

**NA'LA'LA' I HILA'-TA, NA'MATATNGA I TAOTAO-TA: CHAMORRO
LANGUAGE AS LIBERATION FROM COLONIZATION**

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We certify that we have read this thesis and that, in our opinion, it is satisfactory in scope and quality as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Pacific Islands Studies.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to explore the connection between decolonization and language revitalization in Guåhan, an island in the Marianas archipelago. This thesis argues that one could better understand the manifestations, obstacles, and complexities of decolonization by looking at language revitalization. It also explores the liberatory potential of language and language's importance to a people. This thesis argues that the main obstacle to decolonization is its emphasis on state-centric approaches, and that effective decolonization should be rooted in indigenous values and perspectives. Language revitalization is not only used as a metaphor for decolonization, but is also argued to be a core method and component of effective decolonization. Through an analysis of the history of language oppression, Chamorro-english dictionaries, and community language projects, decolonization and language revitalization will be shown to be intimately connected. Language as a core component of a people will be shown to be an avenue of reconnection, an avenue of empowerment/resistance, and an avenue for community building. Lastly, this thesis breaks down hegemonic ideas about decolonization in Guåhan and calls for a vast Chamorro reimagination.

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Introduction (I Tinituhon)

Este I tinige'-hu para si nana-hu biha, Estella Meno Gofigan

Yanggen mohon hu ekungok I biha-hu, bai hu tungo' esta I fino'-hu ni ma kenã'i yu' i mañaina-hu. When I was 8 years old, my grandma, Estella Meno Gofigan, tried teaching me our mother tongue, Fino' Chamoru. The Chamorro language, or Fino' Chamoru,¹ is the indigenous language of the Chamorro people of the Mariana Islands in the Western Pacific, the area known as Micronesia. The Mariana Islands are an archipelago of fifteen islands politically partitioned into the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (C.N.M.I.), and the u.s.² unincorporated territory, Guåhan (Guam). Linguistically, Fino' Chamoru is classified in the Malayo-Polynesian family of Austronesian languages.³

My grandma would sit me down everyday and teach me how to say various phrases such as “Hafa tatatmanu hao?,” “Hayi na'an-mu?,” and “Este I gui'eng-hu.”⁴ I distinctly remember when she said the word for nose, “gui'eng,” I laughed to her face and told her I did not want to mimic her funny sounds. Her words sounded funny to me

¹ In this thesis, the words Chamorro and Chamoru may be interchanged from time to time. After intense orthographic debates, the contemporary understanding is that Chamorro is how you spell the word in english, and Chamoru is how you spell the word in our indigenous language.

² In this thesis, the words “english,” “america/american,” “uncle sam,” “spain/spanish,” will not be capitalized. This is a form of linguistic resistance. They will start being capitalized when these “proper nouns” start acting “proper.”

³ While most of the languages in Micronesia lie under the classification of Micronesian languages under the group “Oceanic,” Chamorro, along with Palauan, is said to possibly be a totally independent branch of an Austronesian language. Linguists have also said that because of prominent grammatical features and vocabulary similarities, Fino' Chamoru is closely related to certain languages in the Philippines, although the exact language that Chamorro is derived from is unknown at this time.

⁴ Chamorro for “How are you?” “What is your name,” and “This is my nose.”

because at school we were only taught in English, and as a child I was never taught Fino' Chamoru. When I was young, all I wanted to do was play, read, listen to music, and watch television; however, most of the media, music, and books were in English. Thus, I developed a strong affinity to the colonial language. I simply believed that English was a superior language, and I did not understand the importance my grandma was placing on Fino' Chamoru.

I felt that Fino' Chamoru was an inferior language because of what we might call "language colonialism." According to Ngugi Wa Thiong'o in his seminal book, *Decolonising The Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*, colonization is the process that "annihilates a people's beliefs in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacity and ultimately in themselves."⁵ The colonizers weaken the cultural identity of the colonized by making them abandon their cultural practices and identify instead with colonial practices. Language colonialism is a process through which a colonial language displaces an indigenous language so that the indigenous language is oppressed and seen as inferior. Postcolonial theorist Frantz Fanon explains that, "All colonized people—in other words, people in whom an inferiority complex has taken root, whose local cultural originality has been committed to the grave—position themselves in relation to the civilizing language."⁶ This internalized, inferior complex according to Paulo Freire in his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* causes the colonized to act in ways that distance themselves from perceived "negative traits" thus attempting to look and behave like the colonizer.

⁵ Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind: the Politics of Language in African Literature* (New Hampshire: Heinemann, 1986), 18.

⁶ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, (New York: Grove Press, 1962), 2.

The colonized then discriminates against his/her own people because they remind them of their own inferiority.⁷ The fact that I shunned my Grandma's language lesson reflects the inferiority complex I felt because of language colonialism.

My story is the story of many young Chamorros born and raised in Guåhan, the most populated island of the archipelago and the focus area of this thesis. Of the approximately 175,000 people that currently live in Guåhan, only around 18% speak Fino' Chamoru fluently. In addition to this, 44% of the population in Guåhan live in households where only English is spoken.⁸ What these statistics tell is that Fino' Chamoru is being spoken at a very low rate and according to linguist Donald Topping, "If the trend continues, there is a very great possibility that Chamorro will cease to be spoken by Guamanians within another generation."⁹

In the scholarship on language endangerment, many scales have been developed to gauge the vitality of a language. In these scales, language vitality is analyzed based on intergenerational transmission, language attitudes within the community, the age range of the speakers, number of speakers, and domains of use of the language. The most fitting level of vitality for Chamorro according to Ethnologue, a website dedicated to language revitalization causes, is somewhere between "Shifting" and "Moribund." A language is considered shifting if the child-bearing generation can use the language amongst themselves, but it is not being passed down to children, and a language is considered

⁷ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 1993).

⁸ Guam Census. Language Portion, 2010.

⁹ Donald Topping et al., *Chamorro-English Dictionary*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1975), x.

moribund if the only active uses of the language are members of the grandparent generation and older.¹⁰

This language endangerment has become evident throughout the island. I recently talked to an exchange student at the University of Guam who was from the islands of Palau. After exchanging greetings and pleasantries, she told me she had been in the island for a little over a month, and then she asked me what the language of Guåhan was. After telling her that the indigenous language of the island was Fino' Chamoru and giving her a preview of the language, she shockingly revealed that not once has she heard the language spoken since she arrived to the island. She was shocked that Chamorros had their own language because all Chamorros she had met spoke only English, even when talking to each other. *Este muna' gofriste yo'*.¹¹

Even though Fino' Chamoru is no longer prevalent in Guåhan, there are still areas where the language exists, although it is highly territorialized to certain realms of society. One of these areas is the church where masses and rosaries can be still conducted in Fino' Chamoru even if, ironically, many Chamorros do not understand what is being said. Another space of Fino' Chamoru is in slang words, song lyrics, and certain everyday phrases. For example, we all know how to say "Malago' Mumu," "Ai Adai," and "Laña'." ¹² This is a common phenomenon in endangered languages; where renowned linguist Joshua Fishman, in his book *Can Threatened Languages Be Saved*, stated:

Finally, it is commonly understood that the threatened language yields too few

¹⁰ Ethnologue, "Language Status." Accessed March 5, 2014.
<https://www.ethnologue.com/about/language-status>.

¹¹ Chamorro for "This made me extremely sad."

¹² Chamorro for "Do you want to fight," and the rest are idiomatic expressions that are difficult to translate directly.

material or other-than-kinship advantages for any significant number of mainstream individuals to acquire anything more than a smattering of convivial pleasantries or emergency phrases in the threatened language.¹³

Many may argue that this is a good thing because they are speaking the language in the most rudimentary sense; however, this is more so a reflection of the crisis point that the language finds itself in. Fermina Sablan, a project specialist at the Guam Community College who works on Fino' Chamoru, explicates this territorialization of the language, by saying:

Pa'go, kalan taya' saga-ña. Kalan ta dadaggao huyong gi un banda guini yan un banda guihi lao ti mafasagagayi magâhet. I saga-ña I fino'-ta gi hinagong-ta, gi hafa ta sasangan huyong. Este I lengguahi, ti siña la'la' anggen ti ta sasangan. Siña ta tuge' ya ta pega gi "filing cabinet". Anggen para u la'la' este I fino'-ta, debi di ta na'i saga-ña yan, kampo gi korason-ta, kampo gi hinasso-ta, kampo gi fino'-ta.¹⁴

The important point to make here is that even though there are these small areas of Fino' Chamoru survival that we must be thankful for, the ultimate goal is to get the language spoken in all realms of society. Having the language spoken in these few areas alone is simply not enough.

¹³ Joshua Fishman, *Can Threatened Languages Be Saved?*, (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2001).

¹⁴ Personal Interview with Fermina Sablan conducted in July 2013.

Translation for "Today, it is almost if it has no place (the language). It is like we are throwing it (the language) out to one side here and one side there, but it is not really staying. The place of our language is in our breaths and in what we say. This language, it cannot live if we are not continuously speaking it. We can write (the language) and put it in a filing cabinet. If our language is going to live, we need to give it space, space in our hearts, space in our thoughts, and space in our speech."

How did Fino' Chamoru, which has been spoken and passed down for thousands of years become so endangered in just a few generations? Is there a relationship between the language loss and the colonial circumstances in Guåhan?

Guåhan is currently an unincorporated territory or colony of the united states with no voting representative in congress and where the local people are not allowed to vote for the president.¹⁵ Natives of Guåhan are now very patriotic american citizens¹⁶ who whole-heartedly feel they are part of the american nation. Our main roads are “Marine Corps Drive” and “Purple Heart Highway,” and some of our main schools include “John F. Kennedy High School” and “George Washington High School.” There is also an annual “Liberation Parade” in which Chamorros celebrate the “liberation” the americans brought against the japanese occupiers in 1944. As Keith Camacho states in his book, *Cultures of Commemoration*, many Chamorros internalized the liberation of Guåhan into their ways of thinking, receiving, and sharing. At the end of the war, they committed themselves to perpetuating the liberal aspects of ‘democracy’ and to ‘aiding’ americans at some point in the future.¹⁷ Camacho also says “The rhetoric of loyalty has been invented as form of social control.”¹⁸ A loyal, colonized society implies an obedient, pacified

¹⁵ Julian Aguon, *What We Bury at Night: Disposable Humanity*, (Florida: Blue Ocean Press, 2008).

¹⁶ Chamorros received american citizenship through the Organic Act of 1950 signed by president Harry Truman. Chamorros fought for this citizenship and the Guam Congress walkout of 1949 served as the tipping point in making the american government finally give Chamorros citizenship and a more “equal” footing.

¹⁷ Keith L. Camacho, *Cultures of Commemoration: the Politics of War, Memory, and History in the Mariana Islands*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2011).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 20.

population. Pa'go, Guaha giya hita gof manmanhohongge na manmismo na amerikanu siha.¹⁹

Unfortunately, Camacho is more than correct in his analysis of Chamorro gratefulness and loyalty to the red, white, and blue. One of the most significant aspects of this loyalty is that Chamorros are amongst the highest groups per capita joining the united states military. It is incredibly unusual to be born into a Chamorro family that has no member as a soldier.²⁰ Being able to go onto military bases to purchase everyday goods and to gas your car for a cheaper price becomes something cherished and desired. The military has become embedded into our everyday lives. This complicates things because it makes decolonization sentiments become perceived much more negatively. To criticize the flag, in many people's eyes, is to discredit the service many of our Chamorros— including many of our family members, have given to america. As said best by Chamorro scholar and activist, Robert Underwood, “The military is a 12 foot giant in our house... he is bound to step on some of your children.”²¹

Despite all of this colonization, there has been Chamorro resistance culminating in the decolonization movement in Guåhan today. Decolonization in the most legal sense is a remedy for the wrongful and illegal abrogation of a people's right to self-

¹⁹ Chamorro for, “Now there are those amongst us who believe that they are true americans.”

²⁰ Julian Aguon, *What We Bury at Night: Disposable Humanity*, (Tokyo: blue ocean press, 2008).

²¹ Laurel Monnig, “Proving Chamorro”: Indigenous Narratives of Race, Identity, and Decolonization on Guam, (Ph.d diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2007), 400.

determination.²² While this is the legal definition which we do need to recognize, utilize, and fight for, decolonization and self-determination also goes much deeper than just shifting a political system or governance system, it is about reversing the harm that colonization has done. On a practical level, decolonization is quite literally having the ability to make one's own decisions or to determine one's own path. It is about empowering communities to stop relying on foreign actors.²³ It is at this juncture that this thesis will expand upon and analyze for possibilities, opportunities, and liberation.

This thesis attempts to explore the connection between this decolonization movement in Guåhan and language revitalization. Through understanding language revitalization projects, we can have a better understanding of the manifestations, obstacles, and complexities of effective decolonization in Guåhan. Throughout this thesis, language oppression and language revitalization will act as a metaphor for the overall picture of colonialism and decolonization. However, moving past this metaphor, it is argued that language revitalization should also be a core method and goal for effective decolonization. Central to this thesis is that revitalization of Fino' Chamoru as the common language of the Chamorro people is necessary to our decolonization, resurgence, and renewed thriving as a people. I argue that the decolonization movement needs to be rooted in the epistemology that the language brings. The current and growing language revitalization movement in Guåhan can be the catalyst needed for this Chamorro-rooted decolonization process.

²² Julian Aguon, "On Loving The Maps Our Hands Cannot Hold: Self-Determination of Colonized and Indigenous Peoples In International Law", *UCLA Asian Pacific American Law Journal* 16, no.1 (2011).

²³ Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind: the Politics of Language in African Literature* (New Hampshire: Heinemann, 1986).

To further explicate how I will argue these points, it is necessary to look at a chapter summary of this thesis. In Chapter One, I argue that the history of language colonialism in Guåhan directly led to the current situation of language endangerment. I detail how the spanish colonial era in Guåhan, dated from 1668-1898, led to language policies that viewed and treated the indigenous language as a tool for their catholic missionization agenda. The effect of this colonization was that an abundant spanish lexicon was introduced which tended to displace indigenous terms. Then, I discuss a shift from spanish language colonialism to u.s. language colonialism beginning in 1898 when Guåhan became a territory of the united states as a result of the spanish-american war.

