementary definition- e.g., of “persecution” and “membership of a particular social group”- through local, national, and international adjudication. These particularly juridical “localizations” of international norms, customs and precedents entailed political modifications leading to the expansion of these means of securing refugees through additional formulation of the 1967 Protocol.

In the United States, the 1980 Refugee Act brought national immigration policy in conformity with these international conventions. After a period of unilaterally handling asylum and refugee migrations, implementing this legislation remained conflicted and unevenly carried out. On the one hand, by importing the refugee definition of the 1951 Convention as well as the

procedures of status determination, this act offered a potential break with the ad hoc measures of admitting Indochinese refugees through executive determination of parole allocations and admissions (Loescher 1986, 154). On the other hand, this attempt in establishing “humanitarian and nondiscriminatory” terms for admission based on status-screening procedure (not ideology) became delayed. When the act created heightened inducements for further flights (“pull-factor”), the case-by-case realization of the refugee definition was delayed until further dislocations overwhelmed regional detention capacities and federal budgetary limits. The blanketed presumption of status for Indochinese refugees only became reversed practically under Ronald Reagan’s administration (Ibid 190-1). Couched in terms of economic constraints, refugee policy was highly politicized, serving as a tactic within an apparatus of heterogonous means for crafting spheres of liberal peace and influence. Thus legally defining refugees as subjects of special humanitarian concern offered interstate, transnational, and yet border-forming circuits of power and legitimacy between the United States and its principal allies like the Philippines and Thailand.

While general global governance of displacement became stressed<sup>23</sup> by the prolonged crisis, existing legal and administrative immigration system became exhausted for the US, thereby leading to the passing of the Refugee Act of 1980. Refugee flights “grew in size... reach[ing] an average of 1500 people a month by the spring of 1978.... The number of new arrivals kept outpacing... additional resettlement slots offered by the United States and other countries” (Chan 2006, 68). According to established principles, these intractable flights marked a neutral problem for the administration of immediate care and assistance. But read within an apparatus of power, this prolonged emergency embodied a persisting legacy of American Cold War policies and military aggression. Not incidentally, counter-insurgency and anti-communist

battles within a perceived “moral” war, against what presidents from Kennedy to Reagan would deem amoral communists, produced dislocations that received special “humanitarian concern.” As many analysts contend, US refugee policy held an explicit, exclusive bias for granting refugee status to populations pitted against Communism (Anker 6; Keely 2001; Loescher 1986, 85). Before the 1980 refugee act, the so-called “seventh preference” within the US Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 enabled the executive branch of government to admit through parole those refuge-seekers who were symbolically valued as “freedom fighters” (Chan 68). Regardless of past acts of counter-insurgent violence or human rights violation against US “enemies,” these “rescued” subjects figured into an immigration politics that separated, through various legislative priorities, heterogeneous elements while managing a productive population for a liberal market-based society.<sup>24</sup> For the most part, in responding to the lingering effects of its aggressive strategies, the US only gradually departed from its “half-door” refugee policy of remaining vastly more receptive to anti-communist allies and those with existing familial ties.<sup>25</sup> In a sense, American refugee law remained entangled as a tactic of foreign policy.

This double-edged quality of the “gift of freedom” delivered to refuge-seekers became manifest within America’s very means of offering immediate relief and resettlement opportunities availed to its South Vietnamese, nationalist Cambodian, and Hmong allies after the fall of Saigon. Beyond ideological conditionality within US refugee policy and existing laws, the very grounds of refuge were striated with sovereign violence in addition to governmentally articulate power-relations. Refugees inhabited supposedly neutral, humanitarian spaces of camps. Of course these were places not only crafted by multiple agencies and inhabitants themselves (discussed below), but also they were formed within emergency situations. As such, camps were often marked by a regional dynamics, interstate antagonisms, and trans-border negotiations of



power. This indefinite, exceptional, ‘borderline’ character carried mixed effects on refugees as populations (Malkki 1992; Nguyen 2012). What’s more, as witnessed in the conflicted refugee camps of the African Great Lakes region, these spaces often became militarized as additional fields for playing out conflict and violence (Muggah 2006). This dynamic has lead some analysts to problematize the humanitarian ethos of neutrality by positing the need to “critically juxtapose” refugee camps within violent spaces of military strategies and operations (Feldman 2007; Espiritu 2013, forthcoming).<sup>26</sup> On these grounds of selective rescue and risk, persistent relations of force could be read as actualizing a violence of selective identification that national security policy and humanitarian assistance co-articulate within contexts of refuge.

Through indirect influence and formal exchanges of ideas, organizational discourse, and political pressure, the Philippines offered refuge for the displaced. Since numbers of the displaced metastasized,<sup>27</sup> offering an individual account through “case by case” legal assessment of persecution became difficult (Vithit 1992). Without the strictures of verification, undetermined refugees were granted presumptive status. This provided them with at least temporary relief (Ibid, 82-88). But each state maintained its own immigration policy, albeit in a manner structured by variable powers crossing the Pacific. In this regard, the Philippines was most capacious: “the Philippines perceived all asylum-seekers, whether direct arrivals as boat people or people rescued at sea...[as] automatically considered as refugees” (Ibid 82). In contrast many other countries handled uprooted subjects according to national interest and immigration law. Territorial sovereignty was stressed. States like Malaysia and Thailand forced returns with inhuman consequences, as was the case of initial Vietnamese boats returned only to be interred in reeducation camps (Robinson 20). Yet even as other states considered asylum-seekers as simply “illegal immigrants,” as in Thailand’s ‘humane deterrence’ program, one may ask, what

conditions made the Philippine's hospitality and humanitarian possible? Put differently, what terms of sanctuary were set and thus violated a universal law of hospitality underpinning a time-honored right to refuge (Derrida 2001)? According to disparate legislative traditions and humanitarian discourses, refugee rights varied unevenly according to domestic policies and international impingements of power (Vithit 43-54). Indeed, only the Philippines, China and Japan were signatories to the 1951 and 1967 conventions. Yet, aggravating this inhospitable climate, even these signatories had internal limitations concerning the domestic implementation of these refugee laws (83). In other words, although unconditional hospitality remains utopian within given terms of politics, both the violence that refuge-seekers are susceptible to and the violations to such a "radical" universal law serve as a means of problematizing state policies and whatever conditions of reception these present.

### **The Reality of Archipelagos: "World" Relations Beyond the Camp**

An archipelago<sup>28</sup> of displacement handled through the spatial strategy of detention, processing and first-asylum centers was established throughout the region. These centers could not entirely be equated to *the* camp as the universalized biopolitical structure of modern politics. Such an analysis remains politically disempowering and theoretically limiting insofar as it retrenches sovereignty at the decisive heart of politics (Cf. Agamben 1999; Farrier 2011, 9-14). In contrast, most of these camps were formed adaptively without long-term planning and without sufficient coordination. Many camps lacked the kind of sovereign control and juridical structure that Agamben theorizes. For instance, detention centers set up along the Thai-Cambodian border became another militarized theater for much of the remaining civil war to play out among various political contenders after Democratic Kampuchea's defeat by Vietnam. Camps of refuge constituted an uneven geography striated by reversible power-relations,<sup>29</sup> an international balance

of power recharged through successive wars, and instabilities of refugee movement. As mentioned the heterogeneity of population flows did not merely signify that various waves hailed from varied backgrounds. Moreover these characteristics implied discrepant motivations- fear, hunger, uncertainty- subject to analysis of their intent. As subjects in transit who were radically susceptible to threats of sexual, physical, political and economic violence, refugees required spaces of collective provisional refuge that simultaneously sought to define them individually as increased numbers of them stayed in camps as “long-stayers” from the 1980s to the mid-1990’s.<sup>30</sup>

As the sole signatory within the ASEAN region bloc since 1981, the Philippines seemed particularly disposed to establishing these determinant spaces for assisting and defining refugees from Southeast Asia (Robinson 1998, Map 2). Positioned within this regional archipelago of sanctuaries, the Philippines’s three processing and asylum centers provided temporary refuge for those being rescued at sea until voluntary return or resettlement to a third country could become availed. While *bona fide* refugees were taken to Bataan, the process of assessing asylum claims was functionally centered at the Palawan First-Asylum Camp. Status determination thereby decides whether a given subject will be relocated to another site of asylum, repatriated,<sup>31</sup> or resettled. Refugees first of all had the most at stake in this process. However, all countries involved were complexly invested in humanitarian yet legitimately sustainable outcomes.

Representative of varying kinds of investment, mostly American and Filipino staff operated these camps. To even those temporarily visiting the Bataan processing center, what became palpable were international asymmetries from the previous two decades of regional political relations cast onto the camp’s microcosm. Most of the American staff took commanding positions in the internal camp staff and authority hierarchy (Mortland 1987, 389-392).<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, for Filipino and other international volunteers, pride also came with the position

the camp held in the world: “refugees are fortunate to be here rather than in the first asylum camps; they are, as the staff frequently comments, in the ‘show-place’ refugee camp of Southeast Asia” (Ibid. 386). Funding came mostly from the UNHCR, whose primary donors were the US, Japan and several countries from Western Europe. By the same token, some of the stimuli behind opening the camps in 1979 came from US insistence on supporting its “heroic” Indochinese allies. This humanitarianism was ironically expressed while supporting the Marcos regime until popular politics proved this to be untenable.<sup>33</sup>

The Philippines’s camps were assigned specific functions for processing refugees, servicing their transit, and screening each asylum-seeker’s claim. Preparation for third-country resettlement and general orientation of refugees was conducted at the Philippine Refugee Processing Center (PRPC) in Morong, Bataan (Mortland 1987, 380-4; Vithit 1992, 81; UNHCR 1990). This center’s objective was to “process” proven refugees for resettlement. That is to say, not only were they availed residences to inhabit while awaiting specific sponsorship and resettlement elsewhere, but also they were introduced to a formative *habitus* comprised of a panoply of programs- educational, medical, social- that were programmed to orient refugees as subjects and potential citizens in advanced liberal societies (Rose 2006). Coming from non-individualistic cultures that were instead based on more relational, “dividual” (as opposed to possessive individual) kinship systems with relation notions of individualized personhood (e.g., Strathern 1988), refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, etc. were being inserted within an institution seeking to dispose refugees and their vital actions towards forms of conduct advantageous to living in liberal resettlement societies. This institutional context has been analyzed in what has been called a “biopolitical apparatus,” which attempted shaping refugees into governable subjects (Ong 2003, 87-103). From one perspective, the PRPC’s processes of

regarding refugees can productively be considered as trying to realize a mythology of transformation that produces a stable “product”- like a “normally” self-possessed subject rehabilitated from a transitive state.

Yet the liminal reconstructions of personhood and subjectivity attempted there could also be cast in light of the heterogeneous social, political economic, and cultural transformations of “neoliberalization” (Harvey 2005). In this light, the PRPC attempted transforming refugees into *homo economicus* or enterprises made from the constructible matter of human subjectivity (Ong 2003; Foucault 2008).<sup>34</sup> These experimentations in transforming refugees’ subjectivity were attempted during the exact period when US conservatives and its allies were trying to reorganize state-society relations along neoliberal market lines. Emerging from these processes of neoliberal “globalization” and state reconfiguration of governmental capacities, an emergent set of policy prescriptions was coming into being as an apparatus of governmentality along with the admitted “sustainable” refugees.<sup>35</sup> In a sense, the Processing Center’s governmental rationality manifested an emergent strategy of “govern[ing] at a distance... [From a] centre of calculation” that sets into motion those dispositions shaping the conduct of incoming refugees as future citizens (Rose 148).<sup>36</sup> Upon arrival their lives were disposed towards manageable forms of behavior that secured medical risk while enhancing economic vigor. During a period of economic uncertainty, federal budgetary limitations were enacted against funding for, “social services, housing, education, food stamps and public welfare. Policies restricting eligibility and limiting benefits were instituted. The refugee program was not spared” (Loescher 203). Selective inclusion of refugees integrated with larger governmental strategy that would render forms of direct policing and governmental action<sup>37</sup> extraneous, inefficient, and ultimately uneconomical (Foucault 2008). Beyond rationales of geographic proximity, preexisting exchanges of staff and labor, and

ideological propinquity between America and its former colony, an emergent rationality became manifest within the refugee camps in the Philippines. Following this restricting economic ‘logic,’ a prime justification for creating these refugee camps in the Philippines were the economic benefits to both the US and the Philippines:

Much of the rationale for training refugees in the Philippines rather than in the countries of resettlement is economic: the United States, for example, justifies such expenditures by demonstrating that maintaining and training refugees at the PRPC is done at much less expense than would be the case in the United States. The Philippine government supports these arguments with visual displays and pamphlets demonstrating the cost effectiveness of the Center. (Mortland 1987, 384)

This calculation of “cost effectiveness” entered political reasoning at a time when political economics of flexible capital accumulation - e.g., characterized by outsourcing, on-demand production, and spatio-temporal logics of speed and compression (Harvey 1990)- was becoming realized. What’s more, since at least the time of Kant, these commercial underpinnings of free market exchange have been postulated as liberal peace afforded through market liberalization (Paris 2004).<sup>38</sup> The Bataan processing center seemed dedicated to forming subjects who could be self-sufficient, of little burden to the social state, and overall amenable to an emergent milieu within resettlement countries. The PRPC offered a particular environmental technique that could handle all those *bona fide* refugees from conflicted societies of Indochina, where the scene was set for excessive discretionary expenditures and military interventions under the US’s struggling Keynesian state.

Contrasting the Bataan camp’s reconstructions of refugee subjectivity into proper liberal subjects, the Philippine First Asylum Camp (PFAC) in Palawan served as an initial refuge for those reaching its shores as the first encountered country of asylum. Before proceeding to Bataan, this asylum camp worked as the determinant zone for sorting through claims to asylum, refugee status and potential resettlement.<sup>39</sup> Most refugees entering the Philippines had to go through the PFAC prior to participating in those rites of passage shaping them into subjects of liberal democracy. Yet this distinction developed only after the camp was known as the “Vietnamese Refugee Camp” to serve Vietnamese from the evacuation of Saigon (Knudsen 1983; Stewart 2011). Its function shifted towards screening first-asylum cases *both* in the context of neoliberal governmental reform of welfare and resettlement *and after* the transition of presidents in the Philippines (1986). At the same time, a renewed spike of out-flows from

Indochina placed renewed burdens on asylum and resettlement countries, and border-strengthening immigration debates were taking place, leading to legislation in Europe and the US (more below). The situations within various detention centers and refugee camps in Hong Kong and Malaysia had worsened since no end of refugee flows seemed apparent, resettlement sponsorship proceeded at a “geological” pace (Robinson, 211), and the population of “long-stayers” added further pressure on security, popular patience, and budgetary limits. This crisis needed remedy.

### **Rituals of Truth**

What can I become, given the contemporary order of being?... What therefore, am ‘I,’ I who belong to this humanity, perhaps to this piece of it, at this point in time, at this instant of humanity which is subjected to the power of truth in general and truths in particular?

-Foucault (cited in Butler 2007, 30)

Palawan’s first-asylum camp presented a technical setting for organizing a very particular group of human beings and what they may possibly become given the appropriate truths told, legal standards met, and technical procedures satisfied. However, just as Foucault questions, there remain temporal, social, and ultimately political contingences that relay how any asylum-seeker may potentially figure as a fully “humanized” refugee. Through outlining the context of displacements, militarism, and humanitarian calculations tied to strategies of economic neoliberalization and ideological containment, I have attempted to map the charged configuration of historical, legal, and spatial elements that places the refugee screening process as a fundamental transaction of truth. These transactions comport prospective refugees in power relations tying governmental agencies with themselves. Categorizing the screening process as one of many “political rituals of truth” in no way dismisses its epistemic value or its “rationality.” Such a dismissal would deny the immediate and broadly structural benefits and procedural objectives of offering a claimant’s right to life via refugee rights, temporary asylum and resettlement made available against experienced persecution. Yet, by analyzing screening as political rituals of truth, one may consider how determinant standards become adaptively

negotiated immanently within camps. Moreover, the mundane negotiations of screening claimants remain entangled within the political elaboration and governmental enactment of more rigorous standards in evaluating the lives of truly deserving Vietnamese refugees. This politics provokes one to ask, how specifically technical “solutions” or ‘expert’ forms of addressing emergent human problems garner legitimacy and symbolic domination in modernity (Latour 1993)? This question remains pertinent in how professionalized capacity of indentifying and testifying to the persecution of displaced subjects forms an intervening field of knowledge and power. Thus in early 1980’s congressional debates responding to US domestic pressures for limiting refugee migrations, investigations stressed the potential and, “substantial weight [given] to the testimony and professional opinions of Immigration and Naturalization Officers who have direct experience with the Indochinese resettlement program” (Loescher et al, 204). These deliberations, which revalued the implementation of case-by-base screening measures through “Re-interpretation of the Refugee Act of 1980,” coincided with similar negotiations and politics of true persecution taking place in Western Europe. Such has been the case in professionalized discursive field of trauma in French asylum politics. Fassin and d’Halluin contend (2007, 303):

During the last three decades, the loss of legitimacy for refugees in France and the subordination of their recognition to the logics of immigration control have led to a guaranteed “right” of protection by their host country...becoming a charitable “obligation” only dependent on the good will of each state (Simmel 2001). It is in this context, in which suspicion toward asylum seekers increasingly prevails, that the quest for evidence has intensified and posttraumatic sequels have taken on growing importance for demonstrating that violence.

Although negotiated according to the sovereign territorial logic of immigration control, these debates materialize in situated transactions of discursive specification and verification according to a professionalized and therapeutic field of knowledge. Yet these purifying rituals of truth, serving as the basis for bona fide refugee personhood, remain characterized by distortions and



epistemic instabilities, even within Palawan's relatively optimal technical setting as a “‘show-place’ refugee camp of Southeast Asia.”

Prospective refugees become interpreted and subjected to such rituals as interviews framed to ascertain definable criteria of persecution. This interaction is an ethical one insofar as it tries formulating a refugee's truth of identity through relating an individual to herself, an interviewer, and an order of the known, which may potentially marshal supplementary relays of “expert” knowledge and technical analysis. Even as the screening process requires that the claimant account for herself as a distinct individual subject, these actors are formed through a “contemporary order of being” consisting of regional politics, legal case histories, and a camp's social world. Engaging in this complex, at times arcane, and emotionally stressing process only opens halfway the door for prospective refugees to some liberal future.

### *The Risks of Flexibility and Rigor*

A politics of verifying claims manifests itself within the makeup of PFAC organization. Examining presumptive “refugee” conscience and asylum seeker's intentionality was entailed even before a subject's life can be adequately passed through the filters of supposedly regularized criteria drawn from international law. These requirements were included in the professional training required of immigration agency interviewers, and additionally these guidelines received dissemination through publications such as the UNHCR Handbook. Regular consultations by UNHCR staff were also supposed to be a frequent fortification in maintaining regular standards. However, this regionally implemented standardization of screening procedures only came into effect a full decade into this displacement crisis in 1989 (Vithit 48-52). Instead of the UNHCR's consistent direct involvement as actors grounding ideals of transparency and

governmental rationality, agencies from Southeast Asian first-asylum and refugee processing nations, whether or not they were refugee convention signatories, implemented some of these norms practically. At the same time, nevertheless, these guiding ideals were subjugated to national and regional political calculations.<sup>40</sup> As even the case with Thailand's Open Door Policy, generous interpretations of those fleeing were given until 1983 (Stewart 150). Moreover, the region's open state of humanitarian need placed international and nationally based humanitarian organizations in pivotal roles of providing assistance. These organizations often invoked UN human rights instruments, humanitarian documents like Red Cross Statutes, and the Geneva Conventions and Protocols in carry out their assistance and policy advocacy work (Vithit, 37-39). Lastly, from the hermeneutic opening of interpreting refugee status in collective terms, opportunities for expansion and assistance emerged for these voluntary organizations. This proliferation formed what Ong describes as the "Volag" (voluntary organization) Universe (2003, 53). Citing the writer Margaret Drabble, Ong shows how,

The border zone was occupied by two sets of displaced populations, who reflected the larger geopolitical fault lines of the Indochina conflict. Along the Thai border were the 'camps of the displaced Khmers' on one side, and on the other side, the 'camps of the displaced West.' Relief workers, mainly from Western countries, provided food, medicine, clothing, blankets, language instruction, and emigration advice... (52)

In the name of universal humanity and a humanitarian ethic of "compassionate action," many voluntarily 'displaced' aid workers implemented many of the social livelihood and welfare elements of refugee law (e.g., education, work-credit employment systems, housing, and self-sufficiency courses). These programs offering forms of security, although codified legally, were not wed entirely to a sovereign-juridical apparatus. Thus as technologies of both guiding and ensuring refugee livelihoods (cf. Foucault 2003), Volags manifested and enacted a governmental ensemble factoring refuge-seeker's ethical truths within the power-relations traversing the PFAC's space.

What's more, many volunteers elaborated their own interpretations of who was or was not a refugee. A large segment of these volunteers derived from Western countries or transnational church-based organizations (Knudsen 1983, 51). As Eleanor Stewart, volunteering with the UN, expresses in American candor, "Let me say from the outset that I think all the Vietnamese people in that camp were political refugees" (2011, 180). Stewart expresses not merely a state of confusion in the face of arcane refugee law but also a humanitarian impulse, "privileging the 'deep humanity,'" of the Vietnamese boat people, as they manifest, "The suffering victim [who] becomes charismatic as universalized humanity" (Malkki 2007, 339). Her arrival shortly after a May 1982 modification in US refugee policy refashioned the Camp as no longer, *the* Vietnamese Refugee Camp. In light of her aspirant humanitarian universality, she expresses a quaint yet understandable unease with the kind of subjugation of refugee and humanitarian laity to certain forms of exacting knowledge like those desired by the inspection of Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS).<sup>41</sup> As violations to cosmopolitan moral norms such as hospitality (Derrida 2001), the drive for stricter standards developed within a context of increased outflows and strained capacities of accommodation. On the one hand, tensions existing between the politics of security, humanitarian principles of neutrality and the claim-merits of asylum seekers have existed in US refugee and asylum policy, receiving an "orientalizing" renewal particularly after terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 (Akram 2000). On the other hand, looser hermeneutically more open interpretations in some of the countries in this period enabled humanitarian agents to provide both assistance and the intervention of caregivers in the name of 'humanized' cases of Indochinese.<sup>42</sup> In conjunction with mostly bilateral resettlement programs (most prominently, Vietnam's Orderly Departure Program), governmental capaciousness towards mostly Southern Vietnamese boat people allowed for a remarkable

number of qualified refugees to leave for countries of resettlement.<sup>43</sup> This hospitality seemed available at least before a gamut of problems mounted- e.g. increased numbers of “long-stayers,” continued flights of refugees drawn by enticing policy “pulled-in,” and the lack of ‘moral’ alternatives to forced returns (Robinson 179-181).

Since these exigencies figured among policy circles as “circulating paper” problematizations of refugees as malingers, “illegal immigrants,” welfare dependents or “economic immigrants,” the screening process took pride of place in refugee politics in the mid-1980’s. Of course, many other causes factored into this prominence. First, within Vietnam, a number of policy changes, such as bilateral deals with the US and regional countries permitted up to 50,000 reeducation camp detainees to seek asylum (Ibid 196). Second, the Orderly Departure Program’s winding down created an outbound cut-off deadline just as first-asylum countries began creating legislative frameworks for curtailing acceptance at decided dates as well. Thus attempts at finding asylum before these cut-off dates placed stress on first-asylum countries, who already were handling excessive backlogs of claims, including many who filed several separate cases, in which each took at least six months to give due process. Third, adding to this pressure to resettle, the cut-off date “surge” happened when “major Western economies were in recession, the per capita costs of resettlement remained high and... Europe and North America...[saw] an exponential increase in the number of asylum seeker arriving” (Ibid. 179). As Robinson argues, populist sentiments of the need to ‘regain control of the borders’ found political expression in the US Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 and the 1985 Schengen Agreement in Europe.<sup>44</sup> These outflows of refugee flights and international immigration reforms had direct and indirect effects on national and regional policies within Southeast Asia.

Every country participating within the region's archipelago of displacement and refuge was compelled towards greater coordination through talks in 1989 that led to the Comprehensive Action Plan (CAP). While these negotiations came much later than perhaps required, perhaps what was always required were the many wars to resolve- at least for the most part- among Vietnam, Cambodia, China, and Laos. For lack of space, I limit my discussion of the CAP here to what seems most pertinent. The CAP induced added rigor to the screening process, through standardization of questions and criteria, as facilitated through UNHCR engagement and oversight that had been an ideal earlier (Robinson 201). A double movement seemed implied in these standards. At once, they demanded faster processing times, fewer delays, and more satisfactory rates of dependable status determination. Simultaneously, they required greater stringency to stem the flow of refugees. This political fix in more "efficient" screening processes served as a compromise of calculated compassion subjecting refugees and the governmental agencies handling their cases to a rationality, partly economic in nature. These calculations violate if not a humanitarian principle of neutrality than perhaps an unconditional law of hospitality as a time-honored right to refuge (Derrida 2001, 6-8). In a word, refugee policy and its humanitarian rights-based provisions became matters of calculation, economizing, and regulation within processes of screening.

### **Screening Subjects**

Screening refugees thereby came to have a tactical force that both drew on the germane conventions while it was characterized by a political economic analysis, not an entirely humanitarian or ethical regard. Admitting the right or wrong refugee presented many ideological, economic, and biopolitical risks for resettlement countries. Ideologically, as mentioned before, states like the US obviated incorporating what it considered ideological "monsters" (Foucault

2003)- or political abjections like communism as opposed to allied liberal subjects lionized as “freedom fighters.” While this preference became challenged,<sup>45</sup> a politics of admitting asylum based on this bias realized the selective expression of refugee law as a humanitarian means of shaping a purified victim worthy of relief.<sup>46</sup> Although not without controversy, inconsistency, or unnecessary hardship, this Cold War politics of humanitarianism realized a political crucible of screening claimants and first-asylum camp inhabitants for eligibility along antagonistic political lines of “friend” and “enemy” (Schmidt 1976; Mouffe 2005; Agamben 1999).