From 1898-1941, Guåhan was under the jurisdiction of the u.s. navy. I illustrate how american language colonialism became much more aggressive towards eradicating Fino' Chamoru and instilling an "english as progress" ideology through naval policies, media, entertainment, and acculturative education. Following this, I discuss japanese language colonialism during the brutal, three-year wartime occupation between 1941-1944. I will show how their policies were aimed at eradicating english and how they had little to no effect on Fino' Chamoru. I end this chapter with a discussion on the post-World War II conditions that allowed the naval era "english as success" ideology to take root. I will show how the most dramatic decline in Fino' Chamoru transition occurred during this period because of a total revamping of Chamorro society and an instilled loyalty to the united states.

Even though the presence of Fino' Chamoru declined throughout the 20th century, there were many attempts to record and translate the language through the creation of

various Chamorro-english dictionaries, which will be my topic in Chapter 2.²⁴ I examine the introductions and prefaces of these dictionaries to highlight their intentions and ideologies. While dictionaries are often seen as projects of language recordation, preservation, and at times, revitalization, I argue that dictionaries are actually a metaphor for the trappings of colonial logic and approaches in the decolonization movement in Guåhan. In this chapter, I sketch a history of the Chamorro decolonization movement and how this history tends to illustrate the “politics of recognition.” I end this chapter by suggesting that in order to truly revitalize the language, we have to think beyond dictionaries only, just as in order to work towards true decolonization, we need to move past colonial logics.

If dictionaries are not enough for the language revitalization movement and colonial approaches are not fit for decolonization, is there any hope considering this particular political atmosphere? What possibilities are there for language decolonization? In Chapter three, I will utilize the emerging theory of “Anarcha-Indigenism” with its emphasis on direct action and everyday resurgence. I will show how guerilla-styled language revitalization projects can help us develop a more effective revitalization practice. The second part of my argument is that these self-determining projects of guerilla language revitalization or what I call “language anarcha-indigenism” can be intrinsically tied into the political decolonization/self-determination movements. To speak Fino’ Chamoru in Guåhan today is one of the most political actions one can take part in. I will explore and analyze how to utilize the language revitalization movement as

²⁴ Bastille, German, and spanish dictionaries are beyond the scope of this study, but they are prevalent and can be a good tool of study to see various aspects of language colonialism.

a way to approach decolonization in a Chamorro-rooted manner that moves away from the focal point of the state or colonizer.

For my conclusion, I will emphasize that the language revitalization movement in Guåhan needs to be rooted in the values of self-determination; at the same time, the decolonization movement needs to be rooted in Chamorro epistemology and language. As Fino' Chamoru scholar-activist Michael Lujan Bevacqua wrote in his essay, *The Chamorro Experience gi Fino' Chamoru*:

The Chamorro language has long been used to tell our story, but it also represents in and of itself, our story and our history. It is the sum of all our complicated parts. To use contemporary Chamorro means to use a living linguistic organism that connects you to people in Europe, Asia and the Pacific. From a language, we can analyze the values of a people, their psychology and epistemology.²⁵

The words that constitute our native tongue give life to our roots and provide the framework for how we should live as Chamorros, and thus the language should be learned and perpetuated. When we know our language, we know how the ancestors thought and felt. Language is the key to re-instilling belief in ourselves and feeling a sense of connection with our past. For Chamorros, the language is our way of expressing important epistemological ideas as well as core cultural values.

Another way Fino' Chamoru tells our story is through its structure and lexicon. For example, the words for daughter and blood are exactly the same with the exception of a glottal stop at the end. Historical records show that Chamorros were matrilineal, but our

²⁵ Michael Lujan Bevacqua, "The Chamorro Experience gi Fino' Chamoru", *Marianas Variety*, accessed November 29, 2013.

language told us this long before any western scientists, historians, or researchers came to that conclusion. Haga' means "blood" in Chamorro and haga means "daughter." This beautifully reflects the matrilineal nature of Chamorro society where land and heritage is given and traced through your mother, and where women have the ultimate respect. Your daughter would be your blood because she continues your lineage and produces those who will care for your land. It is through her that life is perpetuated and it is through her that our people continue to exist.

Another beautiful example of language epistemology is the word taotaomo'na, which literally means "people in the front" but is a term used to describe the ancestors. This shows the circular view of history and time that Chamorros and other Oceanic cultures share. We are supposed to look to our ancestors for guidance rather than turning our backs on them. The past is truly not the past, but rather it lives and breathes with us in the present. Once again, our language has told us this before any book on Chamorro culture was ever published. Without our language, we will forget who we are and our grandchildren will grow up an entirely different people.

I write this thesis as an apology to my grandma, Estella Meno Gofigan, for rejecting the gift of language she tried to give me. Hu gof guiaya hao yan hãgu munã'i yo' animu para este na karera-hu. ²⁶

²⁶ I love you so much and you are the one who gives me inspiration for this journey of mine.

Chapter 1. Ma Sangani Hit Na Para U Satba Hit I Fino' Ingles: They Told Us that english Would Save Us

“It is a fact that in as much as the united states governs here, the Chamorro people should make a determined effort to throw off the last remnants of customs, languages, and ideas which are detrimental to their advancement and to which they cannot be sentimentally attached as relic of their Government by another Nation. To assist in this process is the duty of every american on the island.”²⁷

Anggen kumuentos hao fino' Chamoru, toka hao. An guaha salape'-mu, un apasi. Anggen taya', ma na' fanaosao hao blackboard, ma na' famballe hao gi hilo' i satge. Annai pa'go umeskuela yu' gi 1st grade, ti hu tungo' nai fumino' ingles. Yanggen malago' yu' bai hu kuentos, debi di bai hu fino' Chamoru ya todú I tiempo ma saosaolak yo' sa' taya' salape'-hu. Un biahi ha', ma chule' I salape'-hu para I semana ayu singko sentimos para soup, ya ma chule' todú gi fine'na biahi na hu kefumino' Chamoru, pues annai esta ma punish yo' ni ayu', ma fanui yo' ni salape'-hu. Ti hu tungo' nai kao manmasangani na ti debi di u famfino' Chamoru I famagu'on nu I maneskuekuela. Ti hu tungo' nai hayi sumangani siha, kao I ma'gas eskuela pat siha manmalago' na bai in fanmalate' ya bai in tingo' mamfino' Ingles. Lao makkat ayu, un año hu tungo' fumino' Ingles. Put I gaige I amerikano gi tano', debi di ta tungo' I lenguahhen-ñiha sa' mañasaga gi tano', lao an gaige ham gi gima'-mami, mamfinochamomoru ham todú I tiempo, ti mamfino' ingles ham. Anggen malak eskuela hao, ayu ha' na mamfino'ingles ham. Ayu I malago-ñiha nai na para bai in tingo' fino' ingles.²⁸

²⁷ Jack Flynn, “Leave Your Mark: Over The Editorial Desk”, *Guam Recorder*, (November 1935): 202.

²⁸ Personal interview with my grandmother, Estella Meno Gofigan conducted in August 2013. Translation for “If you spoke Chamorro, shame on you. If you had money, you

My grandma's traumatic experience with language colonialism is a common story amongst Chamorros of her generation. Her courageous testimony compelled me to ask: How did Guåhan's various colonizers view and treat our language? What does this tell us about the importance of language to a people? What factors led to the decline of Fino' Chamoru? Through an examination of the language attitudes and policies that the Spanish, American, and Japanese colonial regimes enacted towards Fino' Chamoru, this chapter will illustrate the different effects of language colonialism in Guåhan's history.

By the end of this chapter, we will have an understanding of the historical factors that led to the decline of Fino' Chamoru as well as the psychological underpinnings of language colonialism. It is important to understand this history in order to understand the best path for reversing these processes and once again giving life to Fino' Chamoru. One of the other main arguments in this chapter is that it was not until post-World War II that language shift to English actually occurred. While there were decades of attempted language oppression, nothing effectively took root in the Chamorro psyche until after the war changed the fabric of Chamorro society and the way Chamorros saw America.

paid. If you had none, they would make you wipe the blackboards or sweep the top of the floors. When I was going to school and in the 1st grade, I did not know how to speak English. If I wanted to talk, I could only use Chamorro, and all the time they would whip/spank me because I had no money. One time, I took money to school for one week to buy soup, which cost five cents at the time, and they took all my money the first time I spoke Chamorro. After they were done punishing me like this, they would flaunt and show me my money. I did not know whether they were told that the children at school could not speak Chamorro. I do not know who told them this, was it their boss at the school or were they the ones who wanted us (exclusive) to be smart and for us to learn the English language, but it was hard for me. It took me one year just to start speaking the English language. There at school, they would fence certain areas and there would be signs that said "English speaking area, ENGLISH!" The Americans were staying in our land and we had to learn the English language, but if we were at our home, we were speaking Chamorro all the time. If we were at school that was the only time we spoke English. That was their want and desire, for us to know English."

Before discussing this history of language colonialism in Guåhan, it is important to point out that Chamorro history does not begin with the arrival of the colonizers. Some of the history books in Guåhan begin their analysis of history when the Spanish arrived, however this is not the case. Chamorros have been in our islands since our creators, brother and sister, Puntan and Fu'una, gave their lives to create the islands and the Chamorro people. We had a thriving and complex society that existed long before the arrival of colonizers. Since the focal point of historical analysis is language oppression throughout the various colonial regimes, this analysis will primarily begin with colonial history, but it is important to point out that any comprehensive history project beginning only with the arrival of colonizers is missing a large portion of history.

Another important point to make before engaging in this analysis of language oppression is that despite these oppressive attempts, Chamorros were not passive victims in this process. Many Chamorros actively resisted these attempts at eradicating the language, and did not simply internalize these attempts. It is important to make it clearly visible that Chamorros had agency throughout this history and that this work is derived from a long genealogy of resistance and Chamorro agency. It is my desire that this history of language oppression can help explicate Chamorro responses/resistance.

I. Crosses of Colonialism: The Spanish era

Historically, the Chamorro people have the tragic distinction of being the first Oceanic peoples to come into contact with the western world. As historian Douglas Oliver stated in his book, *The Pacific Islands*, “The rape of Oceania began with Guam.”²⁹ In 1521, Ferdinand Magellan arrived in Guåhan. This initial encounter was a violent one

²⁹ Douglas Oliver, *The Pacific Islands*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1989), 234.

that ended in the scorching of homes and the murder of Chamorros. From 1668-1898, the Spanish officially colonized Guam and introduced many of their customs leading to a “Hispanicization” period. During this period, the *reducción* was introduced. The process of *reducción* was one ultimately aimed at forcing the Chamorros to accept Christianity and become good Spanish citizens by forcing them to live in church-centered communities.

Not only were the geographical spaces Chamorros occupied drastically changed, but Chamorros also changed geographically. During the *reducción*, the 150 ancient Chamorro villages in Guam were reduced to six *partidos* or districts. Each *partido* had a village with a central church and military guard, once again emphasizing the centrality of the church.³⁰ With Chamorros being forced to live in close density to each other for the first time in this manner, the Spanish were able to surveil them and ensure adherence to Catholic standards and church attendance. It must be pointed out that Chamorros were not passively relocated but rather the *reducción* was executed only after a 20-year war between the Chamorro and Spanish from 1671-1691.³¹ This had a damaging psychological effect because this meant that Chamorros were forced to live in lands that were not tied to their genealogy or clan, thus being one of the first exercises in land dispossession by colonial powers.

In addition to this land dispossession, the Spanish introduced various forms of diseases, which nearly decimated the Chamorro people, whose immune systems were not accustomed to these foreign bodies. According to Farrell, “The Chamorro population of

³⁰ Don A. Farrell, *History of the Mariana Islands to Partition*, (Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands: Public School System, 2011).

³¹ Eddie L.G. Benavente, *I Manmañaina-ta*, (Hagatña: Published Independently, 2007).

the Marianas was about 30,000 when Father San Vitores arrived in 1668. About 18,000 of them lived in the Northern Mariana Islands. Only 32 years after the arrival of San Vitores, the total population of Chamorros in the Marianas was down to about 4,500.”³² The Spanish also enacted many forms of cultural genocide. For example, Chamorros for thousands of years worshipped the skulls of our ancestors. We believe that there is spiritual energy within their skulls and thus we would keep their skulls in the most sacred places within our homes. Chamorros believed that even though an ancestor has passed away in a physical sense, they continue to watch over their clans, and in this way, they must still be shown respect.³³ The Spanish in their missionizing efforts believed that these skulls were a form of idol worship, and subsequently went on campaigns smashing the skulls of our ancestors. Chamorros were told that the ancestors had no significant place in their lives, once again degrading Chamorro beliefs and placing them in Ngugi’s “wasteland of nothingness.”³⁴

This period was one of intense depopulation due to casualties of war, disease, and even suicide. Times were very tough for the ancestors. Many of the men who were able to work were killed, so they were not able to grow the crops needed to feed the village. Also, because of the *reducción*, the remaining villages were highly overcrowded, and increased tremendously to the outbreak of disease rates. Many women even resorted to infanticide and abortion because they did not want their children to be raised in the

³² Don A. Farrell, *History of the Mariana Islands to Partition*, (Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands: Public School System, 2011), 195.

³³ Lawrence Cunningham, *Ancient Chamorro Society*, (Honolulu: Bess Press, 1997).

³⁴ Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind: the Politics of Language in African Literature* (New Hampshire: Heinemann, 1986).

dismal conditions of the times under spanish rule.³⁵ All of these show how the spanish forcefully killed off the Chamorro population and thus were able to convert Chamorros to their ways, customs, and religion.

During the spanish era, Fino' Chamoru was viewed as a tool of catholic colonization, with the spanish opting to learn the language instead of forcing its eradication. In his writings, the archbishop of Guåhan, Anthony Apuron, wrote:

The fathers, who brought the faith to the Marianas, had to grapple with the natives and had to find ways in which to enter their mindset and culture. That they did by learning and speaking the native language in order to win the people over and in order that they may impart the faith that is Catholic.³⁶

Apuron goes on to discuss how the main jesuit priest of this era, Pale San Vitores, knew that in order to identify with the Chamorros, he had to learn the language, because once you “speak the language of their heart, you will have touched them. And when you have touched them, then you have won them over.”³⁷ The priests were also some of the first to develop written materials in the Chamorro language such as the 1911 *Chamorro Grammar Book* by Father Callistus and the *Diccionario Chamorro Castellano* produced by Pale' Roman Maria de Vera in 1931.

Despite the fact that Fino' Chamoru became the language of the church, spanish became the privileged language in economic trade and government activities. With the introduction of many new objects and ideas, many spanish words became embedded in

³⁵ Don A. Farrell, *History of the Mariana Islands to Partition*, (Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands: Public School System, 2011).

³⁶ Anthony Apuron, “The Role the Church Played in Helping to Preserve the Chamorro Language and Culture” (paper presented at the Marianas Ballroom, Hilton Hotel, Tumon, Guam on April 1, 1996).

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

Fino' Chamoru.³⁸ The Spanish also established several governmental policies aimed at forbidding students to speak their language,³⁹ and subsequently, in the year 1817, the King of Spain declared that the Spanish language would be taught in the Mariana Islands.

One way that these Spanish loanwords negatively affected Fino' Chamoru is that these loanwords layered over indigenous terms, many times in which the indigenous term has been lost or been put out of use. For example, the contemporary word for family is "familia" and Chamorros are most familiar with this term. Recently, there has been the perpetuation of a non-Spanish word to indicate family, "manggåfa." However, if you say this word to the elders, they have no idea what you are talking about and will tell you the only word for family is "familia." The Spanish had a strong effect on Chamorro memory through this erasure.

At first, the Spanish effect on Fino' Chamoru appears innocuous. Donald Topping, a linguist who studied Fino' Chamoru, wrote in his book, *Chamorro Reference*

Grammar:

There was wholesale borrowing of Spanish words and phrases into Chamorro, and there was even some borrowing from the Spanish sound system. But this borrowing was linguistically superficial. The bones of the Chamorro language remained intact; a little Spanish flesh was added through vocabulary borrowing, but Chamorro remained basically Chamorro.⁴⁰

³⁸ In particular, vocabulary regarding government activities and religious function were nearly all Spanish in origin.

³⁹ Laura Thompson, *Guam and Its People: With A Village Journal by Jesus Barcinas*, (Princeton: Princeton Press, 1947).

⁴⁰ Donald M. Topping and Bernadita Dungca, *Chamorro reference grammar*. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1973), 6.

While I do agree with Topping that the bones of the language remained intact linguistically, I think analyzing the same issue culturally and historically paints a different picture, in which the Spanish effect was not so innocuous. In contemporary Chamorro language, the Spanish counting system is used and barely, if any, Chamorro knows or uses the four different counting systems that our ancestors used. The word for “ancestor” is *saina* and often, this word is now used in church contexts to refer to “god.” The weakening of the Chamorro morale and memory through depopulation, forced conversion, and cultural destruction makes the seemingly innocent addition of Spanish vocabulary to our language quite malignant.

Languages evolve as the circumstances of the people who speak that language change, however the agency of who produces that change becomes the source of contention. Within the realm of Chamorro memory, even if the Spanish did not erase words, they gave them new meanings and new discourses. For example, *taotaomo’na* or “the people in the front, the spirits of our ancestors,” are contemporarily demonized in Chamorro culture. Many Chamorros grow up being completely afraid of the *taotaomo’na* and think of them as evil spirits who are out to cause trouble or cause you ailment. I have heard Chamorros actually say that “god” will protect them from the *taotaomo’na*.

Despite all of this, it is important to show that Chamorros resisted language colonialism. By the end of the Spanish era, “75% of the adult population was literate in Chamorro and some 50% were literate in Spanish.”⁴¹ This suggests that Chamorros continued to pass down *Fino’ Chamoru* during this tumultuous time, in which an entirely new colonial language and ideology was forcefully introduced. Even though many

⁴¹ P. Carano and Pedro Sanchez, *A Complete History of Guam*, (Tokyo: Tuttle Press, 1964), 405.

Chamorros learned spanish because they had to, they still remained loyal to our mother tongue. Also, during this time period, Chamorro women kept the language and culture alive. Many of the Chamorro men died during the Chamorro-spanish war, so there were many instances where Chamorro women took on spanish husbands. However, despite all of this, they continued to pass down Fino' Chamoru and Chamorro culture to their children.⁴² Thus, it is to these manmatatnga na famalao'an⁴³ that we thank for our language and culture existing to this day. Without their resistance to language oppression and assimilation, so much more could have been "lost" today.

II. General Order #1: Linguicide: The american naval era

To truly understand the harshest approaches at Fino' Chamoru linguicide⁴⁴, the american naval period and policies towards the language need to be heavily analyzed. The american navy implemented various policies and incentives aimed at eradicating the Chamorro language, and they really concentrated on forcing Chamorros to use english as the language used both inside and outside the home. This section will examine the various policies of language colonialism the americans used such as the propagandistic, psychological weaponizing of english monolingualism and inferiority complexes used to make Chamorros degrade Fino' Chamoru.

In 1898, the americans took possession of Guåhan as a "spoil" of the spanish-american war along with Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Philippines. During this time, the highest-ranking naval officer stationed in Guåhan served as the naval governor and

⁴² Laura Torres Souder, *Daughters of the Island: Contemporary Chamorro Women Organizers on Guam*, (Guam: Micronesian Area Research Center, 1992).

⁴³ Chamorro for "Brave/Fearless Women"

⁴⁴ Linguicide is the term used to describe the process of destroying or eradicating a language completely.

Guåhan was placed under the absolute domain of naval authority. The first naval governor of Guåhan, Richard Leary, further proclaimed naval authority by saying:

Within the absolute domain of naval authority, which necessarily is and must remain supreme in the ceded territory until the legislation of the U.S. shall otherwise provide, the municipal laws of the territory are to be considered as continuing in force the mission of the united states.⁴⁵

According to Michael Lujan Bevacqua in his article “American-Style Colonialism”, the reason america came to take Guåhan is due to the strategic location of Guåhan as a military station, which would help america gain power in the Asia and Pacific region. However, this military importance for taking Guåhan was downplayed by more “humanitarian” explanations.⁴⁶ During the period of the taking of Guåhan, the u.s. president William McKinley gave instructions to his naval governors:

To announce and proclaim in the most public manner that we come, not as invaders or conquerors, but as friends...win the confidence, respect and affection of the inhabitants of the Island of Guam ... by proving to them that the mission of the U.S. is one of benevolent assimilation.⁴⁷

Thus, according to the military propagandistic discourse, the united states was not there for military purposes, but rather to lift Chamorros out of the squalor of their current condition and teach them the glories of the american way of life.

⁴⁵ Robert F. Rodgers, *Destiny's Landfall: A History of Guam*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011), 108.

⁴⁶ Michael Lujan Bevacqua, “American-Style Colonialism”, Guampedia, accessed November 23, 2013, <http://guampedia.com/american-style-colonialism/>.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

In order to assimilate the Chamorros into a more american lifestyle, the naval authorities took an all-encompassing and tedious approach to forcing english down Chamorro throats and strangling Fino' Chamoru's breath out of the Chamorro people. One of their first approaches was the creation of policies and executive orders aimed at eradicating Fino' Chamoru and making english the primary language in Guåhan. In early 1900, Governor Leary gave orders (General Order No.12) to provide instruction in english for the children of Guåhan. As stated in the order, it was expected that "the present force of native teachers will cheerfully and harmoniously cooperate with the teachers of English that the greatest benefits may be derived by both scholars and preceptors."⁴⁸ This sentiment shows that the naval administration attempted to co-opt native teachers and continue to hide under the guise of benevolent assimilation.

In 1917, Naval Government General Order No. 243 banned the speaking of Fino' Chamoru by "designating English as the only official language of Guam and ordered that Chamorro must not be spoken except for official interpreting."⁴⁹ To encourage the public use of english, the naval government also forbade the speaking of Fino' Chamoru on the baseball fields. This had a dual purpose of encouraging the use of english as well as assimilating Chamorros to american values through baseball protocol and ideology. Adding to this, the events of 1920 helped to illustrate how badly the naval government demonized Fino' Chamoru. In 1920, during the administration of naval governor Althouse, Chamorro-english dictionaries were gathered and then burnt. This came out of frustration from some in his administration that despite all these policies, few Chamorro

⁴⁸ Michael Clement, "English and Chamorro Language Policies", Guampedia, accessed November 25, 2013, <http://guampedia.com/us-naval-era-language-policies/>.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

children were speaking english. The ironic fact about all of this is that these Chamorro-english dictionaries were actually printed by the navy to help the Chamorros learn the meaning of english words.⁵⁰ So, this shows even after 20 years of these attempts to teach english and eliminate Fino' Chamoru, Chamorros were still speaking the mother tongue and resisting these attempts at anglo-phone monolingualism.

In addition to this burning policy, Althouse also demanded that no Fino' Chamoru was to be spoken in the playground or in the classroom. This intense policy came from the fact that as late as 1939, Fino' Chamoru was still the primary language being spoken in Guåhan with many youth having little knowledge of how to properly speak english.⁵¹ This was the beginning of various penalty policies that affected Chamorro students in the school system. For example, students who spoke Fino' Chamoru during school were given a special ticket. If another student spoke Fino' Chamoru, the previous student would pass the ticket on to this other student who spoke the language. At the end of the day, whoever was holding the ticket would face some form of corporal punishment, usually spanking by the school administration. Eventually, the ticket system was phased out and the new policy instituted monetary fines for any student caught speaking Fino' Chamoru during school hours.⁵² In fact, top students were frequently selected to be monitors for the teacher in enforcing this policy of fining other students making this policy that much more cruel.

In addition to these policies, the media played a large role in the propaganda of language ideology and "english-as-progress" sentiments. The main vehicle for these

⁵⁰ Robert A. Underwood. American Education and the Acculturation of the Chamorros of Guam. (Ph.d diss., University of Southern California, 1987).

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

propagandistic messages was the monthly magazine/newsletter named the *Guam Recorder*. The first *Guam Recorder* issues were published by a local company named the Guam Press Association. During its first years of existence, Lieutenant P.J. Searles of the navy was the editor and William Rowley, a stranded navy man “tossed by fate” into the field of journalism was the owner. The *Guam Recorder* was privately owned in its first years, was 5 cents a copy, and covered popular topics such as: Chamorro cultural heritage, current events, Guam history, editorials, statistical data, humorous stories, legends, travel articles, poetry, and Guam and american recipes. Then, on October 2, 1933, the naval government of Guåhan purchased the magazine from Mr. Rowley. The last official *Guam Recorder* printed during these times occurred in November 1941.⁵³

At this point, it is necessary to dive deep into the material written in order to explore how ideologies denigrating Chamorro while promoting english and america were rampantly ubiquitous. There are many quotes throughout editions of the *Guam Recorder* that do not necessarily address language particularly, but that promoted a “forward-thinking” agenda that english is progress and Chamorro is primitive, which are all intertwined with language oppression.

An important point to make is that this “forward-thinking” agenda was a reflection of the paternalistic attitude that the naval government adopted in regards to the Chamorro people. The *Guam Recorder* is the visible embodiment of this paternalistic attitude that enabled the naval government to justify policies and cultural genocide under the guise of “progression” and a “master-laborer” relationship. This paternalistic attitude was important to the colonial agenda because belittling the

⁵³ Paul Carano, “The Guam Recorder-A Brief History”, *Guam Recorder*, (1971): 3.

culture, language, and beliefs of the oppressed is a necessary aspect of effecting the internalized racism that both Fanon and Wa Thiong'o discussed.

This internalized racism is where the oppressed begin to distance themselves from all things that remind them of the oppressed culture or people that they come from. In order to escape this oppression, the colonized need to identify with their oppressor and become like them. The processes of incorporating indigenous people into foreign institutions and systems makes it inevitable that the indigenous and colonized will engage in an identification process where they adopt the colonizer's attitude. Jeremy Cepeda, a Fino' Chamoru teacher and member of chant group "I Fanlalaian", describes this process of language colonialism by saying:

Ma kekepu'no I fino'-ta sa' I minalago'-ñiha na bai in fanmanaiguihi giya siha. Enague I minalago'-ñiha, hafa I mas chaddek na manera ni siña un cho'gue enao? Puno' I fino' taotao sa' yanggen malingu I fino' taotao, hafa I taotao? Taya, siempre taya' hale'-ña, pues siempre magof gue' na u dalak hao. Yanggen I taotao guaguaha ha' hale'-ña, siempre ti guse'hanao, siempre ti chaddek gue' dumalak hao.⁵⁴

Adopting a paternalistic attitude helps to make a people view themselves as lower than themselves and also makes them want to be advanced and civilized like their oppressors.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Personal Interview with Jeremy Cepeda conducted in August 2013. Translation for "They are trying to kill our language because they want us to become like them. That is their desire, so what is the fastest manner you can do this? Kill the language of the people because if language is lost, what is a people? Nothing, they will have no roots and they will be happy to follow you. If a person has roots however, they will not be quick to follow."

⁵⁵ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, (New York: Grove Press, 1962).

One prime example of this paternalistic attitude is visible through this quote by a man named Jack Flynn in his editorial “Leave Your Mark”: “The idea in general is excellent and undoubtedly all of us are united in speeding the day when in thoughts, language, and ideals the people of this lovely island are thoroughly Americanized and may truly enjoy the full benefits of an american form of government.”⁵⁶ Flynn wrote this article with the intention of encouraging incoming military service members to remember to leave their mark in Guam, so that the island could be bettered through more exposure to american ideals and the english language. He makes this colonial paternalism even more evident through saying that the Chamorro people are a worthwhile people who are under the american guidance and who are doing really well for people shut off from the rest of the world. He ends this article by once again highly encouraging fellow military members to leave their mark in Guåhan because a “feeling of self-respect will help you out a lot then, and you will know that in your time you have been a good man, a good american, and good officer.”⁵⁷ Thus, americanizing the Chamorros is considered the duty of a good man, american, and officer.