This agonistic refugee politics played with mixed effects at other sites of screening status and processing refugees. At the same time that Stewart expresses her outrage at shifts in PFAC accommodation, between 1983-1985 from the notorious Khao I Dang camp in Thailand, INS agents, “accepted [50,000] refugees from Cambodia, out of the half million who had fled to the border” (Ong, 58). Although many of the refugees fit the bill as economic immigrants, membership in the Khmer Rouge became the primary identity screened for. “Political opinion” became the primary filter for eligibility due to a similar interpretation of Cambodians in the border camp as the Vietnamese in Palawan: these claimants were initially presumed to be political refugees fleeing persecution by Khmer Rouge or SRV respectively (Ibid). This flexibility of criteria in a political field of forces and polarized antagonisms led to specific exclusions within the supposedly neutral politics of screening later on. As one report from the US Committee for Refugees argued, the screening processes conducted along the border became simply the, “Khmer Rouge Screening Process” (Golub cited in Ong 2003, 58).

Selection of criteria from refugee law operated as a specific focus, targeting salvageable “victims” of persecution within broader political strategies. Complicating this reputed clarity, indeterminacies entered the screening process as destabilizing the reputedly rational

intersubjective interaction of an interview. These included varied camp conditions, past asylum-seekers' interactions with screening agents, and historical "personality" qualities like socio-cultural difference that can shape an asylum-seeker's presentation of oneself. Asylum-seekers in Palawan were not just asked the complicated political question of identity- "who are you?"- But also they had to respond to the questioning of their past identity in another structured account of self (Butler 2005, 30-40). The discursive structures implied in each question and transitory context of querying a subject do not just denote a simple spatial setting and temporal relation. First-asylum camps were often established to, on the one hand, preserve their selves through providing basic sustenance and, on the other hand, preserve "cultures" through managing and recognizing them in a particular framework of self-organization, as the case with work-credit systems that draw on hierarchies existing in societies of origination (Knudsen 46-64).<sup>47</sup> In addition, asylum-seekers were offered arguably "transformative" education opportunities, cultural exchanges, and chances at language training. Beyond these practical facilities of mixing future and past selves in the camp, the screening interview summoned upon the asylum-seeker to appear promptly before an immigration agent as a self-present subject, with a legal will consistent with a verifiable past. Yet, rarely were refugee policies, legal criteria and the screening policies clearly explained to first asylum-seekers even if these structure and normatively organize how the account of their potential persecution and past are received (Ibid. 42; Ong 58). Within the camps, information and relevant knowledge among refugees circulate widely. Yet rumors abound. An epistemic murk pervades such camp 'knowledge' about how to enhance one's likelihoods of meriting positive status. For instance, it became widely reputed that English-speakers had automatically higher priority when interviewing for resettlement in the US (Ong 59). Or for some destinations like Norway, when depicting one's specific family

relation, presenting two similarly aged intimates as siblings instead of spouses may similarly increase chances (Knudsen 42). Neither of these examples of camp knowledge was accurate. Yet claimants worked with whatever social facts and collective representations of refugee policy they could encounter within the asylum camps. The status of this acquired knowledge was as uncertain as claimant's overall status.

Finally, interviews largely comprising the determining process for asylum and refugee status are characterized by interactions couched in terms from legal codes and policy-guided norms. But these supposedly universally applicable norms remain destabilized by the vicissitudes of language, social difference and prior political experience. The norms and means of articulating an account of oneself as, for example, a Sino-Vietnamese refugee have obviously been qualified, in terms of culture, temporality and regular styles of expression, by the preceding experiences of similar spaces and process that made acute demands on subjects. Screening subjects within an asylum camp remains subjectively condition by the tortuous interplay of a subject's "confession" and interrogation as subject detained for political truths within camps for work, reeducation, and the bodily extraction of lethally certain ideological loyalty (Appadurai 2003). Telling the truth of the self was demanded of those subject to Vietnamese reeducation camps. Like certain forms of Christian confession, some reports of the self had to be exhaustive (Foucault 2003). More importantly, telling the truth of oneself had to be repeated again and again, while staying consistent:

One of the things we had to do was write our biography- our studies, our religion, our occupation, our title... As a teacher, for example, I had taught decadent literature, French poetry, that had poisoned the minds of my pupils....We had to repeat this biography each year. *We always had to say the same thing* so it was important to memorize. These were our self-confessions. (Robinson 1998, 196; my emphasis)

This testimony from a South Vietnamese foreign-service officer had to be repeated in an entirely different interlocutory scene- towards grounding a refugee case. For some, telling the truth of



oneself served as a legible testimony corroborating persecution and suffering. For these bona fide refugees, such truthful accounts of the self require reiteration and continual truth-telling in other public contexts, thereby becoming the very basis of resettled identity.<sup>48</sup>

However, for many of those screened for collaborating with monstrous regimes like the Khmer Rouge, their political experiences enter the screening process with mixed effects. In terms of temporality, a screening interview may be affected by something like a ‘traumatic’ limit to what is given in discourse (Edkins 2003). A kind of haunting by the meaning of certain symbols and synecdochal figures of power may disrupt immediately available political resources of representation particularly within another context such as the PFAC. The manner in which the screening for Khmer Rouge was conducted led to thousands becoming “rejected on the unsubstantiated suspicion that they participated in the Khmer Rouge brutality.” For example, a criterion for rejection is working with the regime itself. But what does “participation” mean when considering cases of those, “working involuntarily under the Angkar authorities” (Ong 58)? The political question of how these claimants for refugee status were rejected rested on how their narratives were articulated. A number of factors undermine the relevance of apolitical operations of undistorted communication during screening interviews. First, many screening agents from the INS were reliant on translators (Stewart 182). In addition, the very performative nature of these interviews was characterized frequently by commanding interview styles, which produced specific responses to questioning. Claimant’s linguistic and embodied responses drew negatively from experiences of past political subjectivity and prior interactions with authority figures. Ong details how, “social differences such as the refugee’s body language- smiling even under stress, reporting the deaths for relatives with a dispassionate expression- made them...suspects in the eyes of INS officers” (58). The lack of “cultural and political knowledge

to assess the applicants' stories accurately" added to the 'orientalizing inscrutability' of Indochinese bodily expression for screening subjects. Yet to make matters worse, the tragic impress of the past guided how these survivors conducted themselves before INS agents, whom "based on their experience, they treated... as all-powerful figures to be feared, placated, and humored" (58-59). Finally, these survivors had inculcated survival skills, knowledge and attendant "ethical" forms of self-relation from an intensely violent and antagonistic scene of expressing the self. Unlike a Christian pastoral or Protestant presentation demanding of an individual subject that she speak profusely with detail, an effective tactic of survival under Angkar was simply maintaining, "silence, dissembling, and [giving] fake life stories" (58). While perhaps embodying an extreme "exceptional" case in the screening interviews, these specific experiences of status rejection, according to the legal personhood and social subjectivity of the "refugee," underscore how refugee embodiments and expressive practices of symbolization may register invalidation and loss of relief out of the very experience of prior social lives and political persecution. What becomes proof if only extreme forms of physical violence become articulate instances of "the universal language of human suffering" (Malkki 2007, 338)? Of course, other practices of presenting an accountable self, from a radically different past experience, form determinant conditions of how "one could tell the complex truths about one's situation."

If particular ideologies factor as potential features to be obviated from the political scenes of representation as in the US, then refugee economic dispositions and motivations of economic mobility are not far from the thoughts of policymakers and interviewers. Not only were CAP guidelines and screening standards intended to regulate the flow of migrations (Robinson 198), but also they sought to ease the costs of refugee assistance through resettling fewer refugees. Of these, countries of resettlement were set on selecting *real* refugees who would be self-sufficient

subjects less dependent on welfare (as discussed above). By insisting on *de jure* screening standards, the legal definition of the “refugee” served as a positive tactic for excluding “economic immigrants,” seeking merely to work.<sup>49</sup> Significantly, the 1951 Convention notably excludes economic justifications for establishing a “well-founded fear of persecution.” Without a doubt, the origins of this omission can be traced back to the Refugee Convention’s formative history and legislative implementation, setting the terms of economic exclusion yet exceptional humanitarian reception.<sup>50</sup>

But perhaps one could offer a diverging interpretation of this, “expressed cynicism of the U.S. interviewers” (Stewart 181). Mistrusting refugees by agents of sovereign states may alternatively be read as based on a historical difference within modern liberalism between human “subjects of interest” (*homo economicus*) and “subjects of right.” Foucault suggests considering these two figures as corresponding to contingently situated ethics (self-relations) entailing relations to political power within 18th century liberalism (2007, 275-6). At the PRPC, Khmer refugees fleeing Democratic Kampuchea had been granted certain political and social rights to refuge, education, and physical security based on verified refugee status. As subjects of right they were granted selectively these provisions. But according to “new” governmental programs of neoliberal welfare policy, they became subjected to supplementary governmental programs that had the eventual practical effect of remaking them as entrepreneurial subjects who would cease requiring ‘too much’ governmental input, assistance, or coercion. Ideally, no longer would they hold recourse to assistance guaranteed as welfare rights within refugee laws. As a community, governmentally managed indirectly, refugees in resettlement settings had become empowered individually and collectively through the will to “pursue their own interest... to the utmost... [And] at that point... the interests of others ...will thereby be increased” (275). The

subject of interest pushes individual and social limits as risks taken upon herself, as the refigured refugee subject relates with herself in neoliberal terms of investments in human capital. In contrast, the refugee as subject of right has had his life risked through political persecution based on, “race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.” While these must be determined through technical interactions of screening interviews and eventual juridical proceeding, at least one of these criteria must be precisely satisfied through providing verified truths. Instead of the free circulation of capital, goods, and labor, the refugee as a subject before the law must be placed within specific places- camps, courts, and asylum centers- interpreted and verified according to a more truthful account. As the entrepreneurial subject of interest potentially mingles with the figure of the subject of right, the potential refugee must be carefully analyzed according to measures of screening that exclude economic motivations (interests). And with increased “boat people,” presenting potential budget and assistance burdens according to market-based material standards, it seemed politically urgent that care should be taken when interrogating destitute peasants and property-less former bureaucrats who had ‘simply’ escaped impoverishment through initial Vietnamese collectivization and later partial privatization of state businesses under *Doi Moi* (Robinson 199). Of course, this precise distinction of political from economic grounds for, respectively, persecution or motivation remains its own kind of calculated suspicion, given the specific historical configuration of military intervention, refugee policies, immigration reforms, and economic transformations that appealed to standards for screening subjects.<sup>51</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Since accounting for experiences of violence and suffering endured remains conflicted and painful even in the act of disclosure, limitations to further admissions and resettlement

assistance created a political problem out of the persisting problem of those cast-out from the nation-state by resettlement countries demanding good subjects of freedom. Crafting rescue narratives and their rehabilitated subjects thereby manifested the variable inscription, politicized figuration, and formative violation of universal human subjects of law, states, and governmental powers serving as the instrumental basis for the human subject of international human rights. Palawan's temporally and politically contingent "inhuman" exclusions became "long-stayers" subjected to state and popular suspicion offered in socially constrained yet enabling forms of recognition. These accounts of persecution offered articulate hopes for fleeing persecution, but disclosing the self in relation to often suspicion state agents and other stateless claimants competing for admissions make adequate reception of displaced subjects' narratives and ultimately hospitality highly political events. These contingent relations placed the Palawan First-Asylum Camp at the heart of a genealogy of present "refugee" subjects. And these subjects exceed the limited number of bona fide refugees inhabiting resettlement countries as immigrants and their descendents today. The insufferable persistence of many long-stayers in states of asylum formed bona fide diasporic subjects who could not be repatriated voluntarily until peace was established. In addition they, could not be 'deported' to their "countries of origin" and originary persecution without risking life. Hence, through the politicized process of screening for refugee status, dislocated liminal lives embodied the "infra-reality" of human beings and subjects of fully realized human rights. The limitations and instabilities of status determination simultaneously produced populations like the 2700 Vietnamese "screened-out" seekers of refuge, who have flourished and inhabited quaintly in Palawan, a fringed extremity. This territorially, socially, and environmentally constructed "frontier" of the Philippines embodies its own geography of power, land struggles, and dislocations.



## Chapter Two: Humanitarian Disorientations

Accounts of distinct suffering influence how and where humane sentiments and compassion are drawn to specific locations such as borders camps or urban centers like Tacloban in the wake of Typhoon Yolanda/ Haiyan. For humanitarians, compassion necessitates responses to local exigencies that are seen through limited visibility and assessed according to variably affecting accounts of the suffering self. Yet beyond the presence of emergencies, humanitarian reflection has embodied a historical moral economy of sentiments, pity and action across scales. Modern humanitarianism has been entangled with liberalism's global reach, market conduct, and espoused sensibility (Fassin 2010, 37). As in earlier periods, humanitarians continue to play decisive roles in creating specific places for vitally acting on the suffering of others. These situated relations of compassion thereby produce both humanitarians as well as human beings subject to taxonomic processes of identifying suffering.

After 1978 displaced "Indochinese" populations exhausted the political wherewithal and public patience of both countries of asylum and resettlement. Although initial waves of refugees were offered refuge according to exceptional ad hoc measures, this management of displacement approached becoming the Indochinese "refugee crisis" experienced at a massive scale. This resulted in the 1979, "Indochinese United Nations conference... convened in Geneva to address this broad set of human problems facing not only the immediate region of East Asia, but also most of the West" (Knudsen 1983, 35). Negotiations lead to, "the Philippines government [to] establish the Vietnamese Refugee Camp, with an original handling capacity of 2,000 Vietnamese refugees" (Ibid). Through the crisis's prolonged duration, the camp's initial capacity more than tripled as the mandate of this camp, on Palawan Island, became stressed. Terms of hospitality to

refugees, whom were previously given status *en masse*, changed. With renewed scrutiny of asylum policies, this particular refuge was renamed the “Palawan First-Asylum Camp” according to the immediate aim of offering humanitarian relief before the legal determination of displaced individuals as refugees.

Only by interacting with both a legal regime for refugees (discussed in chapter 1) and a diverse cast of humanitarians could displaced asylum-seekers become classified as “refugees” proper. Thus this “humanitarian” ensemble of governmental processes implied discursive practices supplementing legal adjudication. Relief came on the condition of eliciting particular narrations of the self through status determination processes. These *technical* procedures figured relations of power that binds individual subjects to the truths of a given identity according to a “law” of individual identity (Foucault 1994, 130). Yet, at the same time, this ethical relation of accounting for the self entailed extralegal, governmental exchanges that also formed subjects. In sum, their reflexive narrations were addressed to humanitarian workers as when asylum-seekers encountered on-site education offered by transnational volunteers. Voluntary relief-providers figure pivotally within the humane apparatus of governing subjects through the truths they present about themselves. As the camp English teacher Eleanor Grogg Stewart puts it: “‘Political refugee’ had become the name of the game, and the only way their English could help them was if they could use it fluently enough to convince a delicate” (2011, 184). Even more intensely than in processing centers, these governmental exchanges of compassionate care and narrations of political “persecution” took place in first-asylum camps. Thus the PFAC served as a domain where to manage “deterritorialized” Indochinese who remained incompletely identified, partially subjected to sovereign states, and yet still subject to humanitarian government.



This essay draws from recent anthropological work on humanitarianism to consider the enactment of humane moral sentiments and their potential for disorientations within humanitarian practices. These contingent interventions in the name of precarious humanity manifested disorientations in programs of education offered to distinguished Vietnamese asylum-seekers who lived or still remain in Palawan. By returning to the early 1980's, when terms of refuge and humanitarian responses to asylum-seekers were still being negotiated, I explore the pragmatic influence of specific humanitarian actors- language and cultural orientation teachers- as self-conceived saviors of Vietnamese asylum seekers. Informed by the desire to passionately serve and sacrifice one's own life in order to save Vietnamese "victims," these teachers nevertheless operate within interwoven scales of power, from 1980's US immigration debates to Southeast Asia regional responses to everyday relations among humanitarian subjects. Within the latter field, camp educators offer complex contributions into whether or not Vietnamese asylum-seekers may have resettled as Southeast Asian American subjects offered refugee status. By analyzing the stereotypes, impressions, and expressed feelings of Eleanor Stewart as she recalls her experiences in the Palawan asylum camp, I seek to outline pragmatic processes of how borders are drawn, taxonomies of actors and subjects are constructed, and thus distinct transnational subjects emerge through humane forms of power and practical interactions with voluntary humanitarian actors. Humanitarian interventions guided by the desire to save victims remain tied to cultural assumptions, historical formations and political discourses about how proper refugee subjects ought to act in the specific context of their identification as a refugee, asylum-seeker or "economic immigrant." While extant social scientific accounts have described the transformation and resettlement of bona fide subjects who would become Southeast Asian

American immigrants, little notice has been given to how a community of “screened-out” asylum-seekers came to live and persist near the former asylum camp in Palawan.

### **Voluntary Callings and Compassionate Forms of Domination**

“After I walked past the military guards through the gate... for the first time in 1982, I felt I had reached the end of a psychic journey,” wrote Eleanor Grogg Stewart, United Nations Volunteer (xi). Through the guarded boundaries of the camp, “on the island of Palawan,” she finds comfort at finally arriving at the Vietnamese Refugee Center. She found a place that appeared, “like home... [In] the first hour I was there.” Juxtaposing the guarded nature of the refugee camp with its domestic amenability, the critical entanglements of humanitarian government and military intervention come into view not unlike that enjoyed, from the balcony of Malacanang Palace, by “Helen Taft, wife of the Governor-General of the Philippines William Howard Taft,” during the colonial period of the Philippines (Rafael 2000, 52). Comparing Helen Taft’s comfortable view from the threshold of the colonial home with Stewart’s intimate habitation of a refugee camp, after later intervention in Vietnam, suggests how the space of empire and colonial intervention can become, “available for private consumption and sentimental regard.” Yet Stewart’s arrival in Palawan was also set against a backdrop of violence and displacement. These contradictions of “love and war” suggest how sensibilities and sentimental responses to suffering (once distant and now adjacent) can find habituated, regulated and productive incorporation within political rationalities and affective states (Stoler 2004; Haskell 1995). In Stewart’s memoir *Not Only a Refugee*, her expressed feelings and sentiments of humanitarian love appear as an account of the humanitarian self through re-fashioning an “aesthetics” that allowed, “Taft to feel home while she is away from home.” Although these studies entail historically distinct experiences of the colonial home, Stewart’s later sense of home

in the postcolonial Philippines highlights the ambiguous role of feelings in governing subjects who are differentially mobile, living in structured states of transition to potential freedom.

While the Palawan First Asylum Camp offered immediate relief from passages of exposure at sea, the ironic charms of this camp, for Eleanor Stewart, found expression through a vocabulary of compassion and a concomitant economy of moral sentiment within the asperities of encampment. Stewart's rather optimistic account of the camp inscribes a "compassionate" difference within the "discursive density," formalized documentation, and traceable archive of written accountability that depicts the overall modernist "bureaucracy" and colonial "homage to reason" (Stoler 6) offered by a complex transnational ensemble of humanitarian organizations. In a word, what may find expression in domestic delight at inhabiting the particular space of a refugee camp, built for stateless subjects, is an emphatic sense of a volunteer's "calling" and the fulfillment of a pilgrim-like anticipation for enacting "brotherly love" cast in a secular humanist key.

These historical differences in governmental styles and their distributions of affective "states of mind and sentiment" (Ibid) become apparent through Stewart's bureaucratic pilgrimage. Stewart and other volunteers with the UNHCR had to work through, "a long process, involving many months of paper work," before delivering "compassionate" relief to Vietnamese whom she could be "100% for... since... there wasn't much left for anyone else- not much patience nor much flexibility" (xiv). While her stated desire to compassionately respond to Vietnamese seekers of asylum is indeed admirable, this sentiment harbors potential organizational and epistemological limitations that I read Stewart as trying to overcome. Organizationally, her focused responsiveness to Vietnamese suggests how even her moral action remains conventionally embedded within everyday, administered programming that selectively

regards specific victims of suffering (Haskell 1985; Butler 2006). Yet her care of differently depicted students, clients and colleagues find an alternative vocabulary and descriptive order. On this basis, powers of distinction and affective assessment operate through her conduct, even as her stated care is delivered without, “much patience [or] much flexibility.” In light of this, she retains traces of religious thought and faith-derived moral ideals even within voluntary humanitarian action and subjectivity. Considering Stewart’s practical enactment of care *as a calling* can highlight how she creates meanings, “compassionate” values and, in a word, a sensibility appropriate to disposing herself towards voluntary relations of care. These webs of meaning, sources of legitimacy, and forms of practical understanding together facilitate how Stewart conceives of her identity as a “compassionate” volunteer subject of good conscience or pure humanitarian intentions vis-à-vis receiving clients. Accounting for Stewart’s calling and volunteer identity however remain structured by hierarchies of humanitarian mobility, unequal technical capability, and embedded intimacy of her pragmatic actions within rank-orders of distinction, domination and legitimacy within the context of the asylum camp.

The notion of a “calling” has a deep history yet recurrent value in interpreting how humanitarian agents like Stewart are materially enabled, affectively motivated and symbolically cast within social webs of significance and power. Although Max Weber invokes the idea of a calling in order to develop an interpretation of modernity’s organization of individual conduct in capitalist economy (Weber 2002 [19]), this notion has more expansive significance in considering how politics and rationalizing practices (e.g., science) mobilize “enchanted” religious valuations and ideals concerning work, political organization, and science. On the one hand, much of Weber’s conception of a “calling” derives from its historical derivation in Protestant devotion to secular work of modern capitalism. On the other hand, a

secular calling figures in how political legitimacy, relations of domination, and rational work find basis in the conduct of particular actors of “politics” (Weber 1946). Beyond the limits of Weber’s statist territorial account of politics, I would contend, modern humanitarian relief providers draw on the affective and technical forms of legitimacy and dominance. Doubtless, the positively valued “self-less” quality of Stewart’s voluntary work of teaching maintains an ironic economic and material inequality between herself as an American volunteer for the United Nations and most local Filipinos, Filipino camp workers, and the Vietnamese themselves. Of the United Nations Volunteers, Stewart comments how, “There are hierarchies within hierarchies in a refugee camp. Among the volunteers, the UNVs were at the top even though the 488 dollars a month in 1982 would be peanuts in the U.S., the best-housed and most powerful- in short, an elite” (98). Yet her “calling” to care for her exclusive recipient of care (the Vietnamese), with a self-professed lack of flexibility and patience for anyone else, may be understood better in light of interpreting how dominant political actors regularly maintain stature through securing particularly valued forms of legitimacy based on tradition, charisma, and law. As will be discussed, Stewart’s pedagogic leadership and humane action were maintained less by her legal consciousness and technical abilities within the realm of refugee law and resettlement policy. Rather her comfortable habitation of a humanitarian *habitus* was based on relative political power as a “Westerner” or American, her ‘civilizational’ or racial understanding of Filipino “culture,” and her potentially charismatic embodiment of compassion and the highly valued teaching profession.

By considering volunteers like Stewart as following a political calling, her voluntary work as a humanitarian can be seen as invested with social relations of force or, at least, politically interested even as she professes a “selfless” vision and compassionate enactment of

values. One may consider how humanitarian arguments, organization, and systems of meaning are grounded in the injunction to “emergency” responses to immediate, self-evident suffering (Fassin and Pandolfi 2010, 12). Yet the structured patterns of transnational mediation of visible suffering and hearable “human” vulnerability nevertheless produce particular locations of humanitarian focus and differentially identified susceptibility to suffering as generally witnessed at a distance. Such distances seem practically bridged only through mobilizing a humanitarian “universe” of actors, sentimentally persuasive forms of feeling, principles and technical forms of knowledge. Writing about relief-work in Cambodia, Aihwa Ong similarly notes how a humanitarian universe of discourse materialized interrelated subjects through connected transformative activity:

A constellation of aid agencies- American Refugee Committee, Oxfam, Medecins sans Frontiers, Catholic Charities, and so on- constituted the universe in which Cambodian arrivals were transformed into refugees... refugees were assisted by an international network of relief agencies that began the work of reorganizing their collective survival and their moral sense of who they were to become” (Ong 2003, 52).

This work of transformation through relief networks, however, remains contingent on acquiring refugee status. Although the humanitarian’s universe of discourse proposes some universal moral value granted to human life, the objective of those seeking refuge through attempting to access resettlement in first-asylum camps<sup>52</sup> necessitated translating socio-political experiences into “universal” legal, moral and political terms of refuge. These translations only occurred in the transactional relations and intercultural exchanges of asylum camps as functional sites of power.

“Localizing” humanist values, the human rights of the displaced, and transposable expert intervention according to transnational knowledge-formations arises at the interstices of state control and national delineation. Ong highlights how an operational bridge came about through paired displacements in which,

The border zone was occupied by two sets of displaced populations, who reflected the larger geopolitical fault lines of the Indochina conflict. Along the Thai border were the “camps of the displaced Khmers” on one side, and, on the other side, the “camps of the displaced West.” Relief workers from Western countries provided food medicine, clothing, blankets, language instruction, and emigration advice (52)

While political violence and particular persecutions formed displaced subjects as exceptional objects of therapeutic care and aid within the normal order of state citizenship and membership within “society,” humanitarian discursive practices and on-site responses nevertheless articulate “practical” reorganization of global relief workers, “native” Filipinos as neighbors, and asylum seekers as recipients of compassionate aid. This voluntary organization (VOLAG) universe, on the one hand, posited a humanitarian argument with a universalizing mandate of neutrality in responding to worldly suffering experienced generally in former colonial domains while, on the other hand, rendering “practical” hierarchical orderings among actors of salvation and saved subjects, relief-workers and asylum-seekers, teachers and pupils, internationals and Filipinos, and other relationships among different voluntary relief workers from various organizations.