Many writers, the *Guam Recorder* published, echoed Flynn’s paternalistic sentiment that america and the naval government were working in the best interests of the Chamorro people. Another shocking example of this pro-american ideology was in the September 1935 edition of the *Guam Recorder* addressing how lucky the Chamorro people are that the americans are in Guåhan. This anonymous editor wrote:

In Guam, the utopian ideal is more closely approached perhaps than in any other

⁵⁶ Jack Flynn. “Leave Your Mark: Over The Editorial Desk”, *Guam Recorder*, (November 1935): 202.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

place in the world. We have an efficient and paternal form of military government that is ably administered at a minimum cost to the taxpayers.

Nowhere else in the world is it possible to give the people so much in public service in return for so small an amount of revenue collected.⁵⁸

The author idealizes Guåhan as a dream place for native peoples who need to be taken care of and who do not particularly deserve the treatment they are receiving since they do not do much in return. Going along with the sentiment of the author, Chamorros have it easy and our worth is measured in our ability to create revenue. Thus, this twisted logic says that since we do not produce much revenue, we are not worth that much and should be grateful that america helps us as much as they do. All of these different quotes illustrate a paternalistic attitude necessary in facilitating and quickening the process of colonization.

While these quotes ideologically denigrated anything Chamorro and elevated anything american, writings in the Guam Recorder also more specifically attacked Fino' Chamoru thus comprising the media component of direct language colonialism. Many of these writings reinforce the english language as hierarchically better than Fino' Chamoru in all aspects of life and at the same time, devalues Fino' Chamoru of any worth, purpose, utility, or meaning. These *Guam Recorder* editorials and articles truly are the heart in revealing the mindset of the american naval government. Nowhere can this heart be more openly visible and articulated than through an article in the February 1925 edition. In this article, the author advises all Chamorros to speak to their children in english because Chamorros already had too many limitations for life in the modern

⁵⁸ Anonymous, "Over The Editorial Desk", *Guam Recorder*, (November 1935): 146.

world. The author identified the english language to be associated with three things; “social order, progress, and economic advancement.”⁵⁹

The Guam Recorder’s assault on Fino’ Chamoru did not stop there. The arguments for english as progress infused with the paternalistic attitude prevalent of the time was demonstrated through the writings of these colonizers. In Underwood’s dissertation, “American Education and the Acculturation of the Chamorros of Guam,” he discusses that naval officials claimed that visitors came to Guåhan and noticed that english was not the prevailing language of the people. These officials felt that the Chamorro people’s lack of english usage was a sad reflection on american leadership after 35 years of occupation.⁶⁰ The colonial face reveals itself even further when arguments for english start to become morally justified on the basis of the “master-laborer” hierarchical relationships that america wanted to establish. This specific quote reaches to the core of the Chamorro worth being revenue production and labor ability/quality. In the September 1925 edition, this anonymous author wrote:

Through english will come a knowledge of fair play and a keen sense of honor such as the progenitors of Americans had at the time of the origin of the language and such as is practiced by the American nation at the present time.

With a knowledge of english under American tutorship will come a natural love of labor and industry by those who even come to think themselves educated.⁶¹

These are all examples of how the Guam recorder embodied the colonial thinking and ideologies of the american naval government during this time. It is absolutely important

⁵⁹ Anonymous, “Editorial”, *Guam Recorder*, (February 1925): 150.

⁶⁰ Robert A. Underwood. *American Education and the Acculturation of the Chamorros of Guam*. (Ph.d diss., University of Southern California, 1987).

⁶¹ Anonymous, “Editorial”, *Guam Recorder*, (September 1925): 8-9.

to recognize that the *Guam Recorder* focused on many things, but language was one of the main themes in the editorials. Articles written to convince the Chamorro people to give up Fino' Chamoru and instead speak english were ubiquitous throughout the publishing of the newsletter. Through these naval policies and the messaging in the media, the u.s. navy held Fino' Chamoru to a low standard and convinced many to believe in Fino' Chamoru's inferiority and most especially the "english-as-progress" argument.

Examining and looking more closely as to how these "english as progress" sentiments were spread and produced, we can see the effective perpetuation of the pro-english, "forward-looking" ideology. According to Underwood in the article, "Language Survival, The Ideology of English and Education in Guam," the decline of Fino' Chamoru did not just begin due to discriminatory policies towards Fino' Chamoru, but because of the propagandistic message of english as progress and success. He argues that the downfall of the language came with the decline of the language's use in the homes in favor of english. ⁶² Underwood wrote, "Most of the value attached to English was phrased in terms of school success; but of equal importance, English was also cast as part of the agenda of progressive social development. The learning of English was supposed to uplift in social terms, the Chamorro people." ⁶³ Of course if Chamorros were led to believe that english was going to help their children succeed in life, they would definitely want them to learn english as best as they could. The four reasons outlined for the success of english and the decline of speaking Fino' Chamoru were that english led to

⁶² Robert A. Underwood, "Language Survival, The Ideology of English and Education in Guam", *Educational Research Quarterly*, 20, no. 4 (1984).

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 77.

academic success, the development of a modern society, economic success, and american assimilation. ⁶⁴ Through the various policies and media propaganda during this naval period, these were the four basic messages that were placed into the minds of the Chamorro people.

These discriminatory policies, media, and messaging had a long-lasting effect on the psyche of those affected. My grandma told me the reason she did not want to teach the Chamorro language to my mother and uncle is because she did not want them to go through the same experiences that she went through. She said:

Sa' I kinemprende-ku na yanggen un tungo' fino' ingles, siempre gos malate' hao gi eskuela, lao hu sodda' pa'go na lachi ayu na tiningo'. Lao ayugue, para un na'malattetete, fumino' ingles ha' todū I tiempo. Guaha ha' hu hasso, annai umeskuekuela lokkue' ti hu gefungo' fino' ingles, lao annai hu tungo', sisten pari, fia yu' humanao kumompetition sa' malate' yu'. Lao ayugue na guaha ha' gi matto gi hinasso-ku na anggen un tungo' fumino' ingles, malattetete hao siempre gi hilo' tano'. Ayugue na ti hu fa'na'gue I dos patgon-hu fumino' chamoru ya manlalalalo' pa'go nu guahu. An pon malate', maseha hafa na lenguahhi. ⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Personal interview with my grandmother Estella Meno Gofigan conducted in June 2013.

Translation for "Because my understanding was that if you knew the english language, you would definitely be smart at school, but I found that this 'knowledge' is not true today. However, that is why (in reference to not teaching my mother), you will be made very, very smart from speaking english all the time. It was I alone who thought this, when I was going to school, I really did not know the english language, but when I did, oh man, I continued and went to (english language) competitions because I was smart. But, it was only I who these thoughts came to; if you know how to speak english, you will be definitely be extremely smart on this earth. That is why I did not teach my two children

This is a direct example of how my grandmother internalized much of what was propagated regarding the language. Too often, many of us blame our grandparents and parents for not teaching us the language, but we have to understand that them not teaching us the language does not result from laziness, but rather from love. Our elders did not want us to suffer from discrimination or psychological trauma because they felt these things firsthand, and would never want that for their children or grandchildren. Because of this strong and deep love, the elders wanted their children to learn and speak perfect english instead of Fino' Chamoru, which they were told would hinder the lives of their children. Our elders were told that speaking english would be our key to success, education, and progress. Although a false premise, can we really completely blame our grandparents and parents for wanting a better life for us? I am not excusing the act, but rather showing that we should not demonize these elders of ours, but rather understand their love runs deeper than we ever imagined.

Despite all of this, it is important to understand that Chamorros continued to still speak Fino' Chamoru during this period. While my grandmother may have internalized the "english as progress" ideology, it was not until it came to the post-war decision of whether or not teach the language to my mother and uncle that this oppression manifested itself. This was a post-war phenomenon. Chamorros for the most part during this naval period of 1898-1941 spoke Fino' Chamoru primarily in the home, even if the americans wanted them to make english the language of society including the homes. Chamorros did not give up the mother tongue and rather returned to speaking it as soon as they went

how to speak Chamorro, and now they are really upset with me about that. If you're smart, it does not matter what language it is in."

home and were with their families and friends. For Chamorros, Fino' Chamoru was still the language of their everyday life.

III. The Failed Assimilation: The japanese era

Although most of the language oppression happened due to american naval policies and post World War II ideology changes towards the english language which will be explored in the next section, it is worthy of one's time to examine japanese language policies. The japanese colonial government established in Guåhan took an intermediate approach between that of the americans and the spanish. Like the americans, they promoted the usage of their language as primary for the "japanization" of the Chamorro people. However, like the spanish, they were not as harsh and adamant in regards to making their language the language inside and outside the home. Although the short-lived, 3-year japanese occupation did not have much effect on Fino' Chamoru, the japanese did attempt to have the status of the japanese language elevated.

From the years 1941-1944, the japanese empire colonized the island. Chamorro memories of this time period are filled with bloodshed, endless labor, and brutality. ⁶⁶As my grandmother told me many times before, the japanese were harsh people who treated them like slaves. If the japanese adopted such a physically subjugating colonial style, what concerns did they have with assimilation? According to Wakako Higuchi's book, *The Japanese Administration of Guam, 1941-1944: A Study of Occupation and Integration Policies with Japanese Oral Histories*, it reached a point where the expected american counterattack was such a threat that the japanese navy could not afford to antagonize local people. The japanese wanted to establish a mutual and dependable

⁶⁶ Robert F. Rodgers, *Destiny's Landfall: A History of Guam*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011).

relationship with the local people even if this relationship would be “superficial” at first; they hoped it would turn into an authentically mutual relationship.⁶⁷

The method the Japanese utilized to reach this goal was through abolishing the U.S. legacy, language training for Japanese, and propaganda to make the Chamorros the Japanese emperor's subjects. Language education in all the areas of Japanese occupation served to be the most effective for long-term integration. “Language training was regarded as the key to foster consciousness among the natives as ‘peoples of Asia’ shaking themselves free from European and American colonial exploitation and having them acquire the Japanese spirit and culture.”⁶⁸ The Japanese referred to their language as their “spiritual blood” because it would “trickle down amongst the Asian races to establish the New Order and world peace by forming concentric circles around the core of Japan's ideology.”⁶⁹ This language colonialism has a long history of use by the Japanese ranging from the Ryukyu people in Okinawa to the Ainu indigenous people taken over by Japan. In the context of Oceania, the responsibility of language diffusion was given to the military forces that occupied the particular islands.

In Guåhan, this responsibility was left to the Japanese navy. Unlike the Americans, the Japanese did not specifically prohibit Chamorro language, but rather banned the speaking of English. Training in the Japanese language began in 1942 beginning with 15 elementary schools. At these schools, children were taught mathematics, Japanese vocabulary, and the reading and writing of certain Japanese characters, from 7:30 a.m.-

⁶⁷ Wakato Higuchi, *The Japanese Administration of Guam, 1941-1944: A Study of Occupation and Integration Policies with Japanese Oral Histories*, (Jefferson: McFarland & Company Inc., 2013).

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 119-120.

11:30 a.m. For young adults, they were taught patriotic songs and Japanese language for 1.5 hours twice a week. This initial schooling was followed by “official” schooling signaled by the arrival of Japanese teachers coming from Saipan and Palau who already had experience working in the islands. These new “official” schools for Chamorro children were not called “public schools” but were rather called “national schools.” This was done to enforce the policy of “naigai ichinyo” which claims that the empire of Japan and all its territories are one body. In these junior “national” schools, students between the ages of 15-17 read and wrote Japanese for ten hours a week originally using printouts from the textbook, “Hanashi Kotoba.”⁷⁰

In addition to these “schools,” Chamorro students were chosen by village officials to join the Provisional Assistant Teachers’ Training School and become language-culture interpreters between Chamorros and the Japanese. They were required to master Japanese vocabulary, reading, and writing of 46 Hiragana and Chinese characters. The textbook these Chamorro students used taught them the importance of the Japanese New Year, the emperor, the rising sun flag, and the national anthem. The English language was prohibited from being spoken at these training schools and students had to use Japanese dictionaries in their dormitories. According to Higuchi, “In this way, the teachers took a leading role to ‘implant Japanese thought’ by means of ‘fresh words’ of the ‘Japanese blood’ which was the best method of ideological communication to replace American influence.”⁷¹ Since English was banned and not Chamorro, the Chamorro language acted as a form of resistance against Japanese colonization. It gave Chamorros some cover since the Japanese could not understand them, only the interpreters could. Chamorros

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid., 123.

created songs to mock the Japanese, however the tone of these songs made it sound as if they were praising the Japanese.

It is interesting to observe that these Japanese policies were not that successful at making Chamorros loyal to the Japanese. Despite all the policies and education, Chamorros, for the most part, did not take after Japanese lifestyles, beliefs, or language. A possible reason for this is the colonial style of the Japanese. As previously said, the Japanese administration was filled with memories of physical harm and brutality to Chamorros. Crawford argues that brutality of this kind naturally breeds resistance and determination to defend the culture under attack.⁷² This ties in perfectly with Gramsci's concept of hegemony. His basic idea was that man cannot be controlled alone by force, but ideas also have a strong role in this control. Gramsci warned of the highly limited effectiveness of direct physical subjugation and brutality in trying to assimilate people. He argued that instead of a war of attack, a war of position rather would work better to control the means of production. It must be noted that Gramsci's theory was originally applied to Marxist economic thinking, but its application also extends to colonial legacies.⁷³ A war of position where struggles over ideas and beliefs occur in order to create a new hegemony will be much more effective in the processes of control. Gramsci's insights about how power is constituted in the realm of ideas and knowledge expressed through consent rather than force have inspired the use of explicit strategies to

⁷² James Crawford, *At War With Diversity: U.S. Language Policy in an Age of Anxiety*, (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2000).

⁷³ Thomas R. Bates, "Gramsci and the Theory of Hegemony", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 36, no. 2 (1975).

contest hegemonic norms of legitimacy.⁷⁴

Another possible reason for the failure of Chamorro assimilation to Japanese language and culture is simply the length of colonization. The Japanese dropped their bombs and occupied the island in 1941 and the Americans reoccupied Guam in 1944 making the Japanese colonization period merely three years. Compared to the previous American occupation, which lasted from 1898-1941 (43 years), three years pales in length. The Americans had a much longer period of time to “assimilate” the Chamorros to their ways and language than the Japanese had. This length difference does play a role in the success of assimilation, but does not imply a definite success of assimilation. This explanation should also not be confused as justifying any attempt at eradication of Chamorro culture or language. The Japanese were not successful at assimilating Chamorros into the Japanese lifestyle. This quote by my grandmother can sum up the Japanese period’s characteristics of eradication of English, non-effect on Chamorro, and brutality.