Inequalities embedded within the possible field of compassionate action extend beyond the differential mobility and hierarchical cosmopolitanisms of these specific subjects. Within the camp, Eleanor Stewart offers an account that marks her work, as well as some of her coworkers’, as affectively distinguished and pedagogically innovate within a backdrop of bureaucracy, local teachers’ incompetence, and camp leaderships lack of responsiveness to needs. Doubtless, Stewart resists extant arrangements and management of the camp, which indeed has to adjust to emergent exigencies. However, the volunteer’s emphasis on wholehearted commitment, realization of compassion, and personal sense of sacrifice for her pupils offers a representation of moral sentiment that contrasts with some of the overlying realities of camp organization. As Stewart claims (3),

‘If you don’t like bureaucracies, you’ll hate the United Nations’... In fact, the UNV belongs to two bureaucracies: the national organization, which handles UN volunteers inside each country... and the UN itself. Even before I left Denver, it became apparent that a volunteer could be chewed up in the double bureaucracy

For her, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, the primary agent in the camp’s management and facilitation of potential refugee admissions, remains chillingly bureaucratic. Its bureaucratic rationality and inflexible logic of assistance fails to respond to emergent needs, and yet, even after herself being subjected to this “double bureaucracy,” she must negotiate a local field of humanitarian action to fulfill a voluntary calling of honorably teaching stateless Vietnamese who are subjects who may be reterritorialized, re-educated, and hence saved. Impersonal governmental handlings of bureaucracy may be a common refrain in the inexhaustible, constant criticism of government and central administrative power that constitutes “liberalism” of various historical forms, from “classical” to neoliberal variants (Foucault 2008). Yet what distinguishes Stewart’s account (and how this account is structured socially) is the manner in which this “cold” governing rationality conflicts with the “more properly” humane values and good works of humanitarian agents like “compassionate volunteers.” The insensitive bureaucrat remains, “obviously easier to criticize,” according to a salient tendency of regarding humanitarian aid providers and their work as sacred and hence morally untouchable to critical analysis and reflexive consideration (Fassin 2010, 37). While the compassionate work of voluntary teachers, clinical therapists, and case workers may now seem just as easily denounced as manifesting “Empire,” disaster capitalism, anachronistic “social welfare states” or the like; further contextualization and historical narration of this humanitarian work, as exercising its own forms of governance and “compassionate domination” (Ong 2003), can increase possibilities for more extensive moral and political reflection on how displaced subjects emerge within transactional relations— whether “victim” or benefactor.



Of course, the specific content of these categories must find legal and social specification through “implicit taxonomic processes” of political clarification, if not purification, and identification through subjects’ own efforts at accounting for themselves as constructed identities (Malkki 1995, 4-7). Not only were these identities formed through the relation of relief worker to “target” recipients of aid, but also volunteers and Vietnamese asylum-seekers themselves articulated their own taxonomies borrowed from their “homelands” as well as those circulating within the context of asylum camps. Stewart’s calling as a passionate voluntary language instructor can be brought into relief by considering how she herself reflects on the categories and kinds of volunteer subjects working in the camp, the manner in which they conduct themselves (and their client populations), and thus the ways she and others claim legitimacy and distinction in their enactment of compassion.

With these in mind, one may consider how invested Stewart is in both helping refugees as well as competing within the field of voluntary actors. She devotes an entire chapter to distinguish volunteer subjects as Benefactors, Careerists, and Passionate Volunteers (89-97). Excluded from this taxonomy are members of the Western Command of the Philippines, as “military men are not volunteers, passionate or otherwise” (89).<sup>53</sup> These complicated figures, which embody sovereign violence, elude the classification of “whether one prefers career people to volunteers depend[ing] on whether you equate careerism with professionalism, that unquestioned term of praise, or with an unwillingness to ‘rock the boat’” (Ibid). With self-apparent clarity, she continues with her own classificatory view on the “VOLAG universe” and places herself within a corresponding taxonomy of compassion, commitment or acquisitiveness:

The term Benefactor is harder to define. It is a word which the Vietnamese knew and used, but one from which I shrank, knowing that the benefactor looks down from above to offer a helping hand. *Passionate volunteer is the closest I can come to coining a phrase which describes the people with whom I worked as colleagues and who lived inside or next to the VRC.* (89; italics added)

That Stewart distinguishes herself from the military, careerists, and even perhaps the Confucian identity of the Benefactor, granted dominance through cultivation, expresses her own desire for autonomy within the camp socio-cultural milieu. What's more, marking this difference, leads her to further defining a volunteer as one:

Who goes to a refugee camp makes a full-time commitment and usually receives money for living expenses. The stated goals of volunteers and career people are the same: the good of the refugees. However, career people can never really be comfortable with volunteers, unless... the smell of a good job with lots of fringe benefits... refocuses the volunteer's behavior wondrously. A sea change may occur after volunteers get into the field and see what kinds of opportunities exist for expatriates. Over here, the talk is about taking care of the needs of refugees. Over there, the talk is of not annoying the local authorities.

Marking one's place and the character of one's conduct as a full-time, single-objective commitment approximates Weber's notion of calling insofar as it enters the discourses and situation of highly mobile humanitarian actors of a postcolonial world order. While refugee camps form through the political organization of actors and subjects enacting varied rationalities- as in Stewart's taxonomy- they may be the grounds for further delineations and spatial orderings according to the divergence of these rationalities. Between the distance of pure responsiveness to the needs of refugees and the desire for stable "humanitarian governance" that does not "annoy local authorities" or inhibit material mobility, Stewart claims a border to exist that the ideal volunteer has to negotiate in order to follow their moral duty. She writes *Passionate Volunteers*, "PVs don't change in [the] way," careerists do, "If anything we become more passionate. That makes us dangerous to careerists. When the career people scold the volunteers, the 'host nationals' read the message... and exploit the situation to their own advantage" (89). Defining certain kinds of volunteers' pure duties, compassionate intentions, and potential friction these may generate thus becomes a powerful task in clarifying what type and whose intervention is the most praiseworthy, effective in terms of humanitarian principles, and "passionate" in

contradistinction with others actions and the governmental rationalities set in place. Thereby expressed on registers of moral sentiments and a liberal claim to an individual voluntary calling within the intimate economy of affective attachment to the camp as home, Stewart attempts to distinguish her interventions in the Palawan First Asylum Camp from others' acting on the actions of others- e.g., pupils, careerists, and "host nationals." Her actions are said to be benevolent, uplifting, and better suited to satisfying their needs- in contrast to bureaucrats and other volunteers.

### **Senses of Place: the Philippines, Filipino "Host Nationals" and Securing Democracy**

As soon as I cleared customs... a dark Filipino man came forward from the milling crowd to carry my things to a UNHCR car. I was groggy enough to think that he was the official representative of UNHCR. Prying him with eager questions, I received, "I don't know, mum," as an answer. Outside the airport door, a girl of about twelve years was selling necklaces of sweet-smelling flowers "Two bucks mum," she said, and when I gave her two dollars, I wondered why she gave me all her flowers and skipped away quickly. I took it as a sign of Filipino hospitality, but found out weeks later that the Filipinos often refer to their pesos as bucks.... We drove through slums worse than any I had seen, in air damp enough to drown in, under a breathing sunset to somewhere in that huge, noisy city

-Eleanor Stewart, p. 4

Engulfed in a milieu entirely different from her home New Mexico, Stewart's misreading of Filipino hospitality and her encounter with the blight and beauty of urban Manila highlights peculiar disorientations that gave her humane interventions a particular force and power within a different yet related political context. Arriving in the Philippines seemed at first like a merely logistical decision for a highly mobile transnational volunteer. Indeed, she seemed responsive only to sheer human need: "Since I was 100% for the Vietnamese, there wasn't much left for anyone else... I hadn't chosen the Philippines only the refugee camp which happened to be there" (xiv). Although she would come to regard it with a postcolonial sentimentality and

domestic regard (as discussed earlier), her being called to a voluntary position of compassionate power exemplified a few dangerous tendencies within global humanitarian operations.

Through the salient grounding of humanitarian intervention's legitimacy in a universal argument and narrative of disaster relief, what seems at first apparent in the borderless reach of humanitarian practices is a logic of immediately responding to emergencies as sudden cascades of violence and consequent human suffering (Pandolfi 2010). These immediate responses find traction within strategically manageable locations that become the focus of attention and spatial basis for distributing aid. Also, what perhaps follows from this humanitarian metaphysics of presence<sup>54</sup> may be the political, cultural, and ahistorical disorientations that humanitarian operations and actors experience. At times, disorientations are rendered "practical" based on a given discursive arrangement composed of "best practice" formalizations of knowledge, therapeutic expertise based on the reputedly universal substrata of bodies and wounds (Ticktin 2011; Malkki 1995), and operational representations of on-the-ground information (e.g., primers, briefings, etc). Insufficient contextual understandings appear to be a frequent problem that reflects a "practical" limitation of critical reflection and nuanced analytic accounts emerging from the pragmatic processes of humanitarian operations (Fassin 2010; Malkki 1996; Fassin and Pandolfi 2011). Yet, the agents of these operations remain and non-neutral participants to ongoing violence since they are exposed to political processes and the fluid relations of social antagonism. Below I consider how compassionate humanitarianism remains interwoven in local fields of social hierarchies and the violence that accompanies to authoritarian politics

Following from these pragmatic shortcomings, humanitarian operations regularly offer targeted responses to often highly entangled problems of statelessness, displacement, trafficking and smuggling, etc. All of these entail defined recipients of care, even as these targeted

identifications must find definition amidst complex social systems and contingent political relations. Indeed, during the early 1980's, the asylum camp where Stewart volunteered was called the Vietnamese Refugee Camp. While she cites this name to refer to the camp as a space allocated solely for hosting "Vietnamese refugees," *prior* to their status determination, what remains open to critical analysis is how relief practices and humanitarian agents themselves made sense of their subjects of care in relation to Filipino "host nationals" and the particular context of the Philippines. When not cast in light of this social context, a targeted program of relief responses can aggravate undefined though related problems like poverty, lack of civil and political liberties, and insufficient rule of law.<sup>55</sup> These humanitarian deficiencies arise out of the "difficult distinctions" that emerge in the legal attempt at identifying who to assist when carrying out a limited mandate in the context of pervasive human need (Feldman 2007). As in the "exceptional and paradigmatic" case of mandated relief offered to Palestinian refugees in Gaza, the very development of a legal "categorization of population for relief purposes" (132) struggles at giving shape to definite recipients of aid based on restrictive terms of "refugee" aid where, "there was almost no one... who was not in need of assistance" (130). Feldman shows how an emergent regime of population categories and subject-identifications left unresolved an effective manner in which to humanely respond to need in the less than definite situation among "native" citizens and "refugees." Simultaneously attempting to adhere both to targeted objectives and moral principles, such as neutrality, within the field of humanitarian practices remains a tall order in the case of Gaza as well as in wider humanitarian interventions (Fassin 2010; Redfield 2010). This is partially so because, as in the case of the first-asylum camp at the Philippines' frontier, the particular "grounds of asylum" structurally present political economic conditions of possibility and unintended entanglements during the delivery of relief to limited recipients.

Through the course of recounting her efforts in providing refugee education as relief, Stewart commits many operative errors based on a kind of involuntary exposure to a sociality and political milieu that precedes and exceeds her work in the camp. Although blame and responsibility does not rest with her individually, she remains subject to her times' excesses, and one must consider her freely given account as situated within the constraints of humanitarian operational culture at that time. But she nevertheless encounters the Philippines as a reputedly "bounded culture," as set of disagreeable Filipino "host nationals," and as a political context dominated by demands for securing democracy. Stewart offers two representations of Filipino culture and Vietnamese culture, in which the latter receives mostly admiration while the former is offered thin description if not relative disapproval. For lack of space, I limit my analysis of these in terms of her depictions of "culture" in so far as a this object of her understanding is thought through in a static manner that figures a loss to thinking through "host national" culture in Palawan relationally or rhizomatically. In one passage, Stewart offers what comes closest to her account of Filipino culture by describing in material terms of consumption and confused desires:

An American must feel the Filipino love-hate. So many aspects of Filipino culture are American. There are American brand names on many household items, which are manufactured in the Philippines by agreement with the company. They look the same, but they aren't. The cigarettes are harsh; the shampoo is like detergent; the baby powder has been said to cause skin problems; the peanut butter is full of sugar; the chocolate tastes wrong. Educated Filipinos know this. They pay the difference for a guarantee that the stuff is actually imported. (72)

Of course, what remains elided in pointing out this ambiguity of Filipino-American consumption is a history of colonization, administrative tutelage, and racialized exchanges of

“culture,” education and patterns of consumption (Rafael 2000; McClintock 1995; Go 2008).

The fact that a socially distinctive class of Filipinos would otherwise choose American goods over their postcolonial imitation underscores how particular interests and a governmentally invested social strata would emerge through both particular localizations of broader capital arrangements as well as cultivations of persisting postcolonial influence. However, these “aspects of Filipino” culture are placed in terms of fetishistic popular and “smart” consumption at a forgotten loss for considering historical relationships that include deeper sources for opposition or interested embrace.

While Stewart emphasizes this ambiguity of US-Philippines relations in terms of material flows, she apprehends the mobility of people and their conceptions of time with similarly limited consideration for historical relations of power. In contrast to Filipino’s consumerist mimicry, Stewart underscores what appears to her as an ironic restriction of US migration:

As much as they flatter us by imitating our culture, I was told by a retired California teacher, Dolores, who planned to immigrate there, that they accept only fifty American immigrants each years [sic]- thousands of visitors and workers, but only 50 permanent residents! Since one has to immigrate officially in order to buy land, this saves their thousands of islands from being “developed” (72)

Since the circulation of fetishized commodities and distinction-generating consumption of these goods reproduce a naturalized and “objective” mode of Filipino flattery and “culture” abstracted from colonial history, it seems outrageous that the Philippines as a sovereign territorial entity would limit the permanent inclusion of Americans within the body politic of the nation.

However, this mimicry of immigration policy perhaps appears less lamentable when considering the reciprocally restrictive immigration policies stipulated within the Philippines Independence Act of 1934, which also known in US congressional history as the “Tydings-McDuffy Law.”

This legislative act, signaling the gradual passage to national sovereignty, also restricted the same number of permanents resident migrants relocating to the United States. At the same time,

this act of democratic liberation justifiably became the subject of nationalist debate in the Philippines' Congress, because it nevertheless maintained the inviolable "property rights of the United States government and of American citizens and corporations," after the attainment of Filipino sovereignty (Gallego 1939, 144; Tydings-McDuffy Act, Section 2b). Nationalist dissatisfaction with sustaining this unequal regime of land and capital possession in the Philippines served as a limit to American immigrants attaining permanent residency and thereby the post-independence right to private property ownership. Similarly, later on a nationalist narrative of Marcos's developmental state, "saving their thousands of islands from being 'developed'" by further foreign national ownership figured as a stake within the reputed development of a "New Society." Without considering these historical entanglements, it remains a small wonder how the passionate volunteer Stewart fails to see the conflicted grounds of asylum in Palawan.

By focusing solely on the Vietnamese as one selectively regarded migrant population, her compassionate care and analytic reflection on humanitarian practices, within the social and political field of action, stop short of understanding, in any complex manner, the highly politicized hospitality of the Marcos regime and the long *duree* of US-Philippines relations. In fact, Stewart refers to "Marcos and his people" merely once either from her ahistorical sensibility, which seems symptomatic of a humanitarian microphysics of presence, or from the "symbolic violence" of euphemizing discontent through speaking, "only indirectly... [Since] No one knew who might be listening" (Stewart 75; Dumont 1995). Yet, indicative of an acute positionality within social and transnational hierarchies of the camp, Stewart initially gained, "an insight into Filipino political problems," through conversing with a woman from a "wealthy family." Not surprisingly, this insight into democratic privations and corruption of Filipino



politics came from an interlocutor whose structured mobility allowed her to live in the US and thereby cultivate distinctive sensibilities. Hailing from the pedigree of the Mendoza family,<sup>56</sup> Stewart's addressee could speak safely from the position of possessing both the lively Badjao Inn and the "land on which the refugee camp was built" (74).<sup>57</sup> Entangled in this period's varied constraints and power relations, Stewart's writing details regulated circulations of people with minimal historical content and hushed political analysis.

### **Temporal Orders**

Marking time is a potent political project insofar as larger cultural systems such as religion and nationalism interpellate subjects in their relations to themselves and others. In addition to Stewart's disorienting gaps in historically narrating the spatial politics offering asylees sites of refuge, she describes how organizations of time deriving from refugee, "host national" and Western conceptions operated dissonantly. These divergent temporalities served as another basis of disciplinary control, postcolonial nationalist conflict, and refugee hope in the transitional space of the camp. Before discussing the liberatory potential and 'abberant' politics of refugee's transitional time, it remains important to understand the specific influences and temporal orderings that shape the asylum camp. Although Stewart found it "hard to believe that Filipinos were oppressed," under the Marcos regime, due to apparent happiness among "islands of smiles," she notes how, "In Puerto Princessa, they distrusted the WESCOM solidiers," who manned the military unit under whose command the PFAC came under (Stewart 75; Knudsen 1983, 46). As considered in Chapter Two, the camp served both as a site for hosting asylees as well as a stake within "counter-insurgency" operations. Stewart recounts an incident in which a drunk WESCOM soldier ran amok shooting local Filipinos and menacing asylees, "before he was gunned down" (Stewart 75). As she recounts, this incompetence appeared in the wake of

counter-insurgent operations- “Some marines had arrived from combat- not against the Communists, but against the Moslems on Mindanao” (Ibid.) It was during this anxious period of WESCOM operations in Mindanao that humanitarian volunteers and asylum seekers refrained from spending their time outside the camp. Instead, they organized themselves spatially and bodily according to the specter of potential violence and the disciplines deemed necessary to manage risk. As in other asylum and refugee camps, militarization of encampments and the organization of functional spaces and bodies inhabiting these served to render hardly distinguishable peace from conflict and sanctuary from violence (Muggah 2006; Vikery 1982). Against demands for the military’s embodiment of disciplined violence, Stewart and other actors in the camp found it hard to assess these signs of authoritarian power. Thus rumors and distrust proliferated. Stewart as a humanitarian volunteer found these threats more senselessly intimidating than comprehensible. This occlusion in seeing the nature of humanitarianism’s concurrence with disciplinary counter-insurgent operations inhibits her understanding of the political implications of their hospitality and humanitarian practices.

As a recollection of the early 1980’s, her depiction of the camp ineluctably retains traces of the juxtaposition of humanitarian relief with militarized disciplinary order. This comingling of rhetorically different objectives but nevertheless related sources of violence and consequent displacement converge in conflicting attempts at organizing the camp’s calendar of holidays, celebrations, and memorial festivals. Although one may underscore how this social calendar offers a particular arrangement of “free time” and carnevalesque abandon within relations of labor and social domination (Adorno 2001; Agamben 2005), marking the camp’s social calendar becomes both an object of cultural commemoration as well as social-political conflict among various agents of the asylum camp. Each of the camp’s particular groups and subjects offered

representations of calendrical time in order to incorporate memories and solidify senses of the past through constructed traditions. Most of the Vietnamese residing in the camp celebrated Tet (or lunar New Year), Two Queens' day celebrating the Truong Sister's resistance, and Buddha's Birthday (59). Yet Christian holidays permitted days off for the entire camp staff. Debates formed around disagreements about how to pluralistically accommodate some of these religious holidays, as they were evaluated as legitimate somewhat differentially within a predominantly Christian milieu that nevertheless was partially managed under secular cosmopolitan auspices of the UN (61).

At the same time, celebrating political days of commemoration inevitably channeled political antagonisms regarding the proper manner of celebrating specific holidays. Although Stewart ends her chapter on a optimistic cosmopolitan note- "There's no Fourth of July on this calendar... as we were not in the US.... I was a member of the world family, temporarily a citizen of the world" (61)- her own account of conflict concerning the camp's calendar highlights her selective care for Vietnamese, her disapproving regard for Filipino host nationals and their "culture," and, in a word, her passionate lack of neutrality. In other words, her depiction of competing calendar visions juxtaposes two cultural groups' losses and privations by selectively "empowering" Vietnamese cultural practices above Filipino shortcomings and their untold grievances- i.e., it was "hard to believe that Filipinos were oppressed." In her description of Filipino national holidays, not only does she offer minimal description of these holidays, in comparison to Vietnamese's respective political commemorations, but also she emphasizes Filipinos' flexibility in "bending the rules," misconduct, and indiscipline. When a meeting among the camp's Volag representatives and Vietnamese committee members are held to decide,

“days of all desired class holidays,” she maintains a critical regard of Filipino’s unwillingness to deliberate on defining what days are camp holidays. She claims,

One of the most difficult C.O. [Cultural Orientation] lessons for us was that our urge to organize was often viewed as an American cultural attribute not regarded with equal fervor by Filipinos. Working in the camp is like walking on foam rubber. The imprint lasts only so long as the foot is in it. The calendar sank into a whirlpool of change which occurred after we UNVs left (58)

Comparing the reputed “American cultural attribute” of definitively organizing time with Filipino’s flexibility elaborations, through a supposedly synchronic or culturally intractable manner, how marking historical dates of political significance was an endeavor that seemed legible as a “cultural” matter while becoming removed from historical relations of power.<sup>58</sup> This depoliticizing tendency of explanation, however, did not figure into her account of how Filipinos conduct themselves on holidays. For Stewart, Filipinos’ celebration of Filipino Independence Day and United Nations Day exemplify their aggressive lack of discipline and personal opportunism. When celebrating the Philippines’ attainment of national sovereignty, Stewart is correctly shocked at the indiscipline of a Filipino camp guard who goes berserk, shooting semi-automatic rifles in the air and ultimately wounding a Vietnamese bystander. This appears characteristic of Filipinos for her. Likewise, disgust at similar sovereign excesses is expressed during the celebration of UN Day. Presumably a day celebrated in the name of global citizenship, a Filipino colonel decides to celebrate his birthday concurrently at the objection and displeasure of Eleanor Stewart (61). This mingling of personal with public dates uncomfortably underscores the entanglement of military sovereignty (personified by the AFP colonel) with humanitarian interventions. Both forces attempt to marking time on the camp’s political calendar. Both incidents remain worthy of criticism, because these expressions of nationalism or internationalism may be conducted in more civil and disciplined manners. Yet the manner through which she attempts explaining these sovereign intrusions by militarized personnel

remains de-historicized and shorn of any explanation concerning WESCOM's particular command of the camp, the potent politics of postcolonial nationalism that Marcos took advantage of,<sup>59</sup> and the Philippines's ambitions to sovereignty within a "global" conjuncture of Cold War international relations among states, global governance via intergovernmental organizations like the UN, and humanitarian interventions by governmental actors of the Volag Universe. Rather than historically and politically considering what becomes marked as significant (i.e., independence from 350 years of colonial domination), Stewart recounts these political holidays in terms of examining the conduct of Filipino subjects. What remains unremarked is how Filipino citizens, teachers and volunteers differ from Filipino soldiers. Yet these latter figures are held in contrast to manageable yet stateless Vietnamese.

In contrast to the excesses of host subjects, Stewart and her UNHCR colleague Bob positively value the reputedly neutral commemoration of Mourning Day, April 30, "the day of the Fall of Saigon" (59). Unlike the violence that becomes the topic for criticism of Filipino displays of nationalism, the organized memorializing of loss, defeat and displacement is realized without violence, disruption, or aberrations in conduct. That the fall of Saigon as capital of the Republic was not universally mourned among Southern Vietnamese matters little in Stewart's account,<sup>60</sup> because what remains important is how this "Fall" has been perceived and marked in time by exile communities. These diasporic groups form around political questions of who figure as subjects of traumatic defeat and humanitarian rescue and what diasporic narratives become constructed. These questions thereby become the basis for exilic culture and diasporic politics when brought to resettlement contexts. But in the space of an asylum camp, these questions very much remain unresolved. Thus, Stewart and her fellow volunteers find their peaceful commemoration all the more distinct and laudatory, because other camps exemplified how this

day, “had the potential for being an explosive moment, as... in Hong Kong in 1982” (59). But in the case of Mourning Day as recounted by Stewart, commemorations in Palawan was a “quiet night.” Stewart describes how, “even inside a refugee camp; [sic] there are political factions.” Thus, camp politics has the potential to reinvigorate the complexities of original violence and political divisions that generated displacements in the first place. However, no ruptures were encountered. Political antagonisms were held in check according to the symbolic organization recalling the defeat of the Republic. As Stewart reiterates an often repeated quality of reputed Vietnamese culture, these divisions remained an, “unspoken issue... and some Vietnamese would say that it should never have been spoken- that it should have been suffered quietly” (58). Conflicts of narrating the nation in stateless exile found consensual commemoration through properly conducted observance of *Vietnamese* loss.

### **Locating Subjects of Refugee Law**

Although humanitarians morally respond to experiences of ‘human’ suffering visited on the “bare” vulnerability of the living body (Ticktin 2011), interventions based on this universal claim must be made within political contexts. Specific locations materialize conflicted bearings of space and time that fall short of lending Stewart’s humanitarian activity “transcendental” coordinates for frictionless intervention. Local contingencies of everyday life in the Philippines and the VRC, in particular, present the basis for responses to *Vietnamese suffering*. As I argued in Chapter One, the latter experience of suffering in Vietnam at the hands of the Vietnamese state had to be expressed by displaced Vietnamese individuals. These articulations translated truths of suffering within local scenes of address in which convincing accounts of violence might have registered into legal discourse as *bona fide* “persecution.” After the international conference in 1989 yielded a schedule for phasing out the Indochina Refugee

Program, asylum-seekers became subject to legal tests of truth: screening processes that produced true “refugee” in contradistinction with other subjectivities. But before these subjectivities were formed from post-1989 structures for giving accounts of the “refugee” self, Stewart details the transitional reassemblage (or emergent technical re-organization) of what would become the Palawan First-Asylum Camp, built from the agencies and practices of the Vietnamese Refugee Camp.

Although the early 1980’s saw fresh ratification of refugee acts in both the US and the Philippines, this legislation found limited national and state implementation. While this growth in human rights norms and international standards for procedural handling displacement appeared to advance, this period only signaled an emergent politics of recognition. By early 1982, the designation of Vietnamese as *prima facie* “refugee” came into question. As a future UN volunteer, Stewart became privy to a US State Department cable that reflected the changing terms of the time: “all Vietnamese were in the refugee category” (179), albeit with different levels of priority assessed according to different levels of alliance with the US and US-backed government of the Republic of Vietnam. However, since flights of refugees continued seemingly without end, both Western countries and Southeast Asian states came to insist on only admitting ‘true’ refugees. Before fully utilizing the statutory definition of the international “refugee,” Southeast Asian states implemented (as well as threatened using) “push back” policies and policing practices of “human” deterrence (Davies 154-5). Towards the ends of border security, governments such as that of Thailand invoked similar measures undertaken to curb “illegal immigrants” as the US had done with Central American migrants (Robinson 1995). Of course, these policies and territorial practices were contested by the UNHCR and resettlement states. Thus, based on overall increasing demands expressed by these actions and additional

requirements for increasing allocations of both funding of asylum administration and admissions for resettlement, a new consensus formed around international arguments for distinguishing legal refugees from economic and illegal immigrants.

Stewart may thereby be said to describe this liminal period. She learned, “a few weeks before I left Denver that the new policy would take effect the same month,” she arrived in May 1982. She would arrive to her new “home” of the VRC only to learn, through everyday processes and anxieties among its Vietnamese residents, that:

Most of my Vietnamese friends- English teachers in the camp, former students from universities, young men who refused to serve in the Communist army of occupation in Kampuchea, even minors with relatives in the U.S. were not going to be able to come here because they were not the right kind of refugee- ‘not much of a refugee’ as Tran Cong Trung put it (179).

As her memoir’s title suggests, she offers an account of this transition when the terms of refuge were in flux. This is a transitive state of contestation, resistance, and persistence in spite of increasing asperities and procedural rigors. Against an increasingly formalized mistrust and international desire to identify true refugees, she offers a *personal* recollection based on her social affinities with Vietnamese friends, through which she expresses her disagreement with refugee “resettlement policy.” Davies details how nationalist states of Southeast Asia came to argue for only admitting internationally defined “refugees” as formalized in the conventional refugee law. These states, except for the Philippines, and the region as a whole refused to accede to international refugee conventions since they previously considered this legality Eurocentric, if not neocolonial (Davies 2008). But Southeast Asian states of asylum eventually began invoking this legal regime of truth because it facilitated the regulation of further flights of displaced populations through limited subjectifications of credible refugees. Davies recounts how this argument gradually became shared with developed states of resettlement to stem the tide of illegal migration through identifying legitimate claims to refuge. Hence *legal* requirements based



on domesticating international refugee law placed asylum-seekers within spaces of identification as opposed to “zones of indistinction” (Agamben 1995). At the mundane level of the VRC, Stewart recounts this shifting tide through personal affinities and compassionate accounts of her friends and herself.

While many stories of political violence are documented in Stewart’s memoir, what she also recollects in her compassionate archive of student’s writing, personal “field-notes,” and situated observations of the camp’s politics of truth is her own emotion-laden, sensible account of presentable experiences of dislocation within the translocal site of the camp (Rafael 1995). Analyzing the VRC as a translocality links humanitarian subjects to both transnational networks of action and the emergent legal discourses that set terms of refuge. Stewart’s humanitarian sensibility resists (as she is enabled by) these translocal forces. As suggested earlier, her compassionate regard not only had precedents in the affective management and intimate aesthetics of colonial government, but also her discourse of compassion attempts selectively marking herself and her Vietnamese friends with a personal difference against the calculative inscription of bureaucratic documentary writing.<sup>61</sup> From her position as a teacher of prospective refugees, Stewart expresses contradicting emotions generated by the conflict between her sentimental objectives and the camp’s overall aims of merely offering first-asylum: “I remember standing ... saying, ‘Nat, I want to teach them American slang and tell them about life here. Now, I won’t be able to do it. It’ll be so painful to explain it to them. How will they feel? There’ll be problems... when people learn that they can’t be resettled. I don’t know whether I can handle it” (179-180). The anticipated pain of rejection and “misrecognition” for Vietnamese who were “not much of a refugee” find invested recollection through her inhabitation of compassionate commonality. A form of emotive equality grows from sharing the nervous states

of humanitarian disorientation (Pandolfi 2011). In her memoir, both Stewart and asylum-seekers appear almost equally subject to emergent international standards and the truth-tests of status determination. That she states, “From the outset that I think all the Vietnamese people in that camp were political refugees” (180), matters far less than how these procedures place both asylum-seekers and Stewart as humanitarian subjects before refugee law. This acute technical disorientation appears doubly felt.

These affective ties among humanitarian subjects arise according to historical affinities formed and refigured when confronting these determinate procedures. The dominant discourse of “credibility assessments” is distinct from Stewart’s humanitarian education (Sandvick 2009, 225). Stewart, as agent of transnational compassion, must read a practically enfolding legality and attempt assisting her pupils to learn the language of refugee law or, as she teleological puts it, “refugee resettlement policy.” In other words, she assists them translate their experiences and “truths of persecution” into articulate accounts for US immigration officers to assess. Yet she must remain circumspect in her professional role as a teacher (181). On the one hand, her students appreciated almost therapeutic relief while learning another language to course a future path beyond past violence and tribulations: “classes and discussions took their thoughts away from the obsession with Resettlement” (181). On the other hand, the capitalized end for asylum-seekers was to be accepted for resettlement. Thus a principle means towards acceptance was building upon one’s capacities within the extralegal field of English-language learning. Her students had different language abilities that historically drew from multiple affinities of the individual past ranging from cultural predilections to France (Stewart 185), military ties with the US or the Army of the RVN, religious experiences of persecution (discussed in Chapter 3), economic position within Vietnam, and filial relations living in

resettlement states. These factor as historical “affinities” that enter the everyday social life of the camp that Stewart observes. Thus these historical bearings appear to offer the immediately observed and appreciated documentary matter for Stewart’s depiction of her pupil’s efforts towards fulfilling resettlement objectives- their “obsession” with becoming a refugee.

With this in mind, the particularities of asylum-seeker’s history acquired further specification during interviews, because evidence of the above affinities contribute to how refugee status-claimants were assessed according to humanitarian admission priority and “resettlement viability” (180-1). The distinction of the Stewart’s pedagogic field of examination from the legal field of status determination offers differentiating milieu for forming “identities,” claiming refugee status, and casting affective lines of political alliance. In other words, social affinities in the presence of the camp were produced through education and cultural orientation programs even before entering the technical exchanges of credibility assessments. As Weber and Bourdieu outline, “affinities” form through structured sets of cultural meaning and recursively mediated relations of communication, social exchange, and observable interaction among complementary actors. Affinities prescribe mundane practices in a meaningful, symbolically ordered, and deeply felt manners. Different affinities exist- such as those formed through work, education, religious institutions, aesthetic performances- that bring together social actors in specialized, differential fields of possibility and “thinkable” action.

Stewart’s account of shared disorientations among educators and asylum-seekers exemplifies a practical affinity before the law. Encountering the confusion, discomfort and anxiety in “communion” between teacher and pupil (Bourdieu 1998, 100) thereby embodies taxonomic and symbolic differences from intergovernmental representatives such as those of the UNHCR and, most significantly, immigration interviewers like those from the American

Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS). This dispositional heterogeneity evinces itself through the perceived suspicion of INS cynicism that is contrasted with Stewart's full support and her Vietnamese students' faithful devotion:

Delegates from Manila put in their days sitting at tables in the Resettlement area of the VRC, determining people's future lives, then discoed the night away... It was fairly common for delegates who faced refugees with solemn faces and exaggerated politeness during the day, calling them Mr' or 'Miss' followed by their given name, to laughter over drinks at night about these same people- describing how they'd outwitted some desperate person who was trying to 'take advantage' of them. They didn't see the offerings of fruit and flowers before the statue of Quan the Am in the pagoda garden, or how people prayed fervently in the Catholic grotto to the Virgin Mary that they would e lucky and would be able to answer the questions right. (182)

From her distinct view, Stewart proffers a panoramic perspective of the field of legal tactics and the field of poignant ritual prostrations amidst the seemingly arbitrary determinations of temporal fates. To some extent, her observations merit validity in the inscrutable kinds of standards and guidelines for the meting out of judgments during this liminal period of implementing the US Refugee Act of 1980. Indeed, discrepancies and lapses in accountability surely were the case in handling claims to refugee status (Davies 2007; Hoi 2005). Yet extralegal forms of disclosing more truthful testimony to suffering and authenticity- if not verifiable "persecution"- constitute other reasons and moral forms of practical action. Following this distinct humanitarian sensibility Stewart offers her student's writing, drawn from her field of pedagogic action, as "proof" that, for her, supplants INS interviews withheld from the view of camp inhabitants. For example, she tries assessing the credibility of their accounts first by recommending particular students' cases for review on the basis of their rhetorical merits using the English language. Second she offers a truer, more "revelatory" account by republishing her own students' writing in her memoir. In short, *Not Only a Refugee* tries presenting a compassionate corrective to perceived "injustices" of international humanitarian "bureaucracy." Her more humane narrative treatment remains iteratively couched in terms inculcated by liberal criticism of the state and, more concretely, the asylum-camp's state of suspicion and mistrust.

The compassionate construction of “refugeeness” through humanitarian relief remains distinct from the detailed technicality of legal discourse. Stewart’s observation and documentation of Vietnamese asylum-seeker’s subjection to a developing international refugee legal regime traces the emergence of legal consciousness. Concrete implementation of legal discourse concerning asylum policy, resettlement, and refugee status entails processes not limited to structured interviews and the legislative adoption of universal individual refugee rights. Rather, as Merry has shown (2003), legal discourse must be disseminated, translated, and set into conscious enactment among mediating practitioners and the very subjects of refugee law. These processes of adoption, translation, implementation and enforcement depend on mundane yet individually specific inculcations of consciousness within cultural fields of action:

Adoption of rights depends on *individual* experiences in the social world has significance for a range of rights-based social movements from pay equity and mental health rights to human rights. Such adoptions depend not only on educating people about the availability of rights, but also putting into place practices within legal systems that will reinforce the experience of these rights... At the heart of the legal process of monitoring this international human rights convention is the cultural work (943)

Hence the difference formed between Stewart’s reflexively described compassionate humanitarianism and the seeming injustices of “resettlement policy” even before the decision of claimants’ cases. As a engaged depiction of the pleasures and anxieties of articulating the truly persecuted self, Stewart’s *Not Only a Refugee* may thus find easier inclusion within discourses of “refugeeness” that predominantly describe “refugee” subjectivity in its aesthetic, biopolitical, psychological and symbolic construction (Malkki 1995, 1992; Nguyen 2013). This descriptive tendency in the literature touches upon the governmental comingling between sovereign

discourse of legal rights and the government of passionate humanitarian responses to human conditions of precarity, vitality and vulnerability to injury, which may be remedied through technical therapeutic intervention. In Stewart's recollection of the Vietnamese Refugee Camp's practical affinities and passionate attachments, what humanitarian disorientation points to is the further need for detailed inquiry into the cultural practices of everyday translation and dissemination of legal consciousness.

### **Disorientations**

Humanitarian practices through which displacements become governmentally managed, through the conduct of distinguished subjects, entail new relations among deliverers of depoliticized care, client subjects, and host nationals. How the host subjects- with their politics, history, and forms of antagonism- figure in this humanitarian ensemble remains a question posed to displaced asylum seekers and humanitarian subjects-. Stewart seems no exception, and her account offers particular evaluations of distinct national values, patriotic celebrations and orders of conduct during holidays. These days of remembrance and celebration mark particular communities and polities in historical time. While lines of conflict become apparent in Stewart's positive evaluation of Vietnamese loss against those of deficient Filipinos, an insidious subjection remains present in her appraisal of Vietnamese pupils and their exilic practices of marking time and articulating history.

The Palawan first asylum camp responded to Vietnamese asylees who lived the disorientation of uncertain passage to liberal freedom or prolonged asylum in the Philippines. Mimi Nguyen argues this passage entails capacity-building operations and governmental interventions concerning subjects who become disciplined according to both a *general* biological-psychological condition and a temporality of transitions to liberal freedom (2013, 72-

75). The “gift of freedom” arrives through this biopolitical transition that is shaped by imperial programming for democratic uplift. Humanitarian work must apparently bring the “benighted other” into relief within a teleological emplotment of liberation, a linear historicity of militarized intervention leading to humanitarian operations, and thus a hegemonic story of liberal rescue from reputed cultural anachronism and democratic deficiency. Yet at the technical level of individual experiences of persecution, the political contents of “persecutions” must find narration and attribution to verified enemies (“Communists”) while affecting the empathetic ears of immigration agents. Far from being guaranteed safe resettlement and recuperation through transparent determination of legal status,<sup>62</sup> unsettled asylees experience a state of disorientation that incidentally is shared by some of the very humanitarian actors who acted upon them. asylum-seeker’s solicited political narration of personal and national histories (Malkki 1995). While working upon selectively “humanized” refugees, humanitarian teachers attempt to order benighted others through language, cultural orientation programs,<sup>63</sup> and immigration interviews that figure mostly iterative accounts of the self.

As argued in this essay, narratives of the individuated self, the nation, and the community in exile were presented to particular addressees: humanitarians. These voluntary subjects experienced their own disorientation within the milieu of the “host nation,” the camp and its organizations of space and time. Although representatives of the emerging post-war “Volag Universe” experienced their own “displacement,” they exercised their own freedom and power on the basis of what some may consider naïve idealism.<sup>64</sup> Yet for many volunteers, like Eleanor Stewart, moral sentiments were crucial in conceiving their humane efforts and secular labors as fulfilling passionate callings to care, serve and expose oneself to benighted others and their transitional asylum. By highlighting humanitarians’ passionate affects, good intentions and moral

sensibilities, what find cover are their own disorientations as well as their stakes in local struggles for legitimacy and social distinction. That is to say, while placing emphasis on their elected adjacency and proximity with the other, voluntary humanitarians such as Eleanor Stewart exercised their own forms of compassionate domination in the name of promoting Vietnamese freedom, against the indeterminacy and lack of autonomy in the camp. A peculiar form of helpless pathos and dehistoricizing identification are apparent in recollecting Stewart's situation of asylum-seekers' entrapment and care at the hands of impersonal administrative organizations:

I was more identified with the refugees than ever, since I could not control my fate any more than they could, or rather I had to control it in the same way- by playing up to the person in power, by smiles and Judas kisses, by hiding my real feelings... [The UNHCR staff] couldn't have found a better way to ally me with their helplessness, to make me prefer life behind their fence (109)

This dramatized "equality" of humanitarians sharing the same spatial and temporal situation of "powerless" victims (Fassin 2011) underscores ambiguities concerning the terms if not injurious nature of the gift, the dominations that practically facilitate humanitarian relief, and the proliferation of cynical distrust among workers color their relationships with those seeking refuge from sovereign violence and forced displacement.



## Chapter Three

### Pastoral Hospitality: Cosmopolitan Channels of Care for Vietnamese in the Philippines

What is it to govern a ship? It involves, of course, being responsible for the sailors, but also taking care of the vessel and the cargo... government of a ship is the practice of establishing relations between the sailors, the vessel... the cargo, *which must be brought to port*, and their relations with all those eventualities like winds, reefs, storms

-Foucault 2007, 98 (italics added)

In December 1978, the Panamanian cargo ship *Tung An* sailed into Manila Bay and, “dropped anchor... carrying 65 tons of fish meal, 40 tons of raw rubber, and 2,300 Vietnamese asylum-seekers” (Robinson 1998, 30). According to a foreign correspondent based in Manila, port authorities prohibited every thing and everyone on board from being unloaded due to concerns over security and the risks of admitting unwanted and un-facilitated seekers of asylum from Indochina.<sup>65</sup> Thus the Vietnamese languished in the boat for several weeks until early 1979. As the story goes, “sometime in January... President Marcos paid a birthday visit to Cardinal Jaime Sin. Asked what he wanted as a gift, Cardinal Sin reportedly replied, ‘I am sure the people out there in the harbour would like a bath’” (31). From this humble request for a gift, Ferdinand Marcos conceded to Cardinal Sin’s wish. Without a doubt, specific conditions were attached to this gift, since all gifts have their obligations, reciprocities and social means of delivery (Mauss 1990 [1950]).<sup>66</sup> But this story also captures the religious limits of pure secular sovereignty- even those excesses of Marcos- through the complex performance of pastoral care and opposition within the given politics of the Philippines. The Catholic Church in the Philippines under the Marcos regime and through subsequent governments embodied the historical emergence of an increasingly resistant government of souls premised on alternative organizations of people, worldly material realities, and moral visions of society. To stress this hesitantly arising alternative, from the early 1980s through to the period of relative democratization (including the

present), highlights the complexity of the Church's role and internal divisions in relation to the Philippines state under Marcos. Shortly after the "People Power" revolution, Carl Lande notes that, "it was only slowly, and with some hesitation, that the hierarchy of the Church, Council of Bishops and then Manila's Jaime Cardinal Sin, became at first cautious, and then increasingly outspoken, critics of the Marcos government" (1986, 119). Indicative of the Church's prudence before the assassination of Benigno Aquino Jr. in August 1983, Cardinal Sin's private appeal for temporary relief to the Vietnamese on board the *Tung An* offers a privileged instance of enacting partial care for stateless Vietnamese behind the public appearance of Marcos's "New Society". What's more, Cardinal Sin's gift manifests a careful tact in influencing the Marcos government towards sustaining the Vietnamese boat people in addition to its other social justice principles. While the historical course of opposition would find one of its central voices in "its premier cardinal and through lower members of the clergy" (Ibid 121), a pragmatic strategy of critical collaboration with the Filipino state would continue through to the administrations of Cory Aquino and Fidel Ramos. Yet when the question of how to sustain assistance to "long-staying" asylum-seekers when the Indochinese refugee resettlement program was set to close in June 1996, the Church provided a pastoral answer to a question posed almost entirely by international and regional system of states of asylum and resettlement.

As the closure of the Comprehensive Plan for Action was set for June 25, 1996, the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, its affiliated charitable organizations, and groups of diasporic Vietnamese refugees organized to oppose forced repatriation of "screened-out" Vietnamese asylum seekers. Now under the presidency of Fidel Ramos, international pressure increased for repatriating those whom had not been given refugee status according to the politics of screening for bonafide legal subjects (discussed in Chapter 1). President Ramos

was permitted by the UNHCR and international community to the use the Philippines' military to force repatriations against asylum-seekers' will, as other Southeast Asian countries of asylum had pursued (Davies 2007; Freeman and Nguyen 2003, 17). On February 12, 1996, the Catholic Bishops Conference (CBCP), represented by Bishop Ramon C Arguelles, Chair of the Episcopal Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants, caught word of the AFP's Western Command's plans. As Military and Pastoral Bishop, Arguelles sought to obviate any violence, which Ramos assured the Bishops would not be the case. Nevertheless, forced repatriation was executed on Valentines Day of 1996. In a scene reminiscent of the defiant barrier of nonviolent People Power mobilized against Marcos-loyal forces, "the refugees formed a circle with men in the center and women and children on the outside, thinking the military would not use force against the outer ring" (Evangelista and Evangelista 2007, 74). Though this strategy failed, national and international outcry at the forcible treatment grew when the incident was, "seen all over the Philippines with the evening news" (75).

Deep dissatisfaction with Ramos's handling of repatriation supported the Church's efforts at negotiating an alternative to repatriation crafted in the best interests of the "screened-out" Vietnamese. Intense advocacy by the Church resulted in a compromise. On July 17, 1996, the Philippine government signed with the CBCP a Memorandum of Understanding that allowed for up to 2000 Vietnamese asylum seekers to indefinitely remain in the Philippines, without threat of forced repatriation, and another 710 to return voluntarily to Vietnam. These events reached a global audience including diasporic Vietnamese Americans, who eventually raised \$1.3 million to fund transitional services and a new camp managed no longer managed by the UNHCR but rather constructed by the Catholic Church. Thus Palawan's Vietnamese Village would be built based on transnational charity and, pivotally, the engagement of the Church in "matters of state."

Through the critical collaboration and political negotiation between the CBCP and the Ramos government, a singular offer of local resettlement- unique within Southeast Asia- was offered to almost 2500 Vietnamese.<sup>2</sup>

These instances of religious power in the Philippines bring into relief a common project of Catholic hospitality and the pastoral care of others. At first, against the heavy-handed repression and legal domination of Martial Law, the CBCP lent crucial organizational power in articulating political criticisms of human rights abuses. Yet again, against the strictures of even international refugee law domesticated within the laws of the subsequently democratizing Philippines, pastoral power of Church offered alternative politics and supplementary practices of humanitarian government addressing salient social problems. Such latent alternatives appear as religiosity's potential that exceeds formal institutionalization that to some extent sustains a liberal distinction between the secular and the religious (Friend 2007; Asad 1993). Beyond this strict separation entailing a liberal politics of tolerance, pastoral power offers hidden transcripts of resistance that may eventually find expression against authoritarian repression or just elite-dominated liberal politics. The latent organization of hospitality offered one such transcript whose reading and enactment stymied forced repatriation of "screened-out" Vietnamese asylum seekers as advised by international humanitarian organizations and attempted by Southeast Asian states.

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<sup>2</sup> Numbers vary for the exact count of locally settled Vietnamese in the Philippines from 2500 (Robinson, 231), to 1939 (Freeman and Nguyen, 16) to 2355 "screened-out" Vietnamese asylum-seekers in the Palawan First-Asylum Camp prior to its closure (Forum and Gaité 1996, 7).

In what follows, I hope to consider how exceptional relief emerged recently through contrapuntal histories of collaboration and resistance. Rich cultural discourses of caring pastoral power and social practices of providing sanctuary from harm developed through colonial channels between the Spanish Philippines and French Indochina and historically vexed passages of postcolonial freedom that sought to crystallize diverse, overlapping forms of government into an emerging international order of “sovereign” states. I argue that multiple practices of government factored as alternatives along the mobile terrain of negotiating with and against the territorial control of state sovereignty. A mostly Catholic cosmopolitan politics of hospitality in the post-Marcos Philippines facilitated Vietnamese asylum-seeker’s singular accommodation within an international order of states that sought to legally delimit further resettlement. Yet this hospitality was not only conditioned by colonial and post-colonial collaborations with post-Independence Cold War governments, but also this hospitality mobilized a pastoral politics that offered sanctuary based on specific conditions of “self-sufficient” conduct and reciprocal gratitude. While the Philippines’ gift of local settlement highlights a particular generosity and resistance to multilateral demands for repatriation of “screened-out” Vietnamese, this refuge became experienced as juridical “statelessness” because the very regime of truth addressing refugees, humanitarian management, and obligatory orderings of conduct exceeded and preceded the historical politics of the Philippines state and its official place in the extant international system of nation-states.

### **Passages from Sovereignty to Pastoral Hospitality**

Before, I’d thought of a refugee as someone who is seeking shelter, but after working with the Central Americans, I became aware that it’s a legal status. [Unlike Salvadorans and Guatemalans,] the Vietnamese and Laotians that we worked with were people that had been processed, and who had a stamp of approval from the U.S. government

-Patty Sherwood, “Sanctuary” Movement worker (Coutin 1993, 25)

The power of secular law and legal discourses of immigration, including those of asylum-seekers and refugees' rights, may be theoretically interrogated in terms of both the instrumental basis and normative orientation of refugee law. Patty Sherwood, the Tucson-based activist from the Sanctuary Movement, witnesses the powerful centrality of state interpretations of legal discourse. This centripetal tendency follows from the enshrinement of the principle of sovereignty within liberal discourses rights and contract as she and others in the Sanctuary movement eventually witnessed when they sought to assist Central American refugees, who were simply considered "illegal immigrants" according to the Reagan administration's reading of the law. Indeed, there exists an antagonism between the popular identification of the refugee and the state determination of bonafide refugees (as extensively considered in Chapter One). For now, one may not only recall Arendt's skepticism concerning the paradoxical dependency of human rights on state implementation (1966, 267-273). Furthermore, beyond this critique of state instrumentality, genealogical consideration can be cast on the limits practically materialized through discourses of sovereignty. Following Michel Foucault's histories of governmentality (2007, 87-121), one may attempt thinking outside the conceptual models and dominant statements concerning "the state." For Foucault, the figure of the prince factored within a historical period of increased reflection on the singular practice and circular thought of states as a unified "art of government" characterized by a sovereign and his relation to his subject and territory- altogether his principality (92). Thus, "sovereignty" only came to serve as the basis for thinking about power in salient terms among states and between individual subjects of laws and states.<sup>67</sup> There are consequences for thinking about refugees and hospitality based on the principle of sovereignty.