Gi hinasso-ku, manggoftaklalo’ siha. Komo ti un cho’gue hafa ilek-ñiha, anggen ti ma patmada hao, ma chonnek hao. Ti ya-hu fumino’chapones, maleffa yo’ todu pa’go esta. Estague ha’ I tiningo’-hu “Konbanwa.” Hunggan, todu I tiempo, mamfino’chamomoru ha’, ti ma lalatde ham yanggen mamfino’chamoru ham. Anggen oran eskuela, ti debi di un kuekuentos, debi di un ekungok ha’ I maestro lao yanggen manhuyong ham, mamfino’chamoru ham.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Andrew Heywood, *Political Ideas and Concepts: An Introduction*, (London: Macmillan, 1994).

⁷⁵ Personal interview with my grandmother Estella Meno Gofigan conducted in August 2013. Translation for “In my mind, they (the Japanese) were extremely mean. If you did not do what they said to do, if they didn’t slap you, they would shove you. I do not like

Her words echo what history has to say about this period in Guåhan's history.

IV. The Linguistic Tranquilizer: The Return of uncle sam

The american linguistic onslaught soon continued after the japanese occupation. After the three years of japanese occupation, the americans returned to the island on July 21, 1944 and fought the japanese for control of the island once again. The american success at reoccupying the island was misconstrued by many of our people as their "liberation." The prevailing narrative on the island is that if it were not for the americans, they would have been killed and had been slaves to the japanese people. This "liberation" ideology sparked the strong patriotism associated with contemporary life in Guåhan and also helped to further language decline.⁷⁶ In addition to this, the post-war conditions and era of reconstruction/rehabilitation of Guåhan spurred many conditions that were disadvantageous to Fino' Chamoru.

After World War II and the complete bombardment of Guåhan with bombs and subsequent remodeling, Chamorro life was changed forever. There was a gigantic shift from an economic framework of subsistence farming to a capitalistic model of wages and employment. According to a study published by the Micronesian Area Research Center, the shift to participation in the modern economy was rather dramatic and abrupt. In 1940, there were 2,747 Chamorro farmers in Guåhan. This number dropped to about 311 in 1960. Due to this new model of life based on wages, there was a much stronger emphasis

speaking japanese and I already forgot the entire language. This is all my knowledge about the japanese language "Konbanwa." Yes, we would speak Chamorro all the time, they would not scold us if we spoke Chamorro. However if it was during school hours, you should not be talking, you should be listening to the teacher, but when we left school, we spoke Chamorro."

⁷⁶ Robert F. Rodgers, *Destiny's Landfall: A History of Guam*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011).

put on educational aspirations and english as the key to unlocking educational success.⁷⁷ This made Chamorros become more actively involved in perpetuating this propaganda themselves and the no-Chamorro language rules were exacerbated. In addition to monetary fines, after the war, schools started creating “english-speaking areas” throughout the building, giving praise and recognition to those students who spoke english only, and providing resources for english-speaking student clubs. There are even examples of principals encouraging the ideology of these clubs, “Parents who speak English at home give great help to their children because the children who speak English well do best in school.”⁷⁸

The shift to a wage economy also affected the use of english because the local and federal government provided a majority of available positions of employment. In order to qualify for these jobs, one had to be able to demonstrate a strong knowledge of the english language. So if one wanted to survive in the world and make some money, knowledge of english would prove to be useful in order to get a job. It seemed that many Chamorros began to learn english simply to survive in an economic model they were so drastically unfamiliar with. Underwood articulates his point in the statement: “The message of English and its impact of occupational success was given prior to the war but had little change for application in the subsistence economy. The post-war occupational picture seemed to validate in dollars and cents this component of the ideology.”⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Teresa del Valle, *Social and Cultural Change in the Community of Umatac, Southern Guam*. (Guam: Micronesian Area Research Center, 1979).

⁷⁸ J. Torres, “Why I Study English”, *Guam Recorder*, (May 1925): 78.

⁷⁹ Robert A. Underwood, *American Education and the Acculturation of the Chamorros of Guam*. (Ph.d diss., University of Southern California, 1987), 151.

With this change of the economic system, different priorities started to be introduced to the Chamorro people. Factors such as higher education and finding wage-based jobs became some of the utmost important areas of daily living. This drastic change of priorities for Chamorros led to the massive outmigration of Chamorros to the united states. Starting from the naval era, Chamorros migrated to the united states for three main reasons: military service, economic opportunities, and higher education. After World War II, the reasons for this migration became increasingly more relevant and significant. According to Faye Untalan, “The military induction of young Chamorro men into the U.S. Navy led to the first wave of Chamorro military families leaving Guam in the 1940s after World War II. These families settled around U.S. Naval Bases in the California communities of Vallejo, Alameda, Long Beach, and San Diego.”⁸⁰

She goes on to illustrate that the Korean War also brought more Chamorros into the military because at this point Chamorros were joining the air force and the army, and not just the navy, thus putting Chamorros into all the main branches of the american military. As the Chamorros joined the military and became stationed outside of Guåhan, they also brought their spouses and children with them, contributing to the number of Chamorros living outside the Marianas. In addition, many of the Chamorros in the military during these tours were marrying spouses who came from other places, thus many of them were marrying outside of the Chamorro people. In addition, Chamorro women at this time were leaving the islands after marrying non-Chamorro members of the military who were temporarily stationed in Guåhan.⁸¹

⁸⁰ Faye Untalan, “Chamorro Migration to the U.S.”, Guampedia, accessed December 3, 2013, <http://guampedia.com/chamorro-migration-to-the-u-s/>.

⁸¹ Ibid.

This experience of language and spousal choice is a very real one for my grandmother from my father's side. My grandma, Magdalena Chargualaf Kuper, was born and raised in the northern island of Saipan and Fino' Chamoru is her first language. She went through World War II just as my maternal grandmother did, but experienced it from the perspective of the northern islands. Although not the concentration of this particular thesis, it should be understood that during World War II, Guåhan was taken by the Japanese, while the Japanese had already been in the northern islands for more than 20 years by this time. My grandmother did not first go to Guåhan until she was in her early-mid 20's. She ended up meeting and marrying my grandfather, Francis Kuper, a German-American born and raised in Aviston, a small German town in the middle of Illinois. They met while my grandfather was stationed in Saipan as part of the United States Navy, and they happily married and had 8 children. My grandma explains it best when I asked her why she did not teach my father Fino' Chamoru:

Annai humanao yu' para I states, pura ingles yan taya' Chamoru para bai hu kuentusi. Ayu nai na maleffa yu' mas. Matto yu' magi ta'lo Guam, hu na'setsetbe Chamoru sa' guaha Chamoru para bai hu fa'na'gue. Mappot un fa'na'gue I patgon komu uno, ti parehu I dos sainan na lenguahhi. Siempre ha' gi states, siempre hao na faningles sa' mandikike' mas un tungo'. Ayugue na ingles ha' nu machocho'gue. Lao pa'go esta malago famagu'on para u ma tungo Fino' Chamoru. Esta ta'lo ma tututuhon I mañaina ma fa'nana'gue I famagu'on-ñiha Chamoru. ⁸²

⁸² Personal interview with my grandma, Magdalena Chargualaf Kuper. Personal translation: "When I went to the states, there was a lot of English and no Chamorro that I could speak or speak to. This is why I forgot a lot of the language. When I came back to

This diasporic experience of marrying outside of the Chamorro people relates to language loss not only through the physical draining of speakers, but also through the choice that has to be made in regards to what language their children will speak.

Outside the military reasons for migration and diaspora, Typhoon Karen was another major factor. Typhoon Karen, which occurred in November of 1962, was a super typhoon with winds estimated up to 173 miles per hour that wiped out many homes and buildings. The acting governor at this time wrote “Over 90 percent of the island’s buildings were destroyed or badly damaged. Following the storm the island defied description as every tree, every blade of grass had been beaten to brown, shriveled masses.”⁸³ Five months after Typhoon Karen hit the island, another typhoon devastated the island undoing much of the post-Karen reconstruction. These two natural disasters eventually led to a huge rehabilitation process through the Guam Rehabilitation Act in 1963, which provided \$45 million in federal funds. However, many families who lost their homes decided to move to places such as California, where many of their family members already lived, rather than wait for the reconstruction process to occur.⁸⁴

Lastly, job prospects and education made migration appealing to Chamorros. For example, according to Untalan, Pan Am airlines, which serviced Guåhan, closed its service in the 1970s. Subsequently, many of their employees who were local people went

Guam, I utilized the Chamorro language again because there were Chamorros who taught me again. It is difficult for you to teach your child (the language) if the two parents do not have the same language. Definitely in the states, you will speak english because there will be more (english speakers) that you know. This is why english is what we were doing, but now, the children already want to learn Chamorro. Parents are once again already teaching their children Fino’ Chamoru.”

⁸³ Robert F. Rodgers, *Destiny’s Landfall: A History of Guam*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2011), 219.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

to the u.s. to find jobs. Also, in the 1960s, a prominent u.s. fruit company went to Guåhan to recruit local people to become fruit pickers in California.⁸⁵ This also contributed to the reasons for outmigration of Chamorro people to the united states. It is important to note that not only did these employees move to the united states themselves, but they also brought their families. For every one employee who left, there were around 3-6 family members who left with them, thus exponentially increasing the number of diasporic Chamorros. All of these factors led to the out-migration which took away many of the island's Chamorro speakers to new lands. As the number of speakers declined in Guåhan, so did Fino' Chamoru.

The post-World War II period not only embodies a period of time where many Chamorros migrated to other areas of the world, but it also embodies a time in which many foreigners started to settle in Guåhan. As the american military was rebuilding post-war Guåhan, they relied on the use of Filipino contract workers to do most of the labor and construction detail. In late 1952, there were approximately around 17,000 Filipinos living in Guam as contract workers. This influx was temporarily paused as the Immigration Natural Services Act (INSA) phased out all contract laborers in Guam for three years. However, in 1960, a case by the u.s. Board of Immigration Appeals named the "Aquino Ruling" allowed some non-immigrant alien workers to stay in Guåhan as permanent residents. So, by 1962, there were 1,700 non-immigrant Filipino workers who were able to obtain permanent residence.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Faye Untalan, "Chamorro Migration to the U.S.", Guampedia, accessed December 3, 2013, <http://guampedia.com/chamorro-migration-to-the-u-s/>.

⁸⁶ Clarisa G. Quan, "Filipinos on Guam", Guampedia, accessed February 19, 2014, <http://guampedia.com/filipinos-on-guam/>.

Soon after these workers were made citizens of the united states and subsequently petitioned the united states to allow their family members from the Philippines to enter Guåhan and apply to also become citizens. This process of bringing their family members out to the island to become american citizens worked efficiently and eventually these Filipino-“americans” became one of the largest ethnic groups in Guåhan making up approximately ¼ of the total population after just a few years. After Typhoon Karen, the influx of foreign workers increased drastically as labor was needed for rebuilding and rehabilitating the island from the typhoon’s destruction.⁸⁷

During this period, the INSA allowed Filipino workers and also Micronesian workers into Guåhan under a program named the “Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Program,” in which they were put under six month contracts. This changed the rules for immigrating to the united states. It established flat quotas for countries in the world and eliminated the ethnically biased quotas of previous laws. Guåhan served as an entry point for this new immigration wave to the u.s.⁸⁸ In 1967, this new wave of foreign workers reached up to 4,500 people. This new program was very oppressive in regards to wages and living situations, so after much protest and organizing, the H-2 system was reinstated. The H-2 system was fairer to these workers because they were paid higher wages due to the u.s. minimum wage being applied to nonimmigrant alien contract workers. The reinstatement of this system led to the largest wave of Filipino residents on the island.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Robert F. Rodgers, *Destiny’s Landfall: A History of Guam*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2011).

⁸⁸ Robert A. Underwood, *American Education and the Acculturation of the Chamorros of Guam*. (Ph.d diss., University of Southern California, 1987).

⁸⁹ Robert F. Rodgers, *Destiny’s Landfall: A History of Guam*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2011).

What does this out-migration of Chamorros and in-migration of Filipinos mean for Fino' Chamoru? As the number of Fino' Chamoru speakers left and the number of non- Fino' Chamoru speakers increased, Guåhan society needed a lingua franca. There needed to be some way for all groups in the island to be able to communicate with each other, and in this case, english became that lingua franca. During this time, all business was conducted in english, and thus its status was once again elevated by both Filipinos and Chamorros. The island heard less Fino' Chamoru spoken as our people left, and heard more Filipino and english spoken as Filipino workers came in. This became an imbalance in the linguistic equilibrium in Guåhan. For many Filipinos, they could not have assimilated well without learning english, thus they were subject to similar "english as success" language ideologies just as the Chamorros were. If being an american was the end goal for these workers, then english was the avenue to obtaining this goal. This example once again shows how Fino' Chamoru oppression is directly related to the positive ideology towards english just as much as it is related to the actual oppression of Fino' Chamoru. We can see that post-world war II presented practical conditions that allowed the "english as progress" ideologies to flourish and actualize.

Despite all these post-war conditions, one of the most significant reasons that Chamorros began to really believe in the "english as progress" ideology is the emergence of enforced loyalty to america following the supposed "liberation." The "english as progress" ideology existed since the navy originally began its "americanization" mission, yet it solidified after World War II with the strengthening of feelings of loyalty to america. Chamorros, before the war, still viewed themselves as different from americans. They were still ambiguous political subjects with no real attachment to america.