One may reflect on the circular, self-referential discourses on state sovereignty and liberal rights as a prevalent manner of reasoning that limits both the cultural and political possibilities of conceivable resistance and negotiating alternatives. Consider how nearly every authoritarian regime in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century has maintained the formal appearance and reputed function of juridical processes upholding the rule of law, legal systems and courts of adjudication in order to find an alternate means for social control, local and international legitimacy, and *sovereign* power over justice behind inaccessible elite courts (Moustafa and Ginsburg 2008). In this regard, one finds in Ferdinand Marcos the sovereign par excellence whose regime exercised, at every step of his reign, juridical maneuvers to ensure “constitutional” legitimacy through manipulating legal codes and reassuring the Filipino public that “the judiciary shall continue to function in accordance with its present organization and personnel” in the Supreme Court. Martial Law embodied the legalistic means for Marcos, a fabled lawyer and guarantor of social order, to work out a state-centered framework of “constitutional authoritarianism” (Del Carmen 1973 cited in Moustafa, 6). By thinking in non-sovereign terms about refugees and consequent humanitarian responses, one can work beyond what Aleinikoff (1995) calls “state-centric refugee law,” because this discourse arose, on the one hand, to facilitate individual flight from persecution while, on the other hand, to provide the legal basis for controlling massive inward and outward flows of refugees.

The secular principle of state sovereignty has excessive bearings in finding legal solutions to the problem of “aberrant” displacement outside the order of states (Ibid; Malkki 1992). Embodying the circularity of “sovereignty” discourses and sovereignty’s delimitation through individual rights, mistaken virtue is imputed to states’ formal arbitration of legitimate membership (through controlling naturalization) as well as territorial control of both ultimate

delivery of refuge (as in resettlement) or ultimate regulation of outflows at the source (as in repatriation programs). This discourse of sovereignty and its consequentially state-centered responses through refugee law thus frame problems of statelessness and selective refugee relief according to other technical questions. These questions shifted as the Indochinese refugee crisis persisted. At first, questions reflected the “exilic bias” of resettlement states’ offered solutions: how to assimilate refugees within Euro-American societies? Doubtless, this query offered some progress when contrasted to the formation of the international refugee legal regime. Yet eventually, with the apparently ceaseless exodus of forced displacement from Southeast Asia and more generally the “Global South,” states of resettlement (e.g., the US, Australia) and first-asylum (e.g., Thailand, the Philippines) began asking if states originating the outflows like Vietnam could control outward migrations. As signaled in Southeast Asia by the Comprehensive Plan of Action in 1989, solutions reflecting a new “source control bias” could include necessary political strategies of voluntary repatriation, non-persecutory reconciliation, and perhaps local integration if not in home countries, then at least at least in regional states of asylum that already help shoulder collective international burdens.

Against the “state-centric” bearings of refugee law, a prophetic means of securing sanctuary arises through reading a time-honored form of hospitality based on Christian cosmopolitanism. Responding to structurally similar international and nationally based restrictions on asylum and refugee admissions during the “particularly dark year” of 1996, Jacques Derrida (2001) seeks to philosophically trace a deep historical alternative to the curtailed hospitality afforded to refugees, political asylees and undocumented immigrants (*sans papier*) by European states- specifically France through enacting the Debris Laws (See Fassin 2012, 87-92). As considered in Chapter One, increasing restriction of humanitarian admissions was also



mirrored by immigration policies in the United States, including the closure of the Indochinese refugee resettlement program. Thus, what appeared as an adequate ethical form of responsibility and potential response for Derrida is the radical reactivation of the,

Great Law of Hospitality- unconditional Law, both singular and universal, which ordered that the borders be open to each and every one to every other, to all who might come, without question or without their even having to identify who they are or whence they came” (18).

Although this appears “radical” and may be deemed merely “impractical” against the instrumentality and sovereignty of territorial states, this ethical injunction to offer sanctuary tellingly derives from both Stoic and Pauline cosmopolitanisms, which preceded the relatively recent system of nation-states circa 1648.<sup>68</sup> Provocatively, this year marking the Treaty of Westphalia- and thereby the birth of the modern nation-state system- signaled for Foucault the end of a preceding dream of Catholic cosmopolitanism and coincidence of divine sovereignty over a temporal yet unified kingdom of God (2007, 234-7). Foucault dramatically reads this discontinuity of spatial ordering and eschatological time as the “end of the Roman empire” through which, in the West, the birth of diplomatic, military-endowed, sovereign states could govern according to *Raison d'état* and subsequent rationalities of government.

In the Philippines, no such secular distinctions come easy whether on account of failed ecclesiastic colonial statecraft or an unsustainable Jeffersonian separation of religion from politics. Embodying the force of religiosity and the ethical call for hospitality, the Catholic Church pushed for a reading of a Christian cosmopolitanism (as suggested by Derrida) and, in so doing, the Church offered a pastoral politics of resistance against a solely secular politics of state sovereignty and territorial delineation. The CBCP’s offer of refuge can be said to embody the cosmopolitan injunctions that, “Pauline Christianity revived, radicalized and literally ‘politicized’ ... for example, the ‘opening of the Gates of Israel’” (19). Yet while this opening of borders, “by the churches so as to secure immunity or survival for refugees,” enacts scriptural

counsel, these ethical demands for offering sanctuary also entails specific political forms and terms. For Derrida this entails another politics of the city, which figures its own limitations and imagination. This optimistic politics may form along lines of a federation of Open Cities in addition to individual “Cities of Refuge” as given historical examples ranging from Dante’s Ravenna to the border city of Strasbourg, “this eminently European city” (18). But this abstract suggestion still leaves one with questions concerning the viability of urban rights, the persistence of urban enforcement through policing, and the strategic privileging of cities as supplementary technologies to state sovereignty. For purposes of my argument, this alternative politics of hospitality must be read against both Eurocentric sites of discourse and urban privileges. Resistant practices of sanctuary, refuge and capaciousness to displaced “others” has materialized recently a hospitality in the Catholic Philippines that draws from colonial channels of religious missions and recuperative care of witnessed persecution.

In other words, a distinct Christian hospitality based on a cosmopolitanism, which nevertheless finds local form in the Philippines, specifically embodied the government of souls through caring relations and practices of pastoral politics. Distinguished from the later emergence of sovereignty and *raison d’etat* in the government of territory and temporal wealth, Christianity elaborated the pastorate as a historical basis for conceptualizing and delivering men in their immanent relations within a flock, through a government of their souls, in their individual relation to God and the pastor (Foucault 2007 122-30). While this history of the pastorate remains complexly linked to historical locations, Foucault details a few qualities of pastoral power that describe the kind of hospitality afforded to Vietnamese asylum-seekers by Bishop Arguelles of the Episcopal Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants. First, pastoral power limits sovereignty through preceding relations of government not organized principally

around the secular king: “Pastorship is a fundamental type of relationship between God and men and the king participates, as it were, in this pastoral structure of the relationship between God and men” (124). While the secular authority, e.g., of Marcos is subsumed in this pastoral relationship before God, the worldly institutional pastor’s authority as, “subaltern shepherd to whom God has entrusted the flock of men and who,” finds its necessary limitation and potential reversibility within relations to the ultimate pastorate- “at the end of the day and the end of his reign, [he] must restore the flock he has been entrusted with to God” (124). The “People Power” revolution figured mobilizations that were partial to this reversal of secular authority, even as this revolution reconsolidated elite-dominated democracy. In addition to enfolding secular control within pastoral power-relations, a particular fluidity and mobility characterizes the Christian pastoral:

Shepherd’s power is essentially exercised over a multiplicity in movement. The Greek god is a territorial god, a god *intra muros*, with his privileged place, his town or temple. The Hebrew God, on the other hand, is the God moving from place to place, the God who wanders (125).

This itinerant form of beneficent care offered by the pastor has to be suited to the collective mobility yet individual desires of each member of his flock. As discussed below, responses to Vietnamese “long-stayers” remaining in the Philippines entailed mobile technologies of tele-communicative power suited to individual asylum-seeker’s geographic dispersal- that is, diaspora- even as the CBCP’s Vietnamese Village was initially constructed for this collectivity. This third individualizing characteristic of the pastorate may thus mimic the individuating accounts of the self given as required by legal refugee status determination processes. By virtue of the individualizing form of care, the hospitality granted to remaining Vietnamese stipulated conduct oriented towards “progressive self-reliance” (Evangelistas 2007, 75-77). In a word, the peculiar hospitality offered by the Catholic Church in the Philippines entailed relations of power through the pastoral care of mobile individuals not entirely subjected

to secular sovereignty and state-oriented refugee law. Pastoral power figured as an active condition of hospitality.

### **Colonial Collaborations and Postcolonial Conjunctions**

Since one may naively read this Roman Catholic heritage of pastoral direction and an ethical injunction to hospitality as the preeminent hidden transcript for resistance within thinly conceived hegemonic orderings of Martial Law as well as liberal, post-civil war humanitarian recuperations of Indochinese ‘freedom fighters,’<sup>69</sup> it remains vital to trace the transnational formation of this repertoire. Catholic practices of government were disseminated through colonial collaborations and postcolonial convergences between the countries that would come to be known as Vietnam and the Philippines. Accounting for the transnational circulations of people, ideas, discourses and ‘modular’ practices entails writing a history of the particular density of productive relations between French Indochina and the Spanish Philippines in addition to their respectively troubled emergence as postcolonial nations in the world following the Second World War. Such global transformations of “people” as conceivable nations proceeded through differentiated governments and related economies of saving souls from state violence and political enemies.

Colonial projects in both French Indochina and the Spanish Philippines found their articulate forms and collaborative conscriptions from Catholic clerical orders and religious missions. From its inception to latter efforts at retaining the Philippines as a colony, Spanish rule was mostly exercised through combined military and missionary action. Yet whereas force and local alliances yielded fragile submission due to unfavorable Spanish numbers in the colony, primary agents and guarantors of Spanish power were Spanish friars who could exercise the “right” of spiritual conquest (*conquista espiritual*), granted through papal sanction of

Christianizing the Philippines. The Spanish colonial state conceived of, “The mission to convert... [As] inseparable from the goal of political pacification,” and ensuring loyalty (Abinales and Amorosa 2007, 51). Although the Church’s formative role in governing the colonial Philippines began in 1571, repeated reformations (against corruptible friar direction by mid-19<sup>th</sup> century) and conversions among particularistic Christian and non-Christian (notably Muslim) groups were necessary. Rearticulating Spanish power through the Church was not limited to the Philippines.

Southeast Asia’s hierarchal world of colonial powers, nevertheless, drew from a common Roman Catholic ecumene and missionary infrastructure for colonial interventions. Missionaries from Europe first appeared in the province of Nam-Dinh in 1533 (McLeod 1991, 3). Further proselytizing throughout what is now named “Vietnam” began in the 1590’s, and these efforts notably drew from Dominican and Jesuit friars based in the colonial Philippines (Ibid. 9). Nevertheless, this missionary presence remained moderate. Thus, the Nguyen dynasty from 1802 until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century mostly tolerated Catholic interactions between French and Vietnamese actors insofar as Confucian political organization was sustained (12). Eventually, over prolonged interactions throughout broader Asia, including the occurrence of the First Opium War, Vietnamese accommodation began to change. Missionaries in Vietnam had supported indigenous rebel groups as well as French interests. Subsequently, at around 1836 edicts prohibiting Catholic missionary activities were declared as what may be considered as responses to ensure political control during the Minh-Mang rule of Nguyen dynasty (Keith 2012, 4-6). In the covetous eyes of the French, after losing other colonies like those in the Americas, religious “persecution” offered justifications for international intervention, on behalf of Catholics in Vietnam, and the establishment of a protectorate (McLeod, 42). While this humanitarian

rationale remains debated- in light of commercial and strategic needs for bases in the “Orient”- this effort drew from cosmopolitan Catholic personnel and religious connections of missionary recruitment. Yet again, Catholic Filipinos and Spanish Dominicans from the Philippines were recruited to join a colonial intervention given humanitarian reasons- namely, the will for religious freedom. On August 31, 1858, a combined Franco-Spanish force descended on Da-Nang to initiate an invasion of Hue. Of this multinational expeditionary force, 450 missionaries were recruited from the colonial Philippines to rectify alleged “persecution” that many historians (according to McLeod) debate may have been, “merely a screen behind which concealed more mundane considerations” (43). Like this indirect logic, this initial maritime invasion encountered strategic difficulties, but these were overcome, resulting in French concessions garnered by 1862. Peace struck at this time formally initiated the amalgamated conquest of French Indochina.

Although Catholic missions and international humanitarian operations served as distinct creators of French Indochina, within particular Filipino locales, colonial arrangements materialized similarly transnational collaborations. During the Philippines’ Commonwealth period, these yielded mixed governmental effects of defining and securing “human subjects” in the American Philippines. Much after France and other European entries had been established throughout Asia, America’s Philippines colony offered unique forms of hospitality put forth in similar veins of ensuring religious freedom from persecution. Before the involvement of the US in World War II, the resettlement of 3000 Jewish refugees was facilitated in the Philippine Commonwealth through a collaboration among Manuel Quezon, the US Commissioner for the Philippines Paul McNutt, American representatives of the lucrative tobacco industry in the Philippines, and figures of nascent importance who took posts as colonial administrators- Dwight Eisenhower and Douglass McArthur. Even as overlying relations of colonial power and secular

interests underpinned this hospitality, they created an opening for limited resettlement when other countries throughout the world failed to create a Jewish refugee resettlement program at the Evian Conference of 1938 (Ephram 2006, 410). But conditions adhered to this refuge afforded to German Jews fleeing fascism. At once, Ephram significantly notes that, “Even the United States offered no new proposals, retaining its quota of approximately 27,000 immigrants per year from Germany and Austria.” Yet simultaneously, the US set the grounds for Filipino exception to pushbacks and deterrence of Jewish refugees. Not only did Filipino asylum manifest one of the only resettlement opportunities outside the Western Hemisphere, but also this gift of freedom from religious persecution came in the context of Anti-Semitism and wariness in regulating the racial, religious and ethnic make-up of the American domestic population. Thus, the resettlement plan that accommodated a few thousand in Manila prior to Japanese attacks on the colonial Philippines and Pearl Harbor only came through colonial channels of cross-Pacific institutional formation, licentious experimentation and governmental accommodation in America’s colony. Indeed, plans for an extensive agricultural settlement were drawn up to accommodate up to 10,000 Jewish refugees in frontier areas of Mindanao. It has been claimed that this project was planned in order to counter-balance Japanese influence there as well as to “develop” what was perceived as unutilized land that has been the scene for indigenous and Muslim claims to land access and autonomy from state repression. Although ultimately unrealized due to the Japanese conquest of the Philippines away from American colonial control, the “Mindanao Plan” initially garnered the support of President Manuel Quezon as a stake within the Philippines’ political transition toward independence through carrying out programmatic initiations of “state” formation. The Philippines attempted to administer functioning programs for governing Filipino

subjects, facilitating migration, and regulating those social and ethnic itinerant subjects who appeared awkwardly cast within the normalized body politics of the Filipino nation.

Ambiguous humanitarian factors figured within contested passages towards forming postcolonial nations and political sovereignties. In the cases of the Republic of the Philippines and the two Vietnamese states formed after the First Indochina War, deeply troubled processes of decolonization and attaining independence recruited from social justice missions and compassionate humanitarian interventions of Catholic “civil society” organizations. Before I discuss the crucible of state-formation and nation-building in dis-unified Vietnam, it remains important to note how the newly independent Philippines continued to deliver refuge in a post-WWII international world in the making. As another instance of hospitality perhaps underpinned yet violated by existing politics, the Republic of the Philippines again responded to the displacement of “White” Russians who initially fled the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 by finding refuge in the China. These so-called “Nansen refugees,” estimated to be 94,000 in 1937, feared the specter of forced repatriation from the emerging communist rule in China (Ilieva 2001, 137). In light of global dislocations and devastation encountered in Europe and throughout the Pacific, the International Refugee Organization and Nansen refugees, “received welcome news,” of up to 8,000 Russian refugees being offered temporary asylum in the Philippines. After 1949, as much as 6000 Russians stayed in Tubabao, Philippines.

Besides the generosity of this offer, asylum granted in Tubabao was doubly significant for the nascent Philippines. First, it was offered in the protean order after the Second World War. As Ilieva highlights, the Philippines’ gift of asylum enriched, “its participation in the creation of the post-World War II new world order. Even before the Philippines gained its independence, ‘the Commonwealth formally adhered on June 10, 1942 to the Declaration by the United



Nations” (138). Indeed, the Filipino delegation led by Carlos Romulo represented the Commonwealth in San Francisco and submitted, “21 amendments concerning three major areas (cultural affairs, security matters and colonial people)” (Ibid). Even before attaining formal independence, the Philippines helped craft the very terms of liberal international order, which was *formally* predicated on equality of nation-states. Not only did the soon to be “sovereign” Philippines contribute to the drafting of the Declaration on Human Rights, but also, as representative of the Philippines, Romulo also became the first Asian to preside over the UN General Assembly. In other words, the Philippines Commonwealth collaborated in constructing the legal personhood of self-determining states and the universal subject of human rights, even when it was colonially subjected to a transitional state as an American Commonwealth. Overall this signals the paradoxical passage to independence codified as sovereignty. As mentioned above, this principle became the instrumental basis of enforcement within the emerging international system.

In addition to thereby consolidating the Philippines’ conditional independence, the gesture of offering Russian refugees asylum entered political anxieties concerning the Hukbalahap (Huk) insurgency and the apparent Communist specter haunting the Philippine state. Notably, asylum was offered to those who fled the Bolsheviks and now the Communist Chinese during the period in which strategic alliances organized around the arising Cold War were being put together. Hence, in light of this danger to the Philippines’ interest in remaining aligned strategically with the US, temporary settlement became offered in a more expedient manner than responses to dealing with lingering questions of guerrilla compensation for their contributions against the Japanese during WWII, land reform for the rural masses and peasants, elite collaboration with Japanese overlords, and, in a word, the material conditions for resistance and

setting objectives by the Huks. In light of this resistance, which operated throughout the country but most visibly in the Luzon provinces north of Manila, the very much elite liberal government of the Philippines selected an isolated location for the camp, which is akin to the location selection of the first-asylum camp in Palawan. Doubtless, this hospitality cast during the passage to Filipino independence served as the closest precedent to the pastoral form of hospitality offered in the 1990's. Moreover, both cases during the Commonwealth and Republic periods may be read as colonial formations that, on the one hand, drew on the moral discourses and best practices of humanitarian projects while, on the other hand, reforming the possibilities of sovereignty for selective recipients of freedom and their deliverers of salvation.

### **Passages of Postcolonial Freedom and Governmental Circulations**

The asylum offered in the wake of the American war with Vietnam was built on the vexed terrain through which national autonomy- if not state sovereignty over a territorial principality- emerged through contrapuntal histories of French and US colonialism. In other terms, passages of postcolonial freedom may be read as necessarily negotiated and agonistically developed through active collaborations during the transition to independence in addition to the proper period of postcolonial independence. Anxieties of postcolonial freedom come to light in post-WWII sensitivities taken in creating the Tubabao asylum camp as well as the international and national programs for managing specific circulations of displaced people. These multilateral programs enter both the republican state's procedural reasoning *and* non-governmental actions. In the former rationality, elite concerns became attached to reconsolidations of governmental forces against arising exigencies within the nation and a 'new world order.' These included calls for land reform, compensation for wartime efforts to liberate the nation, transitional justice of elite collaborators, and, in sum, a restructuring of elite-dominated Filipino society. Yet these

living concerns were subsumed within the drive to Filipino state sovereignty insofar as this could be strategically ensured through persisting relays between the United States and the Republic of the Philippines.

If one were to analytically suspend this formalization of Filipino territorial sovereignty and formal equality among the family of nations- without holding persistent recourse to critiques of neocolonialism- one may further examine transnational relays of humanitarian intervention and Catholic channels of pastoral care.<sup>70</sup> Juxtaposing the Philippines' passage of postcolonial freedom with the deferred formal reunification of Vietnam, by the military-political victory of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, underscores the conjuncture of heightened transnational circulations within the dispersed process of calling into being the nation and state in their distinct formations. In the case of Vietnam's agonistic reunification, "the state" partially formed through highly variegated waves of refugee flights and what some may call the biopolitical racism or sovereign decision of politically denuded "bare life" (Foucault 2003; Agamben 1998). Yet these attempts at purified agency of sovereignty and determination of politically qualified life (*bios*) along borderlines of purely defining citizenship failed. Some displaced Vietnamese persisted in articulating both the hope for refuge and disseminated forms of exilic nationalism, after the failure of nation-building by the Republic of Vietnam. In 1975, these circulating forms became embedded within the complex fabric of humanitarian operations woven within military-diplomatic alliances, liberal labor exchanges, and mobile circuits of pastoral care:

The first boat people that landed in the Philippines... included 2,600 Vietnamese dependents of Filipino overseas workers. A Catholic group, the Daughters of Charity, formed the Center for assistance to Displaced Persons (CADP) to help these common-law wives and their children establish themselves. (Robinson 1998, 23)

Before boat people would be *legally subjected* to state suspicion in 1989, Vietnamese refugees found guidance and governmental accommodation by Catholic agents recruited from existing transnational channels between the Philippines and Vietnam. Purely secular sovereignty (e.g., of Marcos), legal technicalities and resistance to these in the name of charity and sanctuary will be discussed below. For now, consider how pastoral offers of care punctuated the serialized inscriptions of Vietnamese nationalism between decolonization against the French Indochina and Vietnamese national resistance against US-backed nation-building. Throughout the occurrence of these periodic interventions and negotiations of postcolonial “sovereignty,” religious actors collaborated in writing the beginning and the end of Southern Vietnamese national sovereignty. These collaborations arose in the attempts at offering humane delivery and trying to realize territorial strategies for containing perceived threats and massive displacement in the modernizing schemes of the Republic of Vietnam. Like the recuperative work of the Daughters of Charity and CADP, most of these humanitarian interventions conducted subjects, essayed to contain threats, and regulated mobile, nomadic subjects recruited from a common Catholic ecumene, which included American and Filipino clerical ranks.

### **Strategies of Containment: Communist Threats and Refugee Risks**

Because early arrivals of Vietnamese threatened the sovereignties of the SRV and nearby Southeast Asian countries, these states pushed back refugees, thereby seeking to externalize ideological, biopolitical and economic risks. Yet even before the Indochinese exodus began after the fall of Saigon, Catholic missionaries and voluntary humanitarian organizations exercised a pastoral power when they facilitated multiple settlement programs: at first, in the settlement of Geneva Accord refugees between 1954-1955; second, with the South Vietnamese land reforms and agricultural land development programs; and finally through the post-1975

resettlement programs. Clearly this ensemble of pastoral programming was ideologically manipulated for pro-American project of fighting ‘godless’ communism. While all humanitarians were not as luridly manipulative of this geopolitical line spread by noted propagandists like Thomas Dooley, this programming offered at least ambiguous delivery from evil. When examined side by side, each of these settlement projects may be read as partly consolidating the attempted rise and descent of sovereign territorial strategies. But these programs also found pivotal partnership and governmental organization through non-state actors.<sup>71</sup> What’s more, Catholic organizations enacted complementary frameworks by constructively seeking to offer “progressive” alternatives in order to limit threats of popular dissent or communist revolution (if seen in geopolitical terms) within the ‘liberal’ Republics of Vietnam and the Philippines.

Transnational channels of resettlement projects and pastoral programming, including Catholic humanitarian practitioners and social initiatives, combined with counter-insurgency strategies of “containment” pursued by polarized yet sovereign states. Specific tactics of counter-insurgency and psychological operations were notably first developed in the postcolonial Philippines before transposition to Ngo Binh Diem’s “modernizing” Vietnam (RVN). The post-war Philippines Republic confronted immense problems including the lingering demands of Huk guerrilla rebels, who resisted locally the Japanese as well as entrenched client-patron relationships (Kerkvliet 1977). This mostly peasant-based counter-hegemonic “bloc” sustained their struggle for generally redistributive aims. But this ‘rebellion’ was received by the Republic’s leaders according to emerging sovereign logics of Cold War geopolitics and hegemonic efforts at reconsolidating elite rule after much of the wealthiest and most powerful Filipinos collaborated within the Japanese occupation. Renewed consensus was shared among anti-communist elites, Catholics and members of the middle class. This 1950’s hegemonic

perspective viewed Filipino politics through postcolonial framings of sovereign states enfolded within geopolitical maps of containment.<sup>72</sup> While South Vietnam and Korea feature most prominently in this global scene of Cold War polarization, transnational exchanges of personnel, counter-insurgency technologies, and spatial strategies from the Philippines to Diem's RVN manifest significant channels and scripts that preceded the humanitarian operations of the 1954-55 population transfers and the post-1975 boat people "exodus."

Looking back at these Cold War circuits of information exchange and collaboration, fabled figures like the infamous Col. Edward Lansdale<sup>73</sup> figure notably in the Vietnam nation-building efforts based on prior successes in the Philippines. Before becoming a key political and counter-insurgency advisor to Diem, Lansdale led CIA and Joint US Military Advisory Group campaigns in the Philippines. Working with the revived Filipino military and its leader, President Ramon Magsaysay, they led counterinsurgency operations against the Huks, who had ties with an emerging Filipino communist party. Significantly, Lansdale and Magsaysay innovated culturally attuned tactics that aimed to work on the governable matter of motivation by psychologically breaking down Huks and their "superstitious" peasant base. Yet beyond individual techniques, they devised a set of "counterinsurgency doctrines" that would not only be transferred to Vietnam but also became much of the basis for successful counterinsurgency doctrines, "that provides contemporary planners with insights and observations that remain... valid today" (Stoff cited in McCoy, 379, fn 25). Circulating technologies of power contributed to efforts at consolidating a kind of "client" state sovereignty by countering "domestic" political threats. Yet even these containment strategies were fortified through mobilizing caring "soft" practices of resettling and seeking to satisfy the human needs of re-territorialized constituents of the nation.