The realities of World War II changed all of this. During the war, Chamorros aligned themselves against the Japanese, and they demonstrated this through a much stronger allegiance to Americans. One of the most well-known resistance songs during this period created by Pete Taitingfong Rosario goes, “Eighth of December 1941, people went crazy right here in Guam. Oh, Mr. Sam, Sam, my dear Uncle Sam, won’t you please come back to Guam?”⁹⁰ For the Chamorros of Guåhan, the “principles espoused by the United States such as democracy and freedom, provided a dramatic counterpoint to the oppressive Japanese administration.”⁹¹ While the Chamorros believed the United States represented freedom, the Japanese reality seemed to represent the exact opposite. According to Chamorro historian Pedro Sanchez, there were about 500 Chamorros who were murdered through Japanese atrocities, which included beating, bayoneting, and shootings in caves and jungle areas.⁹² “New loyalties lack any strong emotional attachment until they have survived real tests and been hallowed by time –or have been sealed by a compact, formal or informal.”⁹³ These atrocities cemented loyalty to the Americans, who did not seem half as bad, after Chamorros experienced Japanese rule. For these reasons, Chamorros began to feel a particular closeness with the American nation.

This led to Chamorros wanting to become fully incorporated into the American nation. According to Leibowitz:

⁹⁰ Tony Palomo and Katherine Aguon, “WWII: From Occupation to Liberation”, Guampedia, accessed February 2, 2014, <http://guampedia.com/wwii-from-occupation-to-liberation/>.

⁹¹ Keith L. Camacho, *Cultures of Commemoration: the Politics of War, Memory, and History in the Mariana Islands*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2011), 48.

⁹² Pedro Sanchez, *Guåhan Guam: The History of Our Island*, (Hagatña: Sanchez Publishing House, 1989).

⁹³ Michael Waller and Andrew Linklater, “Introduction: Loyalty and the Post-national State”, *Political Loyalty and the Nation-State*, (2000): 13.

Citizenship would bring not only some limitation on untrammelled Naval authority but also a sense of dignity and equality with the rest of the United States, the security of permanent political union, and finally an acceptance by the national government of their political loyalty and willingness to share the obligations of the U.S. Federal system.⁹⁴

Since Chamorros wanted this citizenship, in essence, they had to become fluent in the language of the nation they wanted to belong to, english. They had to live in english in order to become true americans and prove that they were worthy of being just like other americans. For example, in 1950, Congressman Antonio Won Pat testifying before u.s. congress said, “We have adopted your language and assimilated your ideals and ways of life.”⁹⁵ This helps to show that many Chamorros finally started to believe that in order to be taken seriously, they needed to speak english without an accent, and that knowing that speaking Fino’ Chamoru would inevitably cause that accent. To truly feel american, Chamorros needed to know english and speak it just like americans did. It was at this point, with intense loyalty to the american nation, that Chamorros really internalized the propaganda and policies that have been aimed against Fino’ Chamoru.

The effect of this initial internalization was so powerful that even after Chamorro assimilation into american lifestyles, “english as progress” ideologies were still firmly cemented. According to Robert Underwood, “In fact, given the resurgence of Chamorro cultural identity on Guam in the 1970s, any long-term residual effect of desiring positive

⁹⁴ Arnold Leibowitz, *Defining Status: A Comprehensive Analysis of United States Territorial Relations*, (Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff, 1984), 330.

⁹⁵ Carano and Sanchez, *A Complete History of Guam*, (Tokyo: Tuttle & Co., 1964), 368.

integration with americans at the expense of being Chamorro appears to be absent.”⁹⁶ The positive ideology towards english simply remained too strong a factor, and post-World War II, Chamorros believed learning english and speaking english only was practical. This powerful ideology towards english seemed to throw any conversations of bilingualism out the door. Chamorros started to confuse the language of the homes with the language of the workplace. The ideology towards english was so strong that Chamorros no longer felt that Fino’ Chamoru had a place in their lives, especially within their homes and with their children.

Yet, the most important lesson to be learned is this: “The Chamorros are still on the wrong end of social and economic change in Guam despite their English-speaking abilities.”⁹⁷

V. Conclusion

Through colonial anti-Chamorro policies such as monetary fines, corporal punishment, propaganda, and expressing the english language as progress and success, the american colonial project has had great success in assimilating Chamorros and eradicating our mother tongue. Our elders did not pass down the language to our generations because of their strong love for us. Their experiences were so traumatic with speaking Fino’ Chamoru, it seems obvious they would not want us to go through the same experiences of speaking Fino’ Chamoru. These historical processes were so effective because they made the english language become the language Chamorros

⁹⁶ Robert A. Underwood, “Language Survival, The Ideology of English and Education in Guam”, *Educational Research Quarterly* 20, no. 4 (1984): 78.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

started to view the world through thus adopting the stance and worldview of the american colonizer.

Chamorros never fully internalized the “english as progress” ideology until after World War II. The post World War II loyalty to america led Chamorros to articulate their american-ness and a core component of this was to speak flawless english as it would lead to success. Also, after World War II, the fabric of Chamorro society changed completely and the conditions brought upon Guåhan presented a situation in which speaking english was practical. However, due to strong “english as success” ideologies, Chamorros spoke english as the language of business and government, but they sadly also spoke english as the language of the home. This was the tipping point of Fino’ Chamoru becoming a sleeping language.

Chapter 2. Hafa Na Manmalalangu Ha' Hit?: The Malicious Promise of Poisonous Cures

“In sum, the dictionary aims to provide the most recent and complete record of the lexicon of the Chamorro language as it used by the Chamorro people in 1974. In this respect, it is a descriptive dictionary, not a prescriptive one.”⁹⁸

As I first began my journey into awakening my indigenous tongue, I thought I knew the answer. I thought I found the one thing that would give me a second chance at learning my language, my language savior: The *Chamorro-english Dictionary*. I remembered that my mom said she had a copy lying somewhere in the huge ceiling-to-floor bookshelf we still have at our house. After searching for the dictionary for a while, I finally stumbled upon it sitting on a stack of books on one of the shelves nearest to the floor, quietly hiding behind my grandma’s favorite couch. When I finally retrieved the dictionary, it was dusty, the cover was torn, and the pages were all faded a yellow tinge with age. With its white cover and orange font screaming “Chamorro-english Dictionary” and its picture of a latte, which are Chamorro stone monoliths that were used to build houses on top of, sprawled across, it seemed as if the answer to my prayer of becoming fluent seemed to rest upon my turning of these pages.

When I wanted to form sentences in Fino’ Chamoru, I would simply open up the dictionary, find the words, connect them together and all of a sudden, I had my sentence. For example, if I wanted to say that I wanted to go to the store, I would look up all the words and come up with something like this, “Malago’ hanao tenda.”⁹⁹ At the time, I thought that learning the language through the dictionary was going to

⁹⁸ Donald Topping et al., *Chamorro-English Dictionary*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1975), xii.

⁹⁹ The correct way to say this sentence is “Malago’ yo’ humanao para I tenda.”

account for most of what I needed to do in order to achieve fluency. I thought I had discovered a methodological gem and put a lot of hope and confidence that it would get me to where I desired to go.

After a while of studying the dictionary, I was not any closer to becoming fluent in any way. I learned a few words here and there, but I still had no idea how to actually form sentences. I was speaking in such a way that my grandmother really did not understand me. I still remember the times when I would speak so badly that she simply would repeat what I was trying to say in English and then proceed to respond to me in English. She had such a disconnection with the language I was using and was sometimes frustrated by it. I also felt discouraged because I felt I was working hard to learn the language through the dictionaries, but I was not actually moving closer to my goal of fluency. Studying the dictionary was a good step to take, but the dictionary alone was simply not enough. I needed a much more comprehensive approach to language learning and one that did not rely on a single source as the answer to everything. The dictionary was not my savior, and the comfortability I had in striving for fluency through this one tactic alone was damaging.

This “dictionary worship” is relatively common for many Chamorro people. A common thought in Guåhan is that one can easily learn the language if one buys a copy of the dictionary and memorizes a couple of words a day. It is definitely an idea that one often hears when people speak about taking initiatives to learning the language. It seems as if one buys a Chamorro-English dictionary and looks through it *guaha na biahi*,¹⁰⁰ they are fulfilling the quota for language learning and can easily

¹⁰⁰ Chamorro for “Sometimes”

feel that they are doing enough.

These dictionaries are simply not enough, and if they are the core component of any language revitalization movement or strategy, then that language revitalization goal will never be actualized and will always remain a struggle. All of the language revitalization literature shows that it takes more than reading the dictionary once a day to become fluent in any language.¹⁰¹ A much more comprehensive approach that involves the community, uses more than the medium of print, and most especially, challenges hegemonic ideas about indigenous languages are what is needed to truly revitalize a language.

The faith and confidence people seem to put into dictionaries, as being the savior of language learning is part of my argument that dictionaries can perpetuate colonial logics and be used as tools of colonization. For the purposes of this thesis, colonial logics can be referred to as discourses and methods that ultimately benefit the colonizer or colonizing mission even if utilized by colonized/indigenous peoples. In many colonized societies, dictionaries served as colonial linguistic interventions and were an essential component of colonial control. In the article, “Colonizing Language: Missionaries and Gikuyu Dictionaries”, the authors write “by insisting on rational modes of debate, and by defining the language in which the debate took shape, they coercively imposed a hegemonizing trajectory onto cultural exchange.”¹⁰²

This chapter will analyze 5 Chamorro-english dictionaries: “Dictionary and Grammar of the Chamorro Language of the Island of Guam” by Edward Von

¹⁰¹ Lenore Grenoble, *Saving Languages: An Introduction to Language Revitalization*. (Massachusetts: Cambridge Press, 2005).

¹⁰² Derek Peterson, “Colonizing Language? Missionaries and Gikuyu Dictionaries, 1904 and 1914”, *History in Africa* 24, (1997): 257.

Preissig, “English-Chamorro Dictionary” by Revered Adellbert Donlon, “Chamorro-English Dictionary of the Mariana Islands” by F. “Val” C., “Chamorro-English Dictionary” by Donald Topping, Pedro Ogo, and Bernadita Dungca, and finally “The Official Chamorro-English Dictionary: Ufisiât Na Diksiônâriôn Chamorro-Engles” by the Depâttementon I Kaohao Guinahan Chamorro or the Department of Chamorro Affairs. The prefaces of these dictionaries as well as the circumstances of their creations will be analyzed to show the perpetuation of colonial logic and discourses.¹⁰³ These dictionaries will demonstrate and embody three of the most prevalent colonial logic/discourses: separation of colonized from their traditional roots, the limitation of indigenous imagination through hegemonic assimilation, and lastly the co-optation of indigenous peoples into colonial systems.

I. Nihî Ta Tuna I Sagradu Na Lepblo: Dictionary as Colonial Logic

One of the most colonial aspects of dictionaries of indigenous languages is that they can separate people from their languages by dehumanizing these languages and representing them not as living knowledges of communities, but rather as the last words of a dying people. These dictionaries completely transform the essence of language by breaking them down into smaller units with the supposed “intention” of documenting the language, but at the same time not explaining the language’s unique contribution to the world. In essence, dictionaries take languages out of their social realms and place them into slides to be examined by their narrow, colonial microscopes. Most do not equip the reader with idiomatic expressions, vernacular

¹⁰³ It is important to point out that I am referring to colonial discourses and not a unifying colonial discourse. Colonial logics are perpetuated and manifested in various ways and thus do not follow a singular colonial discourse.

ways of utilizing the language, or the connotations that certain words bring.

Dictionaries do not situate the words contextually, and simply “translate” them without taking into account their epistemological differences.¹⁰⁴ According to Lekau Mphasha, “Dictionaries are and will remain the main sources of information about the general meanings of words. However, they do not always serve the needs of all different cultural groups. The ideas presented in them do not always reflect the opinions of all these groups.”¹⁰⁵

Hawaiian scholar Sam No’eau Warner helps to explain these colonial simplifications and dehumanizing processes through his examination of the appropriation of Hawaiian language. Warner writes that:

Non-Hawaiians are promoting an ideology whereby language is viewed as an autonomous entity distinct from the people from whom it evolved. In endowing language with the status of a separate, autonomous entity and objectifying it into a “thing” that is only nominally related to the Hawaiian people, non-Hawaiians set the stage for the appropriation of kuleana over that language.¹⁰⁶

Bilingual dictionaries such as the Chamorro-english dictionaries help to engage in this objectification process because one can see that the root of the creation of these dictionaries is not for a reconnection of the Chamorro people to Fino’ Chamoru, but

¹⁰⁴ Epistemology is defined as “the philosophical science of the nature of knowledge and truth.” For the sake of this argument, epistemology will particularly focus on our way of knowing, not necessarily what we know, but rather how we know what we know.

¹⁰⁵ Lekau Eleazar Mphasha, “The Inclusion of Cultural Meanings in Northern Sotho Dictionaries”, *Journal of Sociology and Social Anthropology* 4, no. 3 (2013):183.

¹⁰⁶ Sam L. No’eau Warner, “Kuleana: The Right, Responsibility, and Authority of Indigenous Peoples to Speak and Make Decisions for Themselves in Language and Cultural Revitalization”, *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 30, no.1 (1999): 78.

rather a separation.

This is clearly evident through reading the preface of one of the earliest Chamorro-english dictionaries published. The “Dictionary and Grammar of the Chamorro Language of the Island of Guam” was written by a united states navy paymaster named Edward Ritter Von Preissig in 1917.¹⁰⁷ Von Preissig published this as a navy department publication for the use of the department of education and the other branches of the government. On the first page of his introduction, he already plays into the colonial discourse of presenting the language as the last words of a dying generation. Von Preissig writes:

When it was his ever-recurring experience to be compelled to abandon word after word contained in the work of the Spanish author, for the reason that they were no longer remembered by any of the living Chamorros, and although all these words represented, upon the most casual etymological investigation, the true genius of the old language, they have been lost to it forever, having apparently died with the last generation.¹⁰⁸

Von Preissig especially emphasizes that the genius of the old language is lost not just now, but also forever. Thus, he seems to be implying that the language is lost to the Chamorro people and is disconnected from them since they forgot the true genius of their language. So even if Von Preissig does acknowledge that the language does have genius to it, he covers this up by writing that even though that may have been the case, the modern Chamorros are separated from that genius. The last great Chamorros were the

¹⁰⁷ Edward Ritter Von Preissig, *Dictionary and Grammar of the Chamorro Language of the Island of Guam*, (1917).

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 1.

past generation, they have died and what is left are simply the last words of an inevitably dying language and people.