The passage of South Vietnam from French Indochina administration to “sovereign” freedom was marked with the violence of mass displacement and the unfortunate project of trying to settle these populations along modernizing lines of agricultural land development and the creation of refugee villages.<sup>3</sup> The armistice negotiated at the Geneva Conference notably stipulated population transfers from 1954-55 across the border formed along the 17<sup>th</sup> Parallel.<sup>74</sup> This *attempted* sovereign arrangement of populations along reputedly discrete territorial lines came as a compromise of temporarily maintaining two Vietnamese states before reunification under a single government to be determined by election in July 1956. This election never happened. Nevertheless, the mandated period of 300 days for population transfers witnessed enough haphazard, unevenly regulated, overwhelming logistic problems to call on the kind of assistance suited to delivering mobile subjects motivated by a variety of political, economic, and social reasons to flee the DRV. While it is necessary to remain attune to the complexities of desire to flee “the North” (if seen in salient geopolitical terms), mostly Catholic humanitarian organizations- in addition to secular ones like the International Rescue Committee- lent aid in resettling asylum-seekers. Former US Foreign Service officer and IRC administrator Louis Wiesner (1988, 9) recalls an, “an outpouring of generosity from private voluntary agencies,” came in the wake of an exodus of inordinate proportions that would exceed almost any government’s capacities, nonetheless after a devastating war of independence. Aggravating governmental difficulties only about “50,000 landlords and businessmen” were anticipated to be relocated in the US Navy’s Passage to Freedom resettlement operation (Jacobs, 130). Of the more than “900,000 who moved south in 1954-55 who were properly called refugees,” 794,876

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<sup>3</sup> Due to limited space, I am limited to discuss only a few features here.

or almost 86 percent of these were Catholic Vietnamese fleeing religious persecution (Wiesner, 9). In this spirit, much of the “outpouring of generosity” found organized form in Catholic relief agencies- notably the US National Catholic Welfare Conference, which preceded the Catholic Relief Services (CRS). In addition to delivering basic necessities reaching by 1957 the monetary value of \$35,000,000, the CRS ran and:

Organized a network of villages under the leadership of 30 specially trained priests and required them to submit detailed development plans, the format of which the dedicated and compassionate Monsignor Joseph Harnett said had been agreed upon with [the Vietnamese Refugee Commission] and the US Operations Mission. It helped villagers to acquire land titles from the government. By the end of 1956, CRS had assisted over 20 villages in resettlement projects (Ibid.)

Perhaps these passages of flight and resettlement may be read as pure morality tales cast in terms of good and bad, elect and red, or South and North Vietnams. But the policy planning and publication of what became networks of refugee villages under “specially trained priests, who submitted their direction to “detailed development plans” and international agencies, complicates the pure morality tale broadcast to the American public. This “flight from Ho to Diem,” that had been portrayed by even moderate, “secular newspapers and magazines like *Look* and the *New York Times*... [As a] modern-day miracle pageant,” was largely orchestrated as an ideological campaign conceived by the likes of Edward Lansdale (Jacobs, 132-34; cf. Miller 2013, 100). An alternative genealogy of freed refugee subjects may be written that considers the governmental enfolding of specific subjects of persecution within strategies of containment and counter-insurgent settlement.

While the calculated exodus of specifically Catholic identified, targeted, and publicized refugees seems to offer a hyperbolic example of charity’s subjection within humanitarian responses to international problems generated by states. When related to other episodes within Southeast Asia- as well as globally- modernist planning of population displacement, transigrations, and frontier-focused development through settlement in fact seems a shared



practice as attempted in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines.<sup>75</sup> Filipino migratory transfers of materially deprived, Huk-supporting populations from Northern Luzon to Mindanao and even Palawan were made concurrently and subsequently to peasant pacification campaigns waged against Huk influence.<sup>76</sup> In fact, settlement programs entered counter-insurgency plans:

By easing pressure and stabilizing politically explosive regions, migration postponed class conflict for at least a generation. It was a phenomenon the AFP and CIP immediately appreciated, prompting them to add organized resettlement of surrendered Huk supporters and sympathizers to counterinsurgency program... The Economic Development corporation (EDCOR) project, which settled ex-Huks in Lanao del Sur and Cotabato, became a powerful propaganda tool of the state (176)

Implementing this kind of land reform not only drew from post-war reconstruction efforts in Japan and Korea but also they enriched international efforts in nation-building throughout “modernizing” Southeast Asia (Miller 2013, 79). Land reform efforts were personified by technicians such as Wolf Ladejinsky who, “gained fame as the preeminent U.S. authority on land reform in Asia. “He was also an ardent anticommunist and a committed proponent of the agrarian New Deal” (79). As a sort of hero of “modernization” work, Ladejinsky’s expertise would benefit ideological interests the calculated interests of the landless, because his technocratic belief rest in the professing that, “ Instead of dismissing land reform as a communist device... Americans ought to embrace it as a way to channel the peasants’ revolutionary impulse in the right direction. In addition... US. Support for land reform in Asia actually harkened back to America’s own origins as a nation of free holding yeoman farmers” (79). Thus postcolonial channels of technical know-how and a modernizing project of liberal individualism made particular projects of development and nation-building in Vietnam all the more potent, since they harnessed both a supposedly reproducible nationalist imagination combined with modernizer’s developmental hope in democratic tutelage and development training. Hence the role of Edward Lansdale and others served crucially in making the case for constituting the Vietnamese nation after far greater than expected numbers of North Vietnamese Catholics fled “religious”

persecution- that kind of persecution that resonates with American imaginings. Yet what we now know is that specific type of persecution required self-serving circulations of both American presentations of “the Blessed Virgin Mary is going south” (Miller, 98) as well as transposable political economic know-how that cast subjects of freedom under Diem’s direction of nation-building.

Against the virtue ascribed to the “sovereignty” of secular states in the postwar international order, the particular passage from French colonial domination to reterritorialized freedom under the RVN highlights presented volatile collaborations in humanitarian partnerships and multilateral projects of modernization. Drawing on religious economies of clerical and missionary personnel and morally significant practices sanctifying sacred life, these transnational passages sought to save displaced populations by disposing their mobility towards governance within national management. Diem’s deleterious responses to problems of refugee settlement not only spread disaffection among his initial bases of power but also they inadvertently set some of the terrain for asymmetric guerrilla war, and counter-insurgency campaigns that would stymie the RVN state. Although regularly couched in international terms of sovereign war between Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the Republic of Vietnam, modernist programs of population settlement and their consequent disaffections offered a kind of “productive” prelude to further American ownership of *the Vietnam War*. For Diem and his American backers, a “transitional period” of developing an alternative government to Geneva-mandated national reunification proceeded as a project of state-formation along discursively salient lines of nation-building, modernization, and liberal “containment” according to geopolitical cartographies. As overly ideal and (un)grounded in technical hubris that these discourses were, nation-building interventions took the form of managing mass displacements through subjecting populations to

Diem's ultimately ill-conceived and devastating programs of modernization: agricultural land development, Highland resettlement of Northern refugees as a "human wall," agrovilles in indigenous ancestral lands, and strategic hamlets. These attempted territorial solutions in the name of security supplanted what otherwise would have been democratic problems of legitimacy- if Geneva-mandated elections came about. In contrast to this framing of legitimacy, Diem's project of modernization partnered with religious, specifically Catholic aid providers and logistical supports.

While much has been critically written about modernist paradigms of planning and consequent displacements (Cernea and McDowell 2001; Hall et al. 2011; Oliver-Smith 2009), the RVN handling of these problems found basis in neither democratic discourses of rights nor wholly in essentialized religion or self-grounding faith. Instead, US-supported high modernist management of these "externalities" may be read as the competition of ideal discourses through which irrationalities salient among development "experts" manifested Western ethnocentrism and racist conceptions of "Oriental" religions as hindrances, "sects," and elements heterogeneous to secular development or monotheistic "religion" as such.<sup>77</sup> Relocating displaced populations within rigid "state"-centered discourses of agrarian planning and development occluded the vicissitudes of localization, the historical attachments that communities have to distinct places, and the existence of *metis* or indigenous local knowledge (Ekbladh 2011; Scott 1998) in handling difficult topographies where settlements were attempted. Charles Keith offers a nuanced account of the development of disaffection among initially supportive Northern Catholics who became subject to secular economic strategies of security and growth:

Although Diệm vocally courted northern Catholics, his government was unequipped to deal with the flood of refugees. As a result, even the *bắc di cư* [Northern] Catholics, initially among Diệm's strongest supporters, resented many of his resettlement policies. Indeed, in the later stages of refugee resettlement in 1956 and 1957, RVN officials moved many *bắc di cư* from settlements of their choosing and placed them,

for economic and strategic reasons, in remote areas in the central highlands or in areas of the Mekong delta that some Catholics felt were too close to Hòa Hảo and Cao Đài communities (247)

Secular limits of sovereign power arose through their very basis on rationalist discourses solving “human” problems. While orchestrating “passages of freedom” partially drew from the discursive wherewithal initially given through colonial government- including such problematic conceptions of “sects” as religious difference- postcolonial “client” states such as that of Diem’s regime mobilized these humanitarian forces of religious organization towards their own ends of consolidating state power over territories.

In light of these shortcomings that arose out of sovereign reasons of state, population displacements may be analyzed as problematic yet symbolically meaningful migrations calling for careful responses. US-supported geopolitical discourse and modernizing state-formation undertaken by Diem’s government nevertheless drew heavily on religious collaborations recruiting humanitarians in responses to civilian “collateral damage” of anti-communist struggles (Cf. Miller 2013). Yet discrepant complexities arise in considering these pastoral convergences. Retaining these ambiguities in mind unsettles apparent continuities of historical practices, colonial discourses, and personnel recruitment between conflicted Vietnam and the Philippines. There remains a historical task of evaluating constructive openings and latent configurations of subject-formation within transnational circuits of colonial Catholic missions and later passages to postcolonial freedom under American hegemony. Keeping these critically ambiguous circuits of Vietnamese-Philippines interaction in mind, I would now like to return to the recent past.

Drawing from historically rich channels of collusion and collaboration, later Church organization enabled pastoral delivery of relief and, most tellingly, prophetic resistance to sovereign orders: “in August 1975, just after a boatload of 84 people arrived on Palawan Island, Marcos commanded the Philippine Coast Guard to re-provision the boat with fuel, food and

water and order it ‘to sail to Hawaii’. A local clergyman alerted the [CBCP], whose appeal to Marcos caused him to rescind the order” (Courtland 23). Ironically, Marcos’s command being deflected by the CBCP anticipated their combined power directing the tide against Marcos, who would flee to Hawaii.

### **Pastoral Hospitality**

Before refugee camps and formal refugee resettlement programs for Indochinese were closed throughout Southeast Asia, the University of the Philippines, Diliman hosted a forum on the legal rights of refugees and asylum seekers in the Philippines. It was significant not only for its organized reflection on responding to the failures of forcing repatriation by the Ramos government as well as attempts elsewhere. The forum’s discussion also engaged a wide variety of organizations who invoked different traditions of ethical thought, legal right, and humanitarian moral principles. In other words, historically distinct modes of government came into conversation again. During these proceedings, Professor Raul C Pangalangan of the UP College of Law highlighted tensions concerning nationality in responding to remaining Vietnamese:

What needs to be re-formulated today is the normative theory of why every Filipino must see himself in the face of refugees and asylum-seekers, why he must recognize in the refugees’ pleas the claims of Filipino migrant workers abroad... or, for that matter, Filipino claims for international assistance in their own human rights struggle against Marcos” (1996, 30)

In this line of questioning, related experiences of displacement and claims to persecution discursively places Vietnamese “others” within important normative horizons of nationality and sovereignty. Thus what the UP forum additionally illuminated was a forum for different forms of responding to the question of “statelessness” that finds its basis in normative form of states and membership by citizens (Malkki 1996). Exceeding the international order of sovereign nation-states, other capacities and discursive reasons arose to offered constructive grounds for imagining community, coequality and reciprocal space beyond the official decisions of states

across secular time and territory (Anderson 1993).<sup>78</sup> While imagining any national community remains potent, pre-national affinities and forms of government embody alternative registers for addressing the other with respect to binds of responsibility and cohabitation based on vulnerability (Butler 2012). Pastoral government operated during the closure of refugee camps in the Philippines by offering sanctuary to those not legally accepted as refugees. Based on different scripts than secular law and different practices than those of national and intergovernmental relief providers, the CBCP and its affiliate organizations delivered an experimental kind of “pastoral hospitality” that was based on religious meanings and concrete conditions of individual conduct and reciprocal enactments of gratitude. In a word, an economy of souls delivered an supplemental form of hospitality that was heteronymous from the “national order of things” and international law.

Since it seems obligatory to recount the vicissitudes of the sea hindering the “boat people,” the direction of ships as a fable of governance offers a complementary account for recollecting the responses of transnational humanitarian government. Moving beyond this imaginary of “boat people” and oceanic dislocation, the construction of a Vietnamese Village in Palawan exemplifies a functional embodiment of an operative form of pastoral power. In this essay, I have argued that transnational channels of collaboration facilitated not only returns to the Philippines, for some Vietnamese Filipinos, but also these served as logistically generative of agencies and practices of humanitarian care. Exceeding the strict logics of state-centric refugee law and legal status determination, these networked relations of assistance were offered to displaced subjects because of the very limitations of variable access to resettlement or local hospitality depending on assessed status claims (whether to refugee, asylee, Filipino national, or other statuses).

But beyond these legalistic determinations, other opportunities developed historically according to longer histories of collaboration and Catholic hospitality. Oscar and Susan Evangelista highlight how, “the Philippines, as a close ally of the U.S., sent a small contingent of engineers and other technical workers to Vietnam. Some of the members of this unit, known as Philcag, married Vietnamese and fathered children during the war years” (2007, 71). The initial return of these several thousand “Philcag” with their Vietnamese wives and children partially paved the way for later refugee flights.<sup>79</sup> Prior to the Indochinese refugee program, the Catholic Church responded to this initial group of “displaced persons” by mobilizing an evolving network of organizations and centers of assistance: first CARITAS, then the National Secretariat for Social Action (NASSA), and finally the Center for Assistance to Displaced Persons (CADP). This ensemble of agencies, which formed to facilitate other Vietnamese inhabiting parts of the Philippines, offers a preface to the storied chapters of the boat people influx. While representations of the latter seem to offer a dominant, general imaginary for conceptualizing Vietnamese displaced from the post-war Democratic Republic of Vietnam, what may be witnessed in these prior collaborative channels is the configured reiteration of the “screened out” Vietnamese as “displaced persons” (not granted refugee status). In this light, the seemingly exceptional “miracle” of local settlement for stateless Vietnamese drew from existing channels of pastoral hospitality that contributed to their care.<sup>80</sup>

Resistance by “screened out” Vietnamese, who appreciated collective support from the Catholic Church in Palawan, exemplifies how the Indochina refugee saga never achieved closure. Specifically, contradictory dynamics of state-centric legal determination processes and the supposedly “withdraw[n] refugee classification,” according to the Evangelistas (72), never found resolution when the first-asylum camp was closed. Indeed, its internationally

mandated relief work ceased. Yet only some of the mechanisms authorized to assist “refugees” were phased out gradually. Some asylum-seekers found resettlement before the June 1996 closure, while others came to accept UNHCR and Vietnamese government offers of monetary support for voluntary repatriation. These included incentives to repatriate; for instance, the “UNHCR offered each returnee... U.S. \$360, assistance in reintegration, and free school or job training” (Freeman and Nguyen 2003, 15). But, for the resistant ones<sup>81</sup> who feared persecution and actively insisted on their refugee identity, intense negotiations produced the “miraculous” Memorandum of Understanding of July 1996 between the Philippines government and the CBCP. This agreement entailed agencies, which once served the Palawan First-Asylum Camp under UNHCR management, continue their humanitarian operations according to new aims of local settlement the Philippines. The Center for Displaced Persons, the Sisters of Charity, and the Remaining Vietnamese (RVNs) themselves collaborated to build and manage a novel Vietnamese Village that would become the “great reminder to the world of the Philippine’s great gift” (Evangelistas 76). What may be called “pastoral hospitality” operated beyond the juridical and political limitations of the UNHCR’s asylum camp.

Gathering material support drawn from diasporic Vietnamese and onlookers abroad sought to answer the combined prayers of both asylum seekers and humanitarians. In other words, delivering hospitality found articulation in prayers and finances. Based on these, the practically materialized form of hospitality in Palawan entailed directions of conduct that may be read in light of Foucault’s account of the Christian pastorate. In addition to the tripartite ensemble of sovereignty, disciplinary power, and biopolitics, pastoral power has often been elided in Foucault’s complex history of governmentality. While a reading of stateless Vietnamese experiences may be cast reductively according to a sovereign form of “bare life,”



Foucault's histories of government suggest a dispositional ensemble of subjects and diffuse tactics of power:

One will arrange things to achieve different ends. The word "disposer is important because what enabled sovereignty to achieve its aim of obedience to the laws was the law itself; law and sovereignty were absolutely united. Here, on the contrary, it is not a matter of imposing a law on men, but of the disposition of things, that is to say, of employing tactics rather than laws, or, of as far as possible employing laws as tactics; arranging things so that this or that end may be achieved through a certain number of means " (99)

Multiple tactics comprised an alternative economy of governing men and things. This short- and long-term responsive ensemble offered two grounds for, "the care and maintenance of all RVNs under the principle of progressive self-reliance" (76).

Materially, resistance to forced repatriation became televised both nationally among Filipinos and globally among transnational Vietnamese diaspora. Thus Vietnamese subjects of resettlement attained and prolonged asylum in the Philippines actively sustained connections through utilizing both the media of telecommunication and an EDSA-like nonviolent art of resistance (as suggested earlier). Both expressions of resistance drew from historical milieu of Filipino culture, which Vietnamese asylum-seekers had grown accustomed to through the open nature of the PFAC. In this light, evoking prayer worked as a means of "telecommunicative medium" that allowed stateless Vietnamese to nevertheless, "send and receive message[s] from afar. [Yet] unlike print, radio, television... prayer prescribe[d] the proper forms of speech and an indisputable destination of address: God" (Rafael 2006, 56). Delivering on the potential promise of Catholic hospitality, the prayers of Vietnamese and humanitarians generated sufficient political opposition and material support to create a proper form for the Vietnamese community to live in Palawan. Transnational technologies of telecommunication and diasporic mobilization of sympathies for stateless Vietnamese proffered an alternative economy of hospitality in a particular milieu: "It was Bishop Arguelles who secured \$1.3 million, which was used to build Viet Ville, from Vietnamese in the United States" (Evangelistas 76). Of course, this economy of

sustained settlement entailed obligations and normative practices that at once contribute to Filipinos' symbolic reproduction of hospitable structures of timely exchange (Bourdieu 1998; See chapter 2). When translated into localized terms like lowland Tagalog "debts of gratitude" (*utang na loob*), these obligatory practices may easily be said to advance the hosts' socio-economic interests. To some extent Filipino hosts- with their partially Christianized "culture" of hospitality- may be read as patron subjects of the "law of hospitality as the law of the household" (Derrida cited in Nguyen 2013, 71). International refugee law and a Judeo-Christian "law of hospitality" represent different economies of time, place and subjectivity. On the one hand, phasing out refugee assistance demanded a time-bound basis for implementing technical procedures of refugee identification, because only *bonafide* refugees deserved sustained support in processes of resettlement. On the other hand, negotiations concerning remaining Vietnamese yielded an indefinitely deferred economy predicated on sustainable subsistence. This pastoral economy of individual care and yet salvation of the flock produced "self-reliant" subjects of mobile, beneficent care.

Signaling these distinct economies, the Memorandum of Understanding offered a transitional management of remaining Vietnamese based on a collaborations between the Philippines state and the CBCP. This arrangement notably envisioned a strategy of care premised on self-sufficiency and "self-management." Indeed, when "the UNHCR... asked the Church if it could afford to take over the support of the [first-asylum] camp... the Church opted instead to work on a plan of progressive self-reliance for the refugees" (75). This government of conduct conceptualized a foundation for constructing Viet Ville near Santa Lourdes and Honda Bay, some 20 km North of Puerto Princessa. Although refuge was offered to individuals and their families, this hospitality may be mapped within a larger economy of moral values that

symbolically arranged subjects through economies of “self-subsistence” and the conduct of souls, yet not by virtue of rights. The Church through the administration of the CADP, under the chief lead of Bishop Arguelles and Sister Pascual Le Thi Trieu, garnered financial, political and moral support<sup>82</sup> towards developing a “home” for Vietnamese asylum-seekers. Viet Village became thought of as a “symbol of unselfish brotherhood and cooperation between the Philippines and Vietnamese.” Indisputably this symbol represented distinctive Filipino generosity given its regional context. Yet the Church’s gift of “returning human dignity to the unfortunate boat people,” also elaborated the Philippines and Vietnam’s complex channels of collaboration and historical passages to freedom.

## **Conclusion: Unsettling “Statelessness” Through Refugee Returns**

The 1990’s witnessed remarked growth of a “new humanitarianism” and a renewed logic of intervention cast along the shores of human rights and liberalism’s triumph. As some commentators have claimed, a new humanitarian reason gained prominence in terms of esteem as well as application (Fassin 2012). Humanitarian government seemed to offer a progressive alternative distinct from the eclipsed reasons of Cold War anticommunism in favor of a new providence of humanity. Thus Michael Walzer strongly claims, “Humanitarianism is probably the most important “ism” in the world today, given the collapse of communism, the discrediting of neoliberalism, and the general distrust of large-scale political ideologies” (2011, 69). Yet this pronouncement seems akin to the epochal thesis of a “universal state” of liberal, market-oriented democracy led by the United States. With few exceptions like Cuba and North Korea, liberalism appeared triumphant. The end of history was the name given to this politically invested order prioritizing democratization, free markets, and limited humanitarian interventions. Yet Fukuyama’s then controversial thesis and more recent claims to humanitarianism’s contemporary ascendance appear as dominant narratives recasting the contingencies of time, place and particular identities within the continuous history of freedom’s production and expansion through global “human” consciousness.

In this light, giving refugees the “gift of freedom” once seemed so assured in its moral calling that granting presumptive refugee status permitted less agonistic access to freedom’s shores. Human emancipation seemed a moral necessity against the witnessed suffering of Communist ‘evil’ during the 1970’s and 1980’s. But this story of liberation stipulated not only a duration of obligatory gratitude as Mimi Nguyen suggests, but also an asserted end to the

refugee's gift as the Cold War closed in, "A flurry of events; Gorbechev's embrace of political and economic reforms; arms-control agreements; the Kremlin's decision to forfeit its eastern European empire; the reunification of Germany; and the collapse of the Soviet Union" (Bon Tempo 2008, 195). What must be added to this series of events is the effective history of attempting to close the Indochina refugee program by 1996. Although it has been argued that, "American refugee laws and policies played no role in these epochal events, yet the Cold War's end did illuminate the state of the American commitment to refugees and how far it had come since its birth in the early 1950's" (Ibid); the experiences of the "screened-out" or "stateless" Vietnamese in the Philippines underscores the discursive limitations historically materialized by the regime of truth addressing refugees that developed since the late 1980's. The "forgotten" Vietnamese refugees offers a contrary case to this truth regime's "progress": "with the Cold War's conclusion, the American commitment to refugees persisted and grew, by some measures, even more capacious" (195). The enthusiasm for the new humanitarianism that coincided with democratizing transition to the "end of history" must be qualified, and consideration might dwell on the same era's mixed consequences of economic, welfare and immigration reform. Although 1989 liberated a previously dominated human rights politics from Cold War geopolitics, humanitarian government increasingly mobilized the logic of selective relief of human needs and the technical identification of certain 'worthwhile' subjects. In retrospect, liberalism's triumph and humanitarian optimism offered limited accounts of an "epoch" that neglects those liminal situations and anxious subjectivities produced through a humanitarian regime of truth.

### **Anxious Accounts**

Vietnamese "long stayers" in the Philippines, Hong Kong, and Southeast Asia show how becoming subjects of history through writing one's own account remains a political undertaking.

Contingencies of time and location manifest how accounts of oneself as a “refugee” remain dependent on available discourses of legal rights and documentary archives detailing demonstrable experiences within governmental sites for classifying human subjects seeking to verify claims of persecution. In a New York Times opinion piece published in 1988, the question posed to the US public was since,

There are many more refugees than *this country can handle*... the Government perpetually faces the vexing problem: Who are legitimate refugees, and which of them should be admitted.... Can all of them demonstrate a well-founded fear of persecution? And even if they can, on what fair basis can they be given slots and benefits that might otherwise go to Latin Americans, or Cambodians? (Emphasis added)

Similar to this national line of questioning, I have tried reading a distinct yet dispersed archive of the Palawan First Asylum Camp. While methodologically and linguistically limited to English-language sources, this archive has included secondary histories, camp ethnographies, Eleanor Stewart’s humanitarian memoir, select interviews with Vietnamese born in the camp or working there, as well as policy reports and speeches delivered during the iterative construction of the first-asylum camp even after closing the Indochinese refugee program. In a word, I have considers disparate representations from a regime of truth addressing refugees, and these representations have factored the anxieties arising in giving accounts of the self in humanitarian spaces- whether they be those of asylum-seekers, humanitarian subjects like Eleanor Stewart, or sanctified agents of pastoral power and cosmopolitan collaboration.

However, there remain asymmetries of socio-political power and humanitarian position even while reading this transnational archive. Particular attention must dwell on the very conditions in which asylum-seekers offered humanitarian narratives through the solicitation of these accounts in order to ground a refugee identity and eligibility for resettlement. Such normative humanitarian conditions undoubtedly entail manners of regulating, distributing and moderating affective forces produced through seemingly rational techniques such as status

determination processes (Sandvik 2009; Stoler 2004; James 2013). As in Taussig's ethnographic inquiry into the politics of state fetishism and mimesis, nervous states present difficulties in "rationally" assessing the narrative claims to essential truth of prospective refugee subjects. Remaining attune to archival location and the affectively difficult positions taken up in this interpretive inquiry can underscore how the historical category of "the refugee" remains contested even as it seems to offer the apriori grounds for some research undertaken in Vietnamese American, diasporic ethnic, refugee and Southeast Asian American studies. To some extent, the refugee classification within these fields seem taken for granted insofar as this writing finds its generation in embodied sites of historical resettlement. This situation denotes an enabling yet constraining politics of inclusion among interlocutors who remain fortunate liberal participants in critical historical scholarship (e.g., Espiritu 2014). Yet as Aleinkoff suggests in his critique of legal scholarship, perhaps there are other approaches to the regime of truth addressing refugees that appreciates the voice of refugees and, "refugee issues... considered from the bottom up" (1995, 267), instead of from the stated privilege of state-centered lawyers or those diasporic reformers who must return to transnational sites of veracity through asylum processes.

With a cautious eye on humanitarian frontiers and interstices of the national histories of the Philippines and Vietnam (Fassin 2012, 245; Winichakul 2003), I have considered discursive processes of subjectification and pure identification of "persecution" as conflicted formations of subjectivity at limits of the refugee. Different locations materialize archival difficulties. Reflecting on the specific location of the Palawan First Asylum Camp, I have sought to consider how assessments of refugee status arose through conflicted translations across distinct discourses- mundane, language-specific, expert- and the complex interactions thereby implied

within humanitarian space. These translations and competing norms for accounting for oneself as a “refugee” serve as provisional components in the PFAC’s humanitarian government. Overall these archival conditions of situated knowledge unsettle the strictly rational basis for adjudicating resettlement claims (based on refugee identity) and administering relief of suffering as delivered by humanitarians, activists, policy-makers, advocates, and asylum-seekers themselves. Refugee return to the Palawan asylum camp- as frontiers of the nation and location of refugee limits- has entailed the elaboration of an oppositional narrative of “forgotten” refugees and thus a kind of “eternal return” of reconstituting an articulate, self-determining, diasporic Vietnamese subjectivity.

### **Credibility in Question: Revisiting the Problem of “Statelessness”**

Yet through the reiteration of social discourse (based out of resettlement states) and governmental reflection, appraising refugee experiences materialize competing epistemologies within the symbolic and technical identification of different subjects. The “asylum-seeker,” “internally displaced person,” “economic immigrant,” or “refugee” in turn serve as the subject-categories that become the preconditions for enacting laws or policies, offering emergency relief, or attempting repatriation. Through this politics of truth premised on the hierarchy of worthiness to relief and aid, humanitarian operations remain caught in a double bind to tested principles of neutrality, impartiality, independence from politics, and equal humanity while remaining entangled in economies of aid accountability, audit cultures, and the complex hazards practically posted to humanitarians by politics (James 2013; Barnett and Weiss 2008). In light of these competing discourses and mixed economies of compassion and accountability, identification processes like status determination interviews in first-asylum camps became required by Euro-American and Southeast Asian states, intergovernmental agencies, and transnational



humanitarians alike. This will to know, which supported a political demand to permit resettlement only to genuine refugees, facilitated a proliferation of distinguished subjects of either humanitarian care or rights dependent on immigration status.

With the credibility of all humanitarian actors in question, neutral “humanitarian” procedures of proving a refugee’s worthiness of relief inadvertently produced a distinct problem of “statelessness” derived from the limited relief and legal entitlements provided through the international refugee legal regime. But just as political debates concerning the humane treatment of “stateless” foreigners and strangers enter a variety of overlapping discourses at various scales, humanitarian government at the Palawan first-asylum camp engaged multiple forms of government, comprising a transnational assemblage of actors, analyses and technical solutions. Walzer touches upon statelessness as a multilayered problem<sup>83</sup> when he considers how overlapping demands for justice through membership to a state as well as duty-based obligation through social exchanges of charitable giving become co-articulated in what he coins the “two-in-one” argument in favor of humanitarian aid. Relating this suggestion to remaining Vietnamese in the Philippines, one can appreciate how channels of pastoral care and an obligation to offer hospitality remains a latent possibility even within the historically overlapping politics of the Philippines, Vietnam, and their transnational circuits. Yet when cast on a technical register of state sovereignty, the spectral presence of “long-stayers” (based on their pastoral participation in an economy of progressive self-sufficiency) became later articulated in legal terms as an issue concerning statelessness born out of Communist state succession and lack of nationality afforded by the Philippines.

This deferred politics grew out of two conditions in which the discourse, which Vietnamese asylees encountered, was not of their time and historical creation. First, as argued

above, the offered gift of refugee resettlement entailed a timeline for available relief based on taxonomic procedures. Hence subjectification as rejected refugees grew from inopportune arrival when refugee status determination processes and its local iteration of the international legal definition came into effect after March 1989. After trying to escape Vietnam by boat three times, a tragic sense of fate kept Nguyen Phuc Truong waiting in the Philippines for 16 years before being interviewed again as depicted in the film *Stateless* (2013). However, Truong expresses an irony growing from a different political moment: “After 16 years of waiting, it seems this time is the longest wait ever.” Before this interview became a potential chance for resettlement, the argument had to be made that publicly problematized as “statelessness” the pastoral hospitality offered to Vietnamese in the Philippines.

Once again, the humanitarian problem of remaining in the Philippines would find deferred legibility within later 20<sup>th</sup> century debates concerning shortcomings of international legal norms developed in the post-World War II period. As the second sense of the long-stayer’s belated encounter with adjudicating their claims to refugee resettlement, what the 1951 Convention Concerning Refugees and 1967 Protocol left out were manners in practically handling cases in which original states of residence ceased to exist or nationality was legislatively limited through contested principles for granting nationality or immigration status (UNHCR 2012, 92). Notably, the 1951 convention does not prescribe how the responsibility for granting citizenship and nationality should be realized by individual states. This shortcoming in the international refugee regime emerged, “due to the complexities of statelessness and the urgency of refugee matters at the time” after the Second World War in Europe (Ibid). Tellingly, a positive framework for handling of “statelessness” in its own proper terms would receive distinct formalization only in 1954 and 1961. Partially on this historical basis, a “state of exception”

became the governmental focus for a variety of state, intergovernmental, and transnational actors who tried developing effective global and national frameworks for practically addressing “statelessness.” Not incidentally, in 2011 the Philippines became Southeast Asia’s only signatory to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons. This move came 30 years after the Philippines under Martial Law became the sole Southeast Asian signatory to the 1951 Convention on refugees. As I have tried to describe, Marcos’s “constitutional authoritarianism” and the implementation of refugee law in the Philippines both during and after Martial Law together embody ambiguities concerning the “rule of law” in the postcolonial structure of the elite-favored “juridical field.” What’s more, rearticulating discourses of sovereignty- as Agamben does in an extreme schematization- offers a reminder of the enduring double-edge nature of state-centric refugee law. In parallel fashion, other sources of prophetic “people power” and pastoral government mobilized and organized resistance against Martial Law<sup>84</sup> and state-centered refugee law.

With respect to these paradoxes of authoritarian appeal to refugee law and the legal dislocation mechanically read as the global state of exception, a different transnational form of politics arose that politicized the pastoral, merely economic existences of remaining Vietnamese in the Philippines. A complex politics of competing futures and variably availed possibilities grew out of overlapping governments. Although the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines offered pastoral support in their resistance against forced repatriation, this unique hospitality availed through mutual understanding forged between the Filipino state and the CBCB made, “it clear that a permanent solution should be found. The status given the Vietnamese was... of temporary form from the start (Evangelistas 79). As outlined above, the remaining Vietnamese existed merely as subjects of interest on the “progressive” basis of naked

economic self-sufficiency without legal status. The pastoral care of the Church offered an ambiguous hospitality in which its Vietnamese and Filipino representatives like Sister Pascuale and Bishop Arguelles would be willing to sacrifice their social positions to stand as caretakers to the otherwise hopeless Vietnamese. At the same time, since this pastoral government left them without legal documentation such as passports, residency status as necessary for education and official exams, and overall civil or political rights afforded to citizens or documented immigrants, their plight became contested as a problem of “statelessness.”

Just as an alternative of pastoral hospitality originated from resistance arising at the frontiers of refugee law- where rejected refugees occupy a site of contestation- humanitarian reasons contributed to a reinvigorated politics that by 2004 presented the remaining Vietnamese with a national avenues for practical redress or different passages to freedom. Initially, what was once optimistically cast as a miraculous symbol of remaining Vietnamese lingered as a problem of extralegal existence. Eventually, their legal limbo entered Filipino political debate reaching the highest executive levels and congressional fora. In 1998, President Estrada decreed Executive Order 44 setting up an Inter-Agency Committee To Resolve Issues and Concerns Involving All Remaining Vietnamese Nationals in the Philippines. This committee was tasked with provide, “a durable and acceptable solution to the issues and concerns surrounding the RVNs” (1). These “surrounding” concerns were meant to engage citizens from areas where Vietnamese were living within a solution-building process. Results form these debates varied. At first, an opening was availed “to apply for Permanent residency (although one informant says that this option was actually only opened to the initial group of Philcag people- i.e., wives and children of Filipinos” (Evangelistas 79). In 2000 the Committee conferred with the Vietnamese to deliberate,” problems with their applications based on existing laws.” Through this process several bills were

filed in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Philippines that took up the possibility for granting permanent residency to all Vietnamese who Congressman Abraham Kahlil Mitra lauded as “self-reliant, law-abiding, and civic oriented earning the respect of the community” (79-80). While initial Bills were not acted on, finally a House Bill championed by Congressman Mitra garnered support of 14 other congresspersons and thereby resulting in the approval of the House Bill No. 5970 entitled, “The Social Integration Act of 2003 for the Remaining Vietnamese Nationals” (80). This proposal offered a means to permanent residency status, documentation, and all accompanying rights. However, while the Bill was being debated and modified in the Senate, a group of Vietnamese lawyers from third countries- “notably Australia and the United States”- visited the Philippines where they argued against this legislative option.

Mobilizing a transnational legal consciousness and distinctly diasporic Vietnamese reading of historical events, these Vietnamese subjects who had been resettled and thereby politically empowered as citizens and legal practitioners articulated the counter-argument to granting residency in the Philippines through problematizing the remaining Vietnamese experiences as “statelessness” cases. This problematization did not arise without historical difference in experience and pragmatic ambiguity. On the one hand, posing their singular pastoral hospitality as extralegal limbo may reassert the dominance of technical forms of government- namely, the secular rule of law. This positively empowers legally enlightened, “successful” resettlement subjects of the Vietnamese diaspora over those without sufficient legal consciousness to overcome the problem of remaining in the Philippines based on the very form of refugee law. However reasserting this sovereign-juridical form of government as resettled Vietnamese did risks selectively interpreting the politics of hospitality afforded remaining Vietnamese in the Philippines. Such a perspective may erase historical difference in

experiences, such as sometimes offered through overly general representations of the “Boat People.” And what may not come into view is the historically specific, precarious politics of truth that increasingly is demanded in humanitarian government.

On the other hand, the lobbying and legal work undertaken by Trinh Hoi, his organization VOICE-Manila, and other diasporic subjects of heightened legal consciousness also sought to reframe the particular experiences of screened-out Vietnamese both within and beyond the flawed discourses of refugee laws and the practices of credibility assessments. Naming the Vietnamese precarious plight in the Philippines as a stateless existence of “merely living” rendered operational the professional, technical capacities and instrumental management of transnational political actors working in a humanitarian vein (Calhoun 2011). In this light, perhaps Trinh Hoi and other’s intense advocacy work making a technical argument concerning “statelessness” and the irregularities of status determination decision-making and appeals processes also contributed to the pragmatic improvement of Philippines’ immigration and citizenship laws. This is exemplified by the Philippines’ 2011 adoption of the 1954 Statelessness Convention. Nevertheless, at the same time, uncertain risks were taken in suggesting to the remaining Vietnamese that, “perhaps becoming permanent residents of the Philippines- or apparently even having that option- might block opportunities for resettlement in third countries” (Evangelistas 81). As with the framing of displacement experiences of all Vietnamese in the diasporic social imaginary of the “boat people,” such an insistence on remaining stateless in the Philippines, to some extent, reflects an investment in historical injury and an attachment to experiences of violation and vulnerability as grounds for becoming consistent subjects of free conscience (Brown 1993; Butler 1997). Going so far as the “third country” Vietnamese lawyers

did in appealing to the “CBCP to intercede, asking that the bill be dropped” still seems a hazardous strategy for globally addressing statelessness.

For the remaining Vietnamese themselves, the community had been “split and the bill had been dropped” that would have granted them permanent residency and Filipino citizenship. Today no more than 300 Vietnamese have attained citizenship after establishing lives with Filipino families, businesses and a locally integrated community throughout the Philippines. Since 2004 select humanitarian cases were opened again for legal consideration. Belated immigration interviews were held in Manila as immigration agents from the US, Australia, Canada and Norway revived the possibility for resettlement. Duc Nguyen’s documentary *Stateless* meticulously depicts this belated, nervous process of screening subjects. But, through methodological self-delimitations, the film forgets the history of transnational humanitarianism including the pastoral hospitality attempted as a local solution for the “screened-out” Vietnamese. Instead, as the “last chapter” of the boat people exodus finds imaginative form in the narratives they tell, through the elicitation of humanitarian government, Duc Nguyen’s film offers a sense of time stretched and dreams deferred. In the film’s final scene, Trinh Hoi pleads for resettling stateless Vietnamese, “as a chance for us to have closure... Saigon fell 30 years ago... this is the one remaining boat people population anywhere in the world, and still we cannot have closure.” This cinematic document and Trinh Hoi’s argument concerning the long-stayers’ “statelessness” mark a kind of enlightened “maturity” and self-determination articulated through thinking at the limits of humanitarian government. Against becoming subjected to the image of pure victimhood, refugee returns to legal reasoning by Vietnamese in the Philippines partakes in competing yet overlapping discourses of government, technologies of empowerment, and ethical practices for narrating and addressing the self.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> The United Nations High Commission for Refugees reported the displaced population to be 33.9 million at the start of 2011 (UNHCR 2012, 1). But this figure does not include, “the millions of displaced Palestinians who come under the mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)... Global trends suggest that displacement will not only continue in the future but will take different forms. The world’s population is expected to grow from today’s 7 billion people to 10.1 billion by 2100” (UNHCR 2012, 1-2). Besides the magnitude of recent and projected growth, these quantitative figures metonymically testify to two unsettling realities. First, the United Nation’s formative role in creating the ‘normalized’ statelessness of Palestinian receives acknowledgement but lacks stated recognition in such statistical accountancy by the organization tasked for refugees and displaced “subjects of concern.” Second, the latter population (“subjects of concern”) for the UNHCR suggests the global difficulties in classification and accompanying these come the decrease in socio-economic support for resettled “refugees” instead of supporting, with less humanitarian legal obligations, the refugee’s others—the stateless, IDPs, refugee returnees, asylum-seekers, returned IDPs, and “Others” (figure 0.1, p. 2).

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Thanh-Thao Truong (November 2013); Trinh Hoi quoted in *Stateless* (film) directed by Duc Nguyen (2013).

<sup>3</sup> Trinh Hoi quoted in *Stateless*

<sup>4</sup> In this pessimistic light, Nietzsche might find ironic affirmation when the journalist Kate Armstrong writes of Trinh: “It is more than good fortune and his background that inspire him to act: “It’s almost like an instinctual thing once you get to know the extent of the refugees’ problems, once you get to know about the injustice still being done upon the stateless, once you learn what’s happening out there, you have no choice but to help” (2000, 35)

<sup>5</sup> The governmental modalities I am referring draws from Foucault’s histories of governmentality: disciplinary power over individual docile bodies, biopower concerned with the life of populations, sovereignty with power over life and in contrast to the limitations of rights, and pastoral power concerned with mobile individuals whose souls are taken care of in their collective relations of sacrifice.

<sup>6</sup> For Nietzsche, wounded subjects gain the identity of an individuated sovereign subject (as a “doer”) insofar as senses of “will” gain continuous linkage through recollectable responsibility to the past (Butler 1997; Haskell 1985). However, departing from Nietzsche’s preoccupation with punishment and criminal law in his formulation of genealogical subjectivity, I seek to follow Butler’s discussion of ethical practices and the reflexive grounds for critique (2005, 11-26) that she claims to be latent in Foucault’s genealogical and ethical sets of research.

<sup>7</sup> Striking an overly alarmist tone at the potential prospects for “unprecedented biopolitical catastrophe” (1998, 188) if our disciplined studies fail to appreciate his warning of the potential dislocating extension of the state of exception becoming normalized as the grounding principle “soon extend[ed] over the entire planet” (38), Agamben arrives at the unconvincing conclusion that the camp, “across a range of historical and political circumstances... [as] subsumed under the category of modernity.” (Das 2007, 332), has become the paradigmatic political space of modernity and “hidden *nomos* of the planet” (Agamben 1998, 176).

While provocative, Agamben’s theoretical-philosophical discourse requires further ethnographic description and historical specificity. I am seeking to chart out the Palawan First Asylum Camp and its pastoral successor as born out of competing and conflicted forms of governmentality. Perhaps bringing “the camp” in line with Foucault’s other research on these formations can elaborate an analysis and humanitarian politics that is not stripped down to, “in the final analysis... grasp[ing] human life in the figure of bare or sacred life, and therefore, despite themselves [humanitarians], maintain a secret solidarity with the very politics that they out to fight (Agamben 1998, 133). Considering humanitarian agencies’ political enfolding within state, international and intergovernmental politics as well as socio-cultural contexts may find demonstrate how a more Foucauldian “biopolitics” than that offered by Agamben may arise through writing discrete effective histories. These genealogies may depart sharply from an ideal, sovereign-centered analysis that claims, “the idea of an inner solidarity between democracy and totalitarianism (which here we must caution, with every caution, advance) is obviously not ... a historiographic claim, which would authorize the liquidation and leveling of the enormous differences that characterize their history and their rivalry. Yet this idea must nevertheless be strongly maintained on a historico-philosophical level, since it along will allow us to orient ourselves in a relation to the new realities and unforeseen convergences of the end of the millennium” (Agamben 10). This influential analysis offer complex citations and facile comparisons based primarily on Nazi totalitarianism and Western theologico-philosophical discourses before engaging more intensely with specific histories. Such untimely comparisons of camps - as hidden matrix of politics,



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as nomos of the modern- traffic in the ideas of equivalence and ideals of pure humanitarian form. As Redfield, Fassin, and others may suggest, his ironically manifests the apolitical politics of the humanitarian present.

The comparative theory of camps may lead to facile comparisons, such as those encountered in humanitarian writing of the first-asylum camp educator Eleanor Stewart who sees no governmental qualitative or historical difference between the Palawan camp and a “reeducation camp” in the DRV. What I find wanting in such analyses based on the mere form of the camp, is the kind of description that details complex collaborations and competing constituent forces, including moral senses, that do not result in a kind of denunciatory mode of ethnography or a totalizing mode of historical authority.

<sup>8</sup> As Foucault may contend, this “governmentality” may include historical regimes of power-relations: biopower, disciplinary power, sovereignty, pastoral power and ethical practices on the self. In Chapter Three (“Pastoral Hospitality”), I consider historical conflict between two competing governments and economies of power. On the one hand, sovereign power and its discourses of legal right may be exemplified by the rule of Ferdinand Marcos particularly during his instatement of Martial Law from 1972-1986. Against this sovereignty and state of exception, the Christian pastorate manifested competing government and economy of souls predicated on beneficent, self-sacrificial, individual and collective care (Foucault 2007, 175-226). In the Philippines this form of power has notably been embodied in the “People Power” movement- now dubbed “EDSA One”- that toppled Marcos in 1986.

My contention is that scholarship engaging with Foucault has not fully appreciated Foucault’s analysis of pastoral power. Scholarship has thereby dwelled on disciplinary power, archaeology etc. Or theoretical and ethnographic accounts have favored attempts reconstructing Foucault’s disparate account of biopolitics (e.g., Hardt and Negri 2010; Agamben 1998; Petrynas ). This remains unfortunate because the initially published lecture introducing historical research on governmentality not only included specifically catholic-based criticisms of Machiavelli’s treatise on the prince, but also the often cited lecture on governmentality (February 1, 1978) was followed by almost five subsequent lectures reflecting on pastoral power, its context, interactions and divergences from commingling arts of government. Perhaps more alarming, as the editor for *Security, Territory, Population* (2007), Michael Sellenart points out, Foucault wrote a manuscript on, “the reformed pastoral, The Flesh and the Body (*la Chair et Le Corps*) [as] announced in *History of Sexuality Volume 1*, page 1, note 4” (Sellenart in Foucault 2007, 374). In addition to his treatment of the pastorate offered in the 1978 lectures, perhaps future “Foucault studies” may further elucidate this significant body of research lost either out of Foucault’s utter dissatisfaction- as “the manuscript of which was totally destroyed” (Ibid, n 31)- or perhaps because his controversial commentary published during the Iranian Revolution offered unseemly conditions of reception leading to an overhaul in his thought.

9 “Humanitarian” today is a widely pervasive reference, but it remains important to keep in mind its strict legal referent as the body of law dedicated to the protocols for conducting war in a regulated, “humanized” manner as agreed upon by states. Asad (2004) astutely unsettles both the secularized religious histories to the salient discourse of “humanitarianism.” As he notes:

Much has been written on concepts of the human as the active subject of modernity, on humanism, humanitarianism, and the humanities. But of the innumerable books dealing in one way or another with humanity, virtually all take its sense for granted—a large, all-embracing category whose members have a single essence. There are introductions to the study of collective forms of life (“Humanity: An Introduction to Cultural Anthropology”), theological reflections (“The Humanity of Christ”), but virtually nothing as far as I know that traces the historical formation of the concept of humanity as a collective subject. And yet it is in the name of humanity that the modern project of humanitarianism intervenes in the lives of other beings to protect, help, or improve them; it is in the name of humanity that progressivist doctrines of freedom are expressed. In other words, it is humanity that is said to suffer, humanity that calls for compassion, defense, and solidarity. (3)

10 This plurality is suggested by Sears (2005; forthcoming) to describe the protracted and multiple antagonisms entailing colonial and Cold War interventions by such powers as the French, Americans and Soviets in collaboration with local political actors. Foregrounding this plurality and overlapping antagonisms remains an important task in tracing the “untimely comparisons” among today’s wars of terror and counter-insurgency with yesteryears’ wars of “containment” and instructive counter-insurgency insofar the lessons of failed nation-building and military intervention in “the Vietnam War” for Americans nurture and haunt the present US (Nguyen 2013, 136-140). Far too often, the overlapping “Cold War” battle in “Vietnam” may be read through entrenched geopolitical historiographies that spatially polarize antagonisms like those between “the Viet Cong” against “Republican Vietnamese” (Giebel 2011). What’s more, selective recognition of American military intervention in “just Vietnam” not only occludes devastating “secret” interventions in Laos and Cambodia but also it attempts the kind of revisionism of neoconservative recovery of the nobly fought past insofar as American perceptions of the war overlook popular, heterogeneous disaffection with the government of the southern Republic of Vietnam.

11 While this “Snap election” ultimately failed in granting renewed legitimacy, through precipitating the People Power revolution that toppled Marcos, the specter of the Khmer Rouge was appropriated as the potential violence and extreme future of any coup d’état against the dissipating regime (276).

12 On the one hand, geopolitically motivated governments sought to offer refuge and sanctuary to their Cold War allies, as the case with the America’s “friends of freedoms” from South Vietnam. On the other hand, international refugee organizations and treaties stressed “denationalized” human rights (e.g., to movement) as well as humanitarian principles like neutrality (Sassen 1998; Peteet 2005). These “two international regimes” for managing refugees found articulation within situated processes concerning refugee-seeking subjects who had to contend with these regime’s dueling imperatives for accepting not only bona fide refugee subjects fleeing past persecution but also self-governing subjects worthy of future inclusion within liberal resettlement countries.

13 As witnessed with experience of “criminal alien” deportees of Cambodian American as well as Central American descent, one may consider presently these forced migrants as subjects not produced solely from their actions and delinquency, but also through the structural subjections of “racializing” urban poverty, ‘lean’ neoliberal welfare (or workfare), and the commingling of criminal justice imperatives within immigration calculations within the United States (as of this writing; see, e.g. Wacquant 2001). As will be discussed later, these variable subjections tied to neoliberal imperatives of individual responsibility violated humanitarian hospitality through evaluating refugee policy according to economic calculus. The extent of this hegemonic valuation of individual responsibility (in economic, behavioral, and political terms) has consequentially produced further dislocations through deportations of former refugee. This negative arch of return has led some to consider the above deportations as “deportation diasporas” (Kanstroom 2012). Large-scale experiences of deportations at once contradicts the principle of nonrefoulment, established within the international refugee law regime, while highlighting the potential vulnerabilities of historically extant immigration laws and practical administrative agencies handling refugees, asylum seekers and other migrants.

14 This data only recorded only cases of refugee and asylum-seekers. They do not reflect internally displaced persons (IDPs). Moreover, each term of possible motivation- “fear, hunger and uncertainty”- marks the undecided quality of accounting for any migrant’s legal status. (See also Anker, pp 1-4)

15 See Keely 2001; Loeschner et al, 1986 122-126.

16 For Yen Le Espiritu, a “critical refugee studies” could only proceed through querying even the territorial criterion of “refugee” as satisfying the requirement of crossing states’ borders. As many critics underscore, the international refugee regime excludes the comparable experience (in quantitative and qualitative terms) of internally displaced people (IDPs), who are not offered the relief of UNHCR operations under their original mandate.