Von Preissig's arguments about the death of the genius of a language reinforce colonial logics of separation because they help to suck the life out of the language and resemble it as a "thing" no longer of much value. Warner echoes this sentiment when talking about the circumstances of the Hawaiian language by stating that non-Hawaiians devalue the language to a "thing":

Non-Hawaiians simultaneously "reduce" the status of the Hawaiian people to the level of an "object" that is even lower and of less importance than this inanimate entity called language. This can be readily seen through non-Hawaiians' actions, which typically focus on saving the language with little or no concern for the well-being of the people...The objectification and dismissal of a people as less important than their language is an extreme form of dehumanization.¹⁰⁹

Warner's logic shows that by devaluing the language and treating it as an "object," colonizers simultaneously dehumanize the community the language belongs to. Colonizers essentially strip communities from their language.

Von Preissig's dictionary pays tribute to this colonial logic of separation through his preface by writing the true purpose of the creation of his dictionary.

The author wishes to express the hope that his principal aim, that of the facilitation of the work of the public school of Guam through the placing of the

¹⁰⁹ Sam L. No'eau Warner, "Kuleana: The Right, Responsibility, and Authority of Indigenous Peoples to Speak and Make Decisions for Themselves in Language and Cultural Revitalization", *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 30, no.1 (1999): 78.

pupil's hands of the means of the acquisition of a thorough understanding of the English words learned by them in the course of their school term, be accomplished.¹¹⁰

We need to ask, whom are dictionaries meant to “preserve” language for? This specific dictionary was not made to help or perpetuate Fino’ Chamoru, but rather it was created with the intent of making Chamorro schoolchildren learn english more effectively. It was intended to separate Chamorro children from the language and for them to clearly see english as the better language.

Separation as a colonial project extends to not only language, but to every realm of society; one could argue it is a core philosophy and methodology of colonization. According to Taiaiake Alfred in his book, *Peace, Power, and Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto*, “disconnection is the root of the problem. Colonization is a process of disconnecting us from our responsibilities to one another and our respect for one another, our responsibilities and our respect for the land, and our responsibilities and respect for the culture.”¹¹¹ Alfred writes that indigenous peoples have been separated from the sources of goodness and power and that this disconnection is at the core of indigenous existence under colonization.¹¹² I extend this argument to include the colonial processes of disconnection from our languages and epistemologies through dictionaries.

The second colonial logic that the Chamorro-english dictionaries perpetuate is that they limit the indigenous imagination through assimilation into colonial logics.

¹¹⁰ Edward Ritter Von Preissig. *Dictionary and Grammar of the Chamorro Language of the Island of Guam*, (1917), 2.

¹¹¹ Taiaiake Alfred, *Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

¹¹² Taiaiake Alfred, *Wasase: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009).

Colonizers aim at convincing the colonized that the colonial logics, approaches, and behaviors are the only natural way of doing anything. Expanding on the argument about hegemony mentioned in the previous chapter, the effectiveness of hegemony lies in convincing people that a certain way of doing things-which inevitably benefits the colonizer- is the normal and only way of doing things. Hegemony normalizes colonial ideologies/practices and neutralizes resistance.¹¹³ As Gilbert Keith Chesterton writes, “Managed in a modern style, the emancipation of the slave’s mind is the best way of preventing the emancipation of the slave. Teach him to worry about whether he wants to be free and he will not free himself.”¹¹⁴ This quote helps to illustrate how hegemony operates: how can one resist if they feel they have a choice? Does this not defeat the overall reason for resistance?

Furthering this argument, this limiting of the indigenous imagination is structurally set up for the colonized to fail. It is hegemonic in the sense that it acts as a total decoy. Built into this colonial structure is the impossibility of the indigenous political project. As Michael Lujan Bevacqua said in a personal interview, the colonial logic works so that:

Even though something is being performed explicitly, there is this emptiness that makes it do nothing and go nowhere. The emptiness is part of the colonial logic and keeps it intact. Once you become convinced of an emptiness, how can you convince yourself otherwise? How can you argue against a void or what use is

¹¹³ Thomas R. Bates, “Gramsci and the Theory of Hegemony”, *Journal of the History of Ideas* 36, no. 2 (1975): 351-366.

¹¹⁴ Gilbert Keith Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995), 114.

there yelling into an abyss?¹¹⁵

The colonial logic attempts to convince the colonized that there is no alternative to colonial approaches, and that in order to achieve any of their goals, they must operate in the colonial system. Colonial methods are the only methods, they are the savior and they are the cure. If the colonized think of any alternatives, they will surely fail.¹¹⁶ This is the total hijacking of the indigenous imagination.

Dictionaries can embody this colonial logic of limitation by offering itself as the cure for language loss. As mentioned earlier, dictionaries have a way of convincing people that they can effectively learn a language if they just study the dictionary. The dictionary has been marketed as the authority on language, and we now have a situation where a book overtakes a community as this authority. With separation as a first step in the colonial process, this limiting logic helps to cement the primacy of colonial ideology into indigenous minds. We are told that dictionaries can save our languages, when they truly cannot.

One can clearly see how dictionaries embody this “preservation vs. revitalization” framework so fruitfully. Part of the mechanics of hegemonic limiting is to work through a preservation framework. With a preservation framework, one is not working to revitalize or give life to the language; one is rather preparing the language for death. However, on the surface, it may seem as if the preservation agenda is the same as the revitalization agenda. Dictionaries prepare the language for being placed in a metaphorical glass box to be preserved in a museum, but never touched. In essence, dictionaries necessitate the

¹¹⁵ Personal Interview with Michael Lujan Bevacqua conducted in July 2013.

¹¹⁶ Taiaiake Alfred, *Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

zombification of languages in which all life is sucked out and the language becomes treated as an artifact and relic of the past.¹¹⁷ This helps to show that many of the supposed cures that colonizers tell us will work are actually ineffective in helping us to achieve our goals. Yet, they continue to tell us that their way is the only way we are going to rescue our languages, political status, and livelihood.

This is highly evident in the “Chamorro-English Dictionary of the Mariana Islands” compiled by F. “Val” C in 1967 by the Hong Kong Press.¹¹⁸ It is quite troubling that no information is given regarding who the compiler is. The name given is simply a nickname with no first or last name provided, and this is problematic because we do not know who this person is or what authority he or she has to be writing about Fino’ Chamoru. “Val” plays into the first colonial logic of dehumanization and separation by stating that Fino’ Chamoru has a very limited lexicon and therefore translating the language into English is simple and concise. It is obvious that “Val” has no understanding of the Chamorro epistemology attached to the language.

However, it is later in this preface that “Val” perpetuates a “colonial way or no way” attitude. Val writes that:

This is the *only* recent publication in Guam of the Chamorro-English dictionary, and it justifies the need to preserve the language for posterity in the libraries and tourist bureaus of the world. Consequently, this culture will forever be lost, if

¹¹⁷ Personal Interview with Michael Lujan Bevacqua conducted in July 2013.

¹¹⁸ F. “Val” C, *Chamorro-English Dictionary of the Mariana Islands*, (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Press, 1967).

publication of this book is not done by the untiring efforts and sacrifice of this author.¹¹⁹

Through this statement, “Val” sets up his/her dictionary as the “savior” of the language because without this dictionary, the culture will forever be lost. “Val” mentions no other alternatives, indigenous agency, or hope for future project; he/she rather tries to convince the reader that this book is the only thing that can prevent the Chamorro culture from dying.

Another especially interesting aspect of “Val’s” statement is that he/she reinforces colonial logics introduced in Von Preissig’s dictionary. Both “Val” and Von Preissig both invoke the word “forever” when referring to specific situations of indigenous peoples. In Von Preissig’s case, it was that the genius of the language was lost forever, and in “Val’s” the culture will be lost forever if not for his intervention. These two sentences help to illustrate the process through which hegemony begins to take root and in which colonial ways become the norm: through representing indigenous ways as backwards and primitive, and doomed to remain in the past forever.

These (mis) representations are extremely powerful because people place a large emphasis on the way things are represented. According to Cultural Studies scholar Stuart Hall, representation is an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture. It does involve the use of language, of signs, and images, which stand for or represent things.¹²⁰ Meaning is said to depend on the relationship between things in this world and the way people mentally represent these

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 5.

¹²⁰ Stuart Hall, *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications & Open University, 1997).

particular things. A large portion of representation is in the language that we use. This helps to illustrate how using temporal language to represent indigenous peoples and situations is a powerful way to alter meaning and make way for colonial approaches to be viewed as the “savior” of the future.

The demonization of the indigenous can be seen in another Chamorro-english dictionary. “English-Chamorro” dictionary compiled by Reverend Adelbert Donlon in 1946. Rev. Adelbert Donlon was a missionary to Guåhan who was captured along with other americans in 1941 by japanese forces and sent on a prisoner ship named the “Argentina Maru” for the duration of the war. According to the preface, “Early in their captivity they came to realize that their stay in the prison camp would undoubtedly be a long one and that they must, therefore become interested in something to keep them mentally active and alert.”¹²¹ Reverend Donlon was supposedly a linguist who spoke other languages and thus wanted to begin his work on Fino’ Chamoru.

In the preface of the dictionary, Reverend Donlon writes “It should be remembered that Ton Jackson’s wife was partly of Spanish descent, consequently, the phrases he compiled were very similar to the Chamorro spoken before the war by the more educated Chamorro people.”¹²² The reverend seems to be insinuating that the spanish blood that was colonially intertwined into our bloodlines is the only saving and civilizing aspect of our people. Being spanish means being more educated and thus having a much better grasp of the language than “normal” non-mestizo Chamorros would possess. Not only does this play into the politics of blood quanta that are extremely

¹²¹ Reverend Adelbert Donlon, *English-Chamorro Dictionary*, (1946), 1.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 2.

prevalent in indigenous discourses today, but also it depicts the Chamorro as civilized and primitive. Chamorros were essentially frozen in time in Donlon's analysis.

These two dictionaries help to show how the indigenous imagination is limited by colonial logic. "Val's" dictionary explicitly shows how colonial approaches hegemonically present themselves as all-encompassing solutions to indigenous problems. Both dictionaries then effectively illustrate the mechanisms of this hegemonic limitation through demonization and misrepresentations of indigenous beliefs and practices. Furthermore, these two dictionaries help to illustrate how the colonial logic of separation and the colonial logic of hegemonic limiting work together to cement colonial ideologies into the indigenous psyche.

Moving forward from this cementation of the normalcy of colonial ideology, the final step in the colonial agenda is to have indigenous peoples themselves champion, embody, and perpetuate these ideologies and practices. It is not only making the colonized believe in what the colonizer says, but rather to have them act on these beliefs in their daily lives. The colonizers essentially enjoy the most control when the colonized do their work for them. Colonization enjoys an internal transformation of the colonized. According to Frantz Fanon, it should not be any surprise that the colonized are the most antagonistic towards the colonized. The processes of incorporating indigenous people into colonial institutions and systems makes it inevitable that the indigenous and colonized will engage in an identification process where they adopt the colonizer's attitude.¹²³

¹²³ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, (New York: Grove Press, 1962).

Taiaiake Alfred expands on this concept through his discussion on “co-optation.”

He writes that co-optation is:

A process through which the policy orientations of leaders are influenced and their organization activities channeled. It blends the leader’s interests with those of an external organization...by becoming somewhat of an insider; the co-opted leader is likely to identify with the organization and its objectives. The leader’s point of view is shaped through the personal ties formed with authorities and functionaries of the state organization.¹²⁴

For the purpose of this argument, the organization Alfred is speaking about can refer to the general realm of colonial institutions and systems. He warns that while many will resist, many will also cooperate with colonial systems. “These people rationalize and participate actively in their own subordination and the maintenance of the Other’s superiority. All colonized people must find ways to survive the experience, and not everyone is capable of active resistance.”¹²⁵

In his book, *The Governance of Ethnic Communities*, Raymond Breton helps to explain how this colonial process of indigenous perpetuation of colonial logics is self-defeating for the colonized. He says that what this process essentially does is prevent leaders from furthering the goals of their people, and rather manipulates them into furthering satisfying colonial objectives.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ Taiaiake Alfred, *Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 98.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 97.

¹²⁶ Raymond Breton, *The Governance of Ethnic Communities: Political Structures and Processes in Canada*, (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991).

His argument further emphasizes that the three colonial logics discussed in this chapter: separation, hegemonic limiting of indigenous imagination, and co-optation of indigenous peoples all work together. Building on the previous argument, co-opting indigenous peoples helps to reinforce the structure of impossibility built into limiting their imaginations. If dictionaries are only colonial “facades” of language revitalization “savior,” co-optation would require indigenous collaboration into the prioritization of these dictionaries as a language revitalization strategy.

Within the history of Chamorro-english dictionaries, these examples exist. In 1975, there was finally a legitimate collaboration between foreign linguists and indigenous Chamorro people. This can be found in the popular dictionary: “Chamorro-English Dictionary” written by Donald Topping, Pedro Ogo, and Bernadita Dungca.¹²⁷ To preface this, the main author of the dictionary is Donald M. Topping who was a professor of linguistics and director of the Social Science Research Institute at the University of Hawai‘i. Topping’s primary interest and concern is rooted in advancing the reach of linguistic work. Although there are two indigenous Chamorros who helped Topping, it is important to note that Topping was the spearhead of the dictionary project.

Topping includes a section entitled “Aim of this Work.” In this section, he mentions that the primary purpose in compiling the dictionary is to provide an alphabetized listing of as many Chamorro words as could be collected and spelled. His aim is to provide the most recent and complete record of the Chamorro language as spoken by Chamorros in 1974. He then goes on to describe his sources. The primary source for a majority of his work came from the spoken language of the Chamorros. He

¹²⁷ Donald Topping et al., *Chamorro-English Dictionary*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1975).

extensively analyzed tape recordings of various conversations and monologues. All entries in the dictionary were spoken and verified by a native speaker of the language. Also, Topping discusses how the dictionary was a collaboration between himself, Pedro Ogo (a Chamorro from the island of Luta), and Bernadita Dungca (a Chamorro professor of education and linguist). He then ends this preface by saying that numerous other people from the Marianas assisted over the years.