17 For reasons of space, this complex history has been overly schematically simplified here. See Chandler (1991) and Kiernan (2002) for some of the best relevant histories easily available.

18 The Khmer Rouge was a minor political group, forced to live in Cambodia’s northern hills, with little more than 5000 followers (Chandler 1991, 174). King Sihanouk’s deceitful, tragic attempts at maintaining the neutrality of Cambodia in relation to neighboring conflicts became ultimately impossible. Juggling favorable ties with the Cold War’s “great powers” entailed Communist and American interventions within the ‘stable’ delineations of territorial control. Not of least import, these interventions included the Nixon administration’s

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massive “saturation” bombing campaigns over neutral Laos and Cambodia dropping more total yield of bombs than all theaters of World War II combined (Kiernan 2009). This inordinate exercise of power gave the opening for the emergence of a more widely, readily demonized Khmer Rouge regime.

19 Personal communication (April 19, 2013)

20 This population label itself reflects the colonial formation bequeathed by French suzerainty. It generally describes Vietnamese, Laotians, and Cambodians of varied ethnicities, ideologies, and descent. Reflective of a peculiar racial logic, it also strangely figures different minorities- Cham, Hmong, Chinese, etc- who have long inhabited what we may now refer to as mainland postcolonial Southeast Asia.

21 Arendt offers an account of the horrors of “denuded” life that characterized the radical vulnerability of millions of stateless Muselmann- or what would later be defined as political refugees- after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the modern state system as it was organized at least in Europe at that time.

22 Perhaps the paradigmatic exception to this governmental inclusion and administrative limitation is the dislocation and stateless of Palestinians, who were not covered under UNHCR mandates but the specialized agency United Nations Relief and Work Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). This organization formed to make amends for the UN’s role in the formation of the Israeli state and the persisting Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

23 Other regions of displacement also contributed to this law’s realization. For instance, conflicts in Afghanistan and Iran, Guatemala and El Salvador, Haiti and Cuba, among others greatly aggravated both national and global problems of managing refugee statelessness. On the Central American refugee displacements see Coutin (1993)

24 This “biopolitical” system could be conceived as somehow exercising contradictory standards of classical sovereign territoriality (or reason d’etat) in addition to “transnationalizing” international human rights that imply emergent forms of legal personhood beyond citizenship (Sassen 1998, 21-24). Yet only through gradual legislative modifications and their organized impetus did the United States come to accede to refugee conventions and human rights instruments. As Sassen argues, “it was not until the 1980s that the same [growing influence of human rights law] began in the United States, though it lags behind” (22).

25 Integrating humanitarian reception of refugees within the strategies of containment and military confrontation was not exceptional, for the US, within global refugee politics. As Charles Keely argues (2001), “there was not one international refugee regime during the Cold War, but two: one in the industrial countries of the first world vis-à-vis Communism and one for the rest of the world. The second regime was the sphere in which the [UNHCR] primarily acted” (306). Thus, a Cold War bipolar logic was practically inscribed within both policy and provision of humanitarian receptions for refugees. Most “first world” industrial countries implemented their refugee policies as, “an extension of the strategy of containment.”

Furthermore Loescher outlines (1986, 170-190) how the invocation of the 1951 conventional definition of the refugee within Southeast Asia contrasts sharply with the exclusionary reception of Haitian, Cuban, Guatemalan and Salvadoran asylum-seekers, who were deemed “economic immigrants” and not victims of persecution, even as those displaced from these countries were also subjected to counter-insurgency programs and “Cold War” alliances.

26 Espiritu cites the placement of initial refugee camps within and adjacent to the very military bases that served as functional basis for carrying out military operations. Drawing from her own displacement and refugee resettlement history, she outlines how initial evacuation operations brought South Vietnamese refugees through Subic naval base and Clark air force base in the Philippines through Andersen air force base in Guam to eventually Camp Pendleton in the San Diego metropolitan area. Both of the former bases were, respectively, the largest military facilities in American network of bases outside of North America. And, according to Espiritu, Andersen served as facilitating the largest yield of bombing on mainland Southeast Asia.

27 As a Foucauldian apparatus (dispositif) of power- that may also be considered as a governmental web of diverse agencies- the emerging humanitarian management of the regional displacement drew from the “international community” and from regional actors. This ensemble had to meet the living needs of those displaced as immediate exigencies, which ultimately became drawn out beyond most government’s expectations. Added to this prolongation, many various waves and refugee flights constituted the populations displaced beyond the well-known, emblematic cases of the “boat people.”

28 No allusion to gulags or concentration camps is intended by using this signifier. In fact, taking inspiration from a quote from Eduardo Glissant, I am inclined to seeing these refugee centers as a multiplicity rather than as the camp as it emerged from European experience or theoretical imaginary, as in “the nomos of the modern” for Agamben (1999). Similarly, as some readings would have, disciplinary spaces do not necessarily take on a totalitarian character. From a similar though not entirely connected vein, camps have been analyzed as akin to “total institutions,” asylums, or repressive institutions from Goffman-inspired analysis, Bettelheim’s institutional psychology, or an American anti-psychiatry critique (W. Reich). These latter analyses productively- I contend- inform Mortland’s discussion of the Bataan processing center insofar as it is a particular space for refugee training, forming and symbolic handling through the center’s “rites of passage” (1987; cited in Ong 2003).

29 Thus sovereignty was conditioned by an ensemble of immanent governmental agencies (Foucault 2007, 23)

30 To remedy this ad hoc refugee management, a regionally coordinated refugee plan would be delayed until the Comprehensive Action Plan in 1989. Thus, this patchy, uneven, archipelagic nexus of securing the lives of the displaced was marked by militarization, sexual abuse and, as in the case along the Thai-Cambodian border, actual civil war which included some of the worst kinds of real politick, including Thai, Chinese and perhaps- through these regimes- US support for the Khmer Rouge against the Vietnamese, People’s Republic of Kampuchea, and Khmer Serei (Robinson, 67-74). The problem of security or physical protection within refugee camps remains globally vexing. In particular, they often become spaces for recouping power after defeat, iterating nationalism and resistance (Peteet 2005; Malkki 1996) and carrying out the very productive conflicts that displace and figure attempts to exercise some durable neutral practice of humanitarian assistance (Muggah 2006; Lischer 2005; Feldman 2007)

31 The Philippines’s immigration services, within the executive branch of governance, gave a liberal interpretation of the non-refoulment principle with the 1951 Convention (Vithit 82). Thus it was often the preferred destination for those fleeing by boat.

32 The historical dominance of most Filipinos in spite of formal sovereignty persisted in this post-Vietnam War period, as the Philippines became the primary site of evacuation for South Vietnamese.

33 Ironically, in 1973 it was due to the Marcos’s violent confrontations in the southern Philippines with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the Bangsa Moro Liberation Organization that anywhere from 30,000 to 200,000 Filipinos sought refuge as refugees in Sabah, Malaysia (Vithit 83). The agonistic knot among the Marcos regime’s geopolitically aligned humanitarianism with these conflicts for autonomy and consequent displacements in the Southern Philippines will be considered in subsequent treatments.

34 Perhaps one could consider how governmental practices and welfare agencies were utilized, modified and “innovated” within these processing centers, during a period of broad geopolitical shifts and transnational remapping of power.

35 This process can be traced from the devolution of “social” responsibilities onto individual residents, immigrants and refugees. From the election of Reagan as president into the 1990’s, immigration policy debates measured and contrasted “worthy,” working, docile and economically viable citizens. These calculative debates often included “racializing” representations of certain “unviable” refugees (e.g., Haitian “boat” people) in addition to the mobilization of localized resistances to these representations against the austere limitation of federal support for refugees (Loescher 1986, 202).

36 These “pacific crossings” of governmental rationalities, welfare reforms, institutional organizations between the US and the Philippines- as well as other points of American Pacific power- have a long history (e.g., McCoy and Scarano 2009; McCoy 2012).

37 As in the German police state discussed by (Foucault 2007)

38 In this light, it seems utterly consist that the PRPC was converted into the Bataan Technology Park, Inc. Moreover, it would be interesting to see the possible homologies of flexible practices, training competencies and programming policies between the governmental logic of the PRPC and such Filipino agencies as the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, the Philippines Overseas Labor Office, Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, among other offices comprising what has been called the “Philippine Labor Brokerage State” (Rodriguez 2010). What expertise, policy dispositions and general “lessons” were learned, possibly relayed and related to the Filipino state’s active role in inducing outbound labor migration, with inbound commitments of “citizen duties,” remittances and ‘diasporic’ nationalism?

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39 In contrast to considering PFAC as a paradigmatic site or anomic zone of indistinction between war and peace or the exception and the norm within liberal, biopolitical modernity (Agamben 1999), the PFAC figured as an interrelated site of attempted specificity and legal, political, and social definition. Thereby it demanded specificity and the truth of its refuge-seeking subjects.

40 In other words, through the political reasoning that pitted *raison d'état* within or against the interplays of regional and global balances of power

41 Interviewers from the INS usually came for temporary interview tours, when eventual legal eligibility would be determined for resettlement in the US (Stewart 181-2). Although other countries utilized the PFAC as a processing center, as mentioned earlier to be the case for Norway, I have yet to encounter adequately detailed sources depicting these countries' interview processes.

42 In contrast to some violent potentialities of legal states of exception (Agamben 1999, 2005), the Philippine somewhat anomic situation for processing, resettling, and screening, enabled humanitarian interventions and forms of qualifying, caring for, examining and conducting lives of the displaced.

43 Data recorded at that time (as of April 24 1982) describes how a total of 17,241 refugees were housed in the PFAC, 12,197 departed in the 1979-1982 period. Resettlement countries granting the most admissions for the refugee-seekers from the PFAC included: the US, West Germany, Australia, Canada and France, and Norway (Knudsen 1983, 37). Consistent with a governmental recourse to social sciences knowledge-production, Knudsen's study, funded by Norway's Social Research Council and Ministry of Labor, describes the PFAC as Norway's primary refugee processing center. This alignment of political function and scholarly funding is paralleled by the discursive wealth depicting the realities and processes enacted within the Bataan camp for the US.

44 It may serve as no surprise that Thailand, for instance,

45 Through an active social movement and landmark legal battle on behalf of those fleeing persecution from the very "freedom fighters" the US were supporting in Guatemala and El Salvador (Coutin 1993), the exclusivity of the US refugee and asylum system, biased towards political refugee claimants from Communist countries, was modified.

46 Given our contemporary international entanglements, elements of this refugee politics still subtly persists Agamben's theorizations of sovereign power of "bare life" seems more relevant here than his more exaggerated claim of this exception becoming modern political normality. Highly publicized admissions like Chen Guangcheng's flight from China in 2012 as a refugee student at NYU exemplifies the remaining preferences in refugee policy.

47 For example, the UNHCR managed the Thanh Xuan restaurant, which "served a version of Vietnamese food" (Stewart, 9) and employed "Vietnamese girls...as waitresses." The Vietnamese who worked there did so through the work-credit system that tried reproducing culturally known patterns of collective cooperation and production (Knudsen, 50). Interestingly, the restaurant became mostly popular with tourists visiting the camp and foreign staff from INS, UNHCR, etc (Stewart, 10).

48 He was eventually granted resettlement (197). Such an account of the self grounded in recognition and articulation through suffering can become- perhaps perversely- a compulsion, passion and form of attachment (Butler 1997; Brown 1995; Cash 2002)

49 This was the Reagan administration's key claim in the aforementioned case (*ABC v. INS*) barring asylum to Guatemalan and El Salvadoran refugees. Miriam Ticktin (2011) also discusses a calculus of humanitarian morality that permits certain diseased migrants from France's former colonies in North Africa to seek treatment through asylum granted via the French immigration law's "illness clause." She details how exceptionally diseased bodies have more legal integrity and access over and before more generally burdened working bodies of economic immigrants.

50 In addition to the Cold War divisions reflected within the international human rights regime, pitting political and civil rights against economic, social, and cultural rights.

51 For reasons of time, space, and source availability, I had to restrict my discussion here to legal and representation matters. I have to delay my discussion of the role of the Catholic Church and church-based organizations of all denominations. The Church in the Philippines was pivotal in pressuring Ferdinand Marcos towards accepting the initial wave of arriving boat people in 1978. Moreover, they were active in forming groups for providing humanitarian assistance as well as spiritual counsel, sponsoring Churches for a religiously diverse refugee population. What's more, perhaps in a dynamic different from the PRPC, Bataan;

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the Palawan camp featured many other denominations, namely Baptist and Mormon agencies active, as opposed to the PRPC's catholic predominance. Finally, I intended on ending this essay with a discussion of the role of the Catholic Church in the politics of revolt and transition during the same period of Indochinese displacement. It appears that, due to the worldly power of the Church in the Philippines, Palawan is the only site in Southeast Asia to have granted local resettlement to a population of up to 2,700 Vietnamese that was screened-out due to the imperfections, "corruption," and politics of screening claimant subjects. This exceptional hospitality, drawing from the law of hospitality as discussed by Derrida (2001), came in 1996 from the Catholic Church's organizing and exerting political pressure on the Ramos administration, which had previously marshaled the military to force this population's return to Vietnam (Robinson 222, 282). This essay serves as an initial exploration into this particularly situated refugee politics of camps, status determination, and procedural failures. These latter political formations produced specific communities, humanitarian networks and humanitarian subjectivities, and places. This essay seems part of a larger potential project, so your comments, criticisms and feedback would be greatly appreciated.

52 As opposed to refugee processing centers (Mortland 1987, 380-381)

53 Below, I consider how the compassionate construction of "refugeeness" through humanitarian relief remains distinct from the technical emergence of legal consciousness of refugee status and individual refugee rights. This difference may express the comingling yet distinction between sovereignty negotiated in the 'aberrant' condition of diasporic statelessness and governmentality of passionate humanitarian responses to this "condition" that may be remedied through technical therapeutic intervention.

54 As one element of possible deconstruction of humanitarianism, the humanitarian "metaphysics of presence" (as described by Derrida) forms through multivalent operations that respond to emergencies according to the present time of emergencies and the closest proximity to identified suffering. This general formation entails universal narratives and practices that work through seemingly frictionless mobility and ahistorical consideration of decidedly political events emerging within social structures, cultural contexts, and relations of power.

55 Of course, these receive consideration via other discourses and interventions organized around other logics, problematizations, and policy debates.

56 "About Us." <http://www.badjainnpalawan.com/aboutus>. [Accessed on 12/6/2013].

57 Peculiar relations of power manifest themselves in naming their property and business as the Badjao Inn. "Badjao" derives from the commonly used Malay-Borneo name for an ethnic group misidentified as "Badjao." These people are also referred to as "Sama Bilaut" since they have established cultural affinities to cosmopolitan cultures, practices and beliefs of Sama, such as those periodically inhabiting Sulawesi and the straits of Sulu and Celebes (Lowe). An irony seems apparent in how their ethnicity is marketed even as their maritime nomadism as "sea gypsies" qualifies their inclusion in the nation in relation to a state attempting to territorialize their mobility and standardize their presence as part of the biopolitically managed population (See <http://www.ncca.gov.ph/about-culture-and-arts/e-books/e-book.php?id=61&t=2>).

58 That reform of camp affairs requires a strong Euro-American imprint to last as essentially better suggests the forceful need for a humanitarian foot in the sands of culture. These sands of "human culture" perhaps suggest the liberal colonial tale of Robinson Crusoe, except in this case Friday is the consolidated humanitarian self who disrupts the given landscape of Filipino culture. More concretely, these sands appear as a historical palimpsest, a fragile archive, and the contingent basis for apprehending human culture.

59 Yet Marcos's articulation of a Filipino "New Society" through Martial Law and national development comes at the simultaneous chagrin of anti-Vietnam War, anti-American Filipino nationalists.

60 Christoph Giebel (2009) notes that about a third of Saigon's population favored "invading Northern" forces of Democratic Republic of Vietnam, while another third remained neutral and the remaining third opposed the incoming military and government. What's more, the government of "South Vietnam" mostly maintained popular support among urban populations, whereas "North Vietnam" drew a great deal of its operational military strength and nationalist support from rural populations of the Republic of Vietnam. Giebel contends that constructing the binary opposition between North and South Vietnam forces obscures the dynamics throughout the longer history of the Indochina Wars. What's more, conflict on the battlefield was fought among more complex actors consisting of resistance forces, revolutionary operatives, collaborators on all sides, etc that confounded and ultimately defeated the US policy framing of North

Vietnam versus South Vietnam. This dichotomized framing remains articulate in some post-war historiography that maintains the US-Vietnam war was fought between two conventional Vietnamese states.

61 What's more, compassionate voluntary action posits a form of moral probity and sentimental investment that apparently undermines international public rationalization of rejecting refugees. Of course, both of these bureaucratic and compassionate discourses entail distributions of legitimacy and domination through the UNHCR, camp NGOs, national immigration agencies and programs of education.

62 Other writers stress, how "refugeeness" is fashioned socio-culturally as a transformed subject in liminal transition (Mortland; Malkki 1995; Ong 2003). Though these constructions of refugee identity remain potent, a first-asylum such as the PFAC offered sanctuary for those without bona fide refugee status. Hence the transformations that were attempted in processing centers, such as the Bataan camp discussed by Mortland and Ong, differ from those camps where refugees' passages to countries of resettlement were not guaranteed.

63 Chapter One directly considers policy-based and legal complexities of status determination. Politics of the 1980's and early 1990's in Euro-American states increasingly sought in status determination processes the universal legal basis for general standardization of admissions as well as reductions in refugee acceptance based on changing terms of war and peace in Vietnam in addition to overly economic emphasis of "neoliberalization" in welfare reform and immigration policy, which came to stress security and individual criminal responsibility within immigration management.

64 As one former volunteer posted in Malaysia claims, most of the volunteers she encountered were either anti-war idealists who became dissatisfied with the worldly decadence of living in the Global North (Ong 2003, 52) or recent college graduates looking to build credentials and travel the world (Henchy, personal communication, May 2013).

65 While the border conflict between China and Vietnam as well as the war between Vietnam and Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge had initiated and thereby produced further displacement, regional accommodation of displaced Indochinese had not been negotiated for the "second wave" of refugee flights. Thus any entry by asylum seekers remained susceptible to sovereign discretion and territorial control over immigration.

66 After some negotiations, UNHCR representative Werner Blatter recounts, "the government agreed to anchor a navy boat beside the Tung An. All the people from the Tung An were allowed to spend couple days on the Navy ship. However, after this bathing ceremony, everybody went back to the Tung An.' People eventually were allowed to disembark but only when they had received a confirmed resettlement offer" (Robinson 31).

67 Needless to say this critical discourse of "the state" has its phobic affinities with neoliberalism, anarchism, overly general studies of "globalization" etc (Foucault 2007, 109; See Foucault 2008; for a salient version of globalizing state-decline consider Appadurai 1996)

68 Derrida argues that Kant's Perpetual Peace offered the most rigorous secular recasting of this vision, but it was predicated on a borderless, frictionless universalization across the globe. In this light, although garnering the greatest sophistication as heir to classical and Judeo-Christian cosmopolitanisms, Kant's articulation appears less tenable than Derrida's insistence on a network of free cities of refuge.

69 This was the selective identification of anti-communist belligerents offered by a succession of US Presidents, including Reagan vis-à-vis the Southern Vietnamese allies and the Central American Contras. Of course, this litmus test for legitimating "refugee" flights follows from a geopolitical state optic (See Espiritu 2007; Loescher and Scanlan 1986)

70 While these supplement and remain facilitated by technologies of power discursively centered as in state rationalities, such cosmopolitan circuits and collaborations, which precede the Jeffersonian constitutional distinction of secular and ecclesiastic realms, partially make up the governmental web of men and things targeted during contested passages of postcolonial freedom.

71 While some may find Foucault's formulation ultimately flawed and unsatisfying, his attempted history of governmentality (or regimes of governing) never posed in absolute binary opposition either sovereignty against pastoral power, governmentality against disciplinary power, or the state against society. To some extent, sovereignty never evaporated in his account. As Foucault claims, "Anyway, I wanted to show you the profound historical link between the movement that overturns the constants of sovereignty consequent upon the major problem of good choices of government" (108). In this vein, he insisted on "a

triangle: sovereignty, discipline, and governmental management” (107). Methodologically, he attempts tracing these as mutually generative of each other modality of government insofar as each historically emerges as dominant intervening forms according to necessarily responding to specific problems and emerging questions - whether these exigencies came in the form of the Protestant Reformation, agrarian shortages (for mercantilism), the limits of state intervention given the finite discursive domain of *raison d'état*, etc.

72 As McCoy (2009) puts it in his history of police technologies developed in the “colonial laboratory” of the Philippines: “Washington no longer viewed the Philippines in colonial terms as its own sovereign territory to be defended at all costs. It was now but a single state among dozens in a larger system of global defense. In an assessment for the state Department... Kennan included the Philippines on a short list of strategic allies” (378).

73 In American hegemonic fashion, Edward Lansdale, “a former San Francisco advertising executive,” became popularly depicted in such Cold War classics of cinema and literature as *The Quiet American* and *The Ugly American* (McCoy 377). McCoy highlights other notable technicians of counter-insurgency including, “Col. Charles Bohannon, a former ethnographer at the Smithsonian Institution and a specialist in Navajo folklore who applied the study of culture, particularly folk superstitions to the war on this peasant guerrilla army” (Ibid.).

74 This border at the 17th instead of the 13th parallel, “which the Viet Minh military success warranted,” came as a trade-off (Jacobs 2004, 130). But transfers along these territorial lines and within a longer period of 300 than may have been more beneficially shortened, Jacobs contends, perhaps would have lessened the intensified polarization of Viet Minh and South Vietnamese nationalist projects.

75 These have been given notable intellectual treatment (e.g., Tsing 2007; Hall, Phillip, Li 2011)

76 Abinales and Amoroso 2005, pp 175-6.

77 To what extent did the US involvement in propping up the Republic of Vietnam depend on the false non-choice of autocratic leadership? Although debated by some (Miller 2013), the foreclosed choice of Diem as the state of Vietnam’s leader offers some light on both the religious Orientalism and dominant racism of American strategic discourse that thought of Diem as a “miracle man” (Jacobs 2004). For lack of space, I had to refrain from further considering this literature on Diem’s Catholicism yet authoritarian rule that was deemed acceptable only according to a racism that necessitated autocratic government for Asians not yet ready for democratic government and truly participatory development. However, one may point out parallel client governments in the mold of GMD’s Chiang Kai-Shek and Korea’s Syngman Rhee who were actively supported through racist ideological consideration regarding their dispositional capacities, religious beliefs, and non-democratic tendencies of ‘non-modern’ Asians. Moreover, recent literature on the mid-1950’s negotiations and resistances to state-formation under Diem has also indicated limitations in considering Diem’s agency as enacted brutally in his violent campaigns meted out on criminal syndicates and religious ‘sects’ (insofar as the latter were cast that way to de-legitimate their alternative political claim in reputed religious terms; Chapman 2013).

78 Consider Michel Foucault’s dramatic claim that the “modern” emergence of the nation-state, as formalized by the Treaty of Westphalia (1648), signaled “the end of the Roman Empire,” with its eschatological arrangement of temporality, economy of salvation, and epistemology organized around scriptural texts and institutional mediations. Anderson’s (1993) account of the nation’s succession of the dominant Christian “cultural system” can be thereby related as a modernist account of emerging *raison d'état*, secularized sovereignty, and international ordering. For an interesting historical treatment of these competing notions of sovereignty and radical identification see Rafael, “The Afterlife of Empire: Sovereignty and Revolution in the Philippines” (2009).

79 To some extent, the Philcag’s transfer of technical support embodied the alliance of postcolonial sovereignties under Lyndon Johnson’s “Many Flags” multilateralism. Yet the initial return of these several thousand “Philcag” engineers underscores the constitutive link between military and humanitarian operations (See Espiritu 2007; Nguyen 2013).

80 This point concerning the CADP and its genesis were stressed to me by Professor Anne Lan K. Candelaria, in an interview conducted on March 20, 2014. Her experiences as a witness and volunteer in the PFAC served the basis for her writing undergraduate and master’s theses, which have unfortunately been inaccessible to me since it exists only in hard copy- perhaps in Ateneo University’s special collections.



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81 Not the “forgotten ones” of Brian Doan’s documentation (2004). See “Introduction: Humanitarian Government at the Frontier” above.

82 The Evangelistas precisely detail the Church’s duties: “The Catholic Church through the CADP was then assigned to (1) ‘coordinate with the NGAs, LGUs, NGOs and international agencies in helping the RVNs in gaining access to education, skills training, livelihood projects and other employment opportunities;’ (2) provide ‘for the care and maintenance of all RVNs under the principle of progressive self-reliance, while assuming responsibility for the administrative cost essential for the effective administration of the RVNs (*italics ours*); (3) undertake ‘the relocation of the RVNs from the PFAC to a new site... (and provide) support services to housing and other support services.’ It was thus the CADP that built and managed Vietville.” (76)

83 Of course, Walzer writes from a particular subject-position and complex historical archive of the Jewish diaspora. Arguably, this global problem for him seems most saliently exemplified by the Jewish diaspora and its problem of lacking a state that would become Israel, with controversy and consequences for Palestinians.

84 For some, Martial Law may typify the “state of exception.” Indeed, Marcos offered a legal rationale or scaffolding for basically all of his abuses (Del Carmen 1979). In this regard, his mobilization of the rule of law underscores the limits of that programmatic area for development and democratization. This problematic of the rule of law may be contrasted to the normalization of the exception outlined in Agamben’s treatment. Marcos and his Supreme Court allies cynically utilized laws as instrumental tactics for distributing power, economic resources, and legitimacy (including humanitarian legitimacy) through positively adopting international refugee law

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