After analyzing this dictionary, it may seem as if it is innocuous, however, we must not too easily believe that as truth. This dictionary was created with the best of intentions, but it is still just a dictionary and on its own, will do nothing to further the cause of language revitalization. Colonial logic basically manipulated us into thinking that dictionaries were the language “savior.” Even indigenous people themselves can create tactics that are within colonial logics, and that is how co-optation works. Just because this dictionary included Chamorro people does not make it more effective for language revitalization. There is nothing more qualitatively “savior” like about this dictionary than previous dictionaries, even if it may include more of an indigenous face and voice.

The final step in the ladder was for these dictionaries to be created by Chamorros and for Chamorros. “The Official Chamorro-English Dictionary: Ufisiât Na Diksionârión Chamorro-Engles”¹²⁸ was produced by the Depâttementon I Kaohao Guinahan Chamorro or the Department of Chamorro Affairs. This dictionary was published in 2009

¹²⁸ Depâttementon I Kaohao Guinahan Chamorro, *The Official Chamorro-English Dictionary: Ufisiât na Diksionârión Chamorro-Engles*, (Hagatña: Depâttementon I Kaohao Guinahan Chamorro, 2009).

with Sylvia Flores as president of Depâttementon I Kaohao Guinahan Chamorro and Katherine Bordallo Aguon as the lead administrator and editor of the project.

In Aguon's introduction to the dictionary, she points out that this dictionary originally started in the late 70's under the supervision of the late Jose Rivera who wrote the first draft of the dictionary. The goal of this dictionary project was to continue where they left off. Aguon credits these pioneer educators as forming the basis for this official dictionary, "a book that all have been waiting for, a book that is destined to become a valuable tool for teaching and preserving the Chamorro language."¹²⁹ Unlike many of the dictionaries spearheaded by foreigners with one or two people assisting them, this dictionary was a large collaboration between different educators.

The first thing to recognize here is that Aguon directly says the dictionary was meant to "preserve" the language, and not revitalize it. While one could say this is just a matter of terminology choice, an actual analysis of the dictionary will show how this dictionary project was about preservation and not revitalization. One of the most unusual aspects of this particular dictionary is that it only goes in one direction: Fino' Chamoru to english. If you want to search for a word, you would have to search for a Chamorro word in order to find anything. At first, one may think this is a good thing because it shows indigenous assertion into the prioritizing of Fino' Chamoru over any other language. However, if one contextualizes this into the current linguistic landscape in Guåhan, we can see the problem.

As stated in the beginning of this thesis, only about 18% of the population in Guåhan speaks Fino' Chamoru. With the language situation being as dire as this, it seems

¹²⁹ Ibid., vii.

ineffective to have a dictionary that only goes from Fino' Chamoru to english. If one wanted to learn how to say something in the language, they would be quite lost. How can you find out how to say something in Fino' Chamoru if the prerequisite for discovering this is a knowledge of Fino' Chamoru itself? We can see why the Fino' Chamoru to english only direction is problematic considering the present circumstances. After effective language revitalization, a one-direction dictionary could have some effect, but with every project we do, we must always remember what the current situation is.

This one-way aspect of this dictionary can help us to once again reflect on the structure of impossibility tied into the colonial logics that are said to save us. Just as learning Fino' Chamoru from this dictionary is extremely difficult, utilizing colonial logics to achieve decolonial goals are also defeating. Colonial logics and tactics do not take into account our unique and nuanced situations or cultural differences, and this is a main reason impossibility is the only result of utilizing these tactics alone.

These five Chamorro-english dictionaries help to explain the trappings of colonial logics that many indigenous communities are exposed to, accept, resist, or internalize. These colonial logics all work together as a well-oiled machine to continue the oppression of colonized/indigenous peoples. However, the discussion has so far centered on dictionaries and language revitalization. How do these colonial logics operate on a deeper level?

II.Hafa I Manhinekse-ta? Dictionary as Metaphor For So Much More

Up until this point, this chapter has heavily concentrated on analyzing dictionaries and their intertwined colonial logics of separation, hegemonic limiting of imagination, and co-optation. It is at this point that I will take a departure from this analysis and

discuss the larger point to be made. This chapter has been utilizing the dictionary as a metaphor for decolonization as it manifests in Guåhan. More explicitly, the metaphor is meant to demonstrate how dictionaries are to the language revitalization movement what colonial logics and approaches are to the decolonization movement: tactics that exist, but if prioritized, are self-defeating.

This section will argue for a reimagination of how the manifestations of decolonization and Chamorro self-determination processes should be enacted in Guåhan. I argue here that the decolonization movement in Guåhan needs to be further removed from the limitations and “compromised logic of colonial approaches and myths,”¹³⁰ and instead a decolonization process rooted in Chamorro values, epistemologies, and teachings must be implemented and practiced. The study of dictionaries helps to illustrate how these “colonial logics” which we think can really bring us true language revitalization really were not meant to do so. For many, dictionaries served as their ticket to language revitalization, yet many did not read the fine print, “failure if used alone.” If we continue to work towards decolonization according to colonial approaches alone, we will also surely fail to realize our goal.

Our approach to decolonization has primarily consisted of methods that work within the colonial legal and ideological framework of u.s. and international law. For example, many of our activists today have made their way to the United Nations in order to passionately testify in front of various committees such as the Special Political and Decolonization and the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Every year, various representatives are sent to these meetings with the hopes that the United Nations will

¹³⁰ Taiaiake Alfred, *Wasase: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 34.

listen to our concerns and engage in action that will help lead us to the dream of decolonization. However, it is very telling that at many of these meetings, the representative of the united states simply walks out of the room during testimony from Guåhan representatives. We have also formed committees such as the Commission on Self-Determination and the Commission on Decolonization that currently operate and work towards setting a date for the plebiscite in which Chamorros will vote for what political status they desire: incorporation (statehood) into the united states, free association, or independence.¹³¹ These committees, while doing some useful work, have many times been stifled by money problems and bureaucratic red tape, thus delaying much of the work that could be accomplished. It is important to understand that while these are the current manifestations in Guåhan; these tactics have a long history, some of which will be explicated later in this chapter. All of these examples illustrate our constriction to colonial frameworks through a separation from our indigenous ways, the limiting of our indigenous imaginations, and the co-optation of our people into these colonial, political systems.

Taiiaki Alfred helps to explicate the dangers of these colonial approaches to decolonization by showing how these approaches trap indigenous people into continuous subjugation and oppression. He says that it is pointless to gain this political space or status if it is void of any indigenous content. Alfred's main argument is that "natives gaining control of governing structures is not enough to allow us to decolonize. In fact, without a cultural grounding, self-government becomes a kind of Trojan horse for capitalism, consumerism, and self-

¹³¹ Political Status Education Coordinating Commission, *Kinalamten Pulitikåt: Siñenten I Chamorro*, (Hagatña: Department of Chamorro Affairs, 2002).

individualism.”¹³²

In other words, he discusses the metaphor of moving from being trapped in a rusty cage to being restricted by a brand new chain around the neck. When asked about indigenous socio-economic, physical, and spiritual conditions, Alfred, in his other book, *Wasase*, does not hold back in explaining his reasons for these conditions:

I believe it is because they are bound up in and unable to break free from the limiting logic of the colonial myths that they claim to oppose. The myths’ symbols and embedded beliefs force aboriginal thinking to remain in colonial, mental, political, and legal frameworks. The chain may offer more room for us to move, but the colonial system is still the one in control.¹³³

A clear analysis of Guåhan’s history shows that our past is filled with shifts from cages to chains and back again. One of the earliest examples of this struggle to move from cage to chain occurred during the Chamorro struggle to gain united states citizenship. During this time, Guåhan was still under the administration of the united states navy, and Chamorros were tired of political ambiguity and feeling like second-class inhabitants of the island. So, in December of 1933, a petition was circulated in Guåhan to fight for citizenship. The Chamorro people, with high morale, sent this petition of 1,965 signatures to the president of the united states, secretary of the navy, and certain members of congress. Despite this petition with all its signatures, there was ultimately no action on behalf of the u.s. government defining the Chamorro political standing as part

¹³² Taiaiake Alfred, *Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 3.

¹³³ Taiaiake Alfred, *Wasase: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 34.

of their nation. This lack of action did not discourage, but rather fueled the drive for political rights and citizenship.

Three years later on July 11, 1936, a group of Chamorros gathered together to take more aggressive actions in regards to achieving what they believed would be best for the Chamorro people. In a joint session of the Guam Congress, they adopted a resolution once again petitioning the united states to grant the people of Guåhan american citizenship. At this meeting, congressman after congressman stood up and expressed their anger and indignation in regards to Chamorro treatment by the united states.¹³⁴ All of these sentiments and passions amalgamated into action.

To strengthen their representation and further see that the resolution gets attention, the Guam Congress decided to send two delegates, Baltazar J. Bordallo, Chairman of the House of Council, and Francisco B. Leon Guerrero, Vice Chairman of the House of Council. An island-wide campaign was initiated to raise funds to send these two men to Washington D.C., and in less than one month, they raised over \$5,000. With these funds and the intention of the people, these two men set out on the 10,000-mile journey to the White House to discuss issues of the political standing of the Chamorro people. Bordallo and Leon Guerrero fiercely stood in front of congress and argued for american citizenship for the Chamorro people.¹³⁵

Citizenship was not actually attained until the Guam Congress staged a walkout in 1949 protesting five decades of naval rule and called for more self-governance. The event made news worldwide and led to the creation of the 1950 Organic Act, which granted

¹³⁴ Penelope Bordallo Hofschneider, *A Campaign for Political Rights On the Island of Guam 1899-1950*, (Saipan: CNMI Division of Historical Preservation, 2001).

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 95.

american citizenship to the people of Guåhan and established a stronger local government.¹³⁶ So, we moved from the cage to the chain of citizenship.

This story helps to show the enmeshment of the three colonial logics that serve as the pinnacle of these arguments, and how they amalgam into what can be described as the “politics of recognition.” According to Glen Coulthard in his article “Subjects of Empire: Indigenous Peoples and the Politics of Recognition in Canada”, the politics of recognition is “the expansive range of recognition-based models of liberal pluralism that seek to reconcile indigenous claims” to sovereignty or nationhood via the accommodation of indigenous identities in some form of renewed relationship with the colonizing state.”¹³⁷

In this case, this renewed relationship would be to more fully incorporate Chamorros into the state as citizens. Coulthard argues “the politics of recognition in its contemporary form promises to reproduce the very configurations of colonial power that Indigenous peoples’ demands for recognition have historically sought to transcend.”¹³⁸ The reproduction of this colonial structure that enables the politics of recognition to exist relies upon enticing indigenous peoples to identify with the asymmetrical and non-reciprocal forms of recognition forced on or “granted” to them. Jeff Corntassel emphasizes this point further by writing:

States tend to narrowly frame self-determination by focusing on state political/legal recognition of indigenous peoples as self-governing entities while diverting energies away from more substantive discussions regarding the reclamation

¹³⁶ Anne Perez Hattori, *Righting Civil Wrongs: The Guam Congress Walkout of 1949*, (M.A. Thesis, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, 1995).

¹³⁷ Glen S. Coulthard, “Subjects of Empire: Indigenous Peoples and the Politics of Recognition in Canada”, *Contemporary Political Theory* 6, (2007): 438.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 439.

of indigenous territories, livelihoods, natural resources, and the regeneration of community languages and culturally based practices.¹³⁹

This is highly evident in contemporary Guåhan. Even after citizenship, Chamorros are still trapped in the chains of second-class “citizenship” where we have close to no political representation on a federal level and have no say in regards to electing the executive. Also, Guåhan is treated as “foreign in a domestic sense” and “domestic in a foreign sense.”¹⁴⁰ What this technically means is that we are part of the united states if any other nation is asking, but we are treated as strangers from a distant land by americans. This is the situation Chamorros are faced with even after the drive for the citizenship we thought would save us from our conditions. On a deeper level, becoming citizens has not changed the very real material conditions of the Chamorro people.

Despite all of this, our push towards equal treatment and transcendence of poor conditions did not stop with this push for citizenship. In September of 1975, the Guåhan congressman, Antonio Won Pat, along with 44 other representatives introduced two bills to establish a constitution of Guam. The push for this constitution occurred after Chamorro leadership in Guåhan discovered that the united states granted this political right to each territory in the “Trust Territory” of the united states. The leadership believed this constitution would emanate from the people and be amended by the people it governed. After sending the bills to congress, it went through political bureaucracy and

¹³⁹ Jeff Corntassel, “Towards Sustainable Self-Determination: Rethinking the Contemporary Indigenous-Rights Discourse”, *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, (2008): 105.

¹⁴⁰ Bartholemew Sparrow, *The Insular Cases and the Emergence of American Empire*, (Kansas: University of Press Kansas, 2006).

ultimately, the senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs acted on this bill by enacting a substitute bill.¹⁴¹

This bill authorized the Guam legislature to call a constitutional convention to draft this constitution. However, it had to fall within the boundaries of *existing* federal-territorial relations. According to the senate, Guåhan could draft this constitution as long as it stayed true to these points: recognizing and being consistent with the sovereignty of the united states over Guåhan along with the supremacy of provisions of the constitution, provide for a form of government which consists of the three branches of government, contain a bill of rights, include amendments made to the Organic Act, provide that only those residents in Guåhan who are united states citizens can vote, and lastly that a system of local courts be established whose relationship with the federal judicial system be decided by the united states congress. The Guam Legislature accepted these terms and began to draft the new constitution.¹⁴² 6 months later, the proposed constitution created a Supreme Court, establishing a system of district representation, and addressed municipal village government, education, public employment, and social services.

The Chamorros who worked for the adoption of the constitution really believed they were doing the right thing for the island, and believed it was necessary to work within this system. Once again, this is the true work of colonization. This shows how separation from indigenous governance, hegemonic limiting of indigenous imagination, and co-optation of Chamorros into the american political system worked in Guåhan. These three necessary steps of colonization narrowed our scope and made us buy into the

¹⁴¹ Penelope Bordallo Hofschneider, *A Campaign for Political Rights On the Island of Guam 1899-1950*, (Saipan: CNMI Division of Historical Preservation, 2001).

¹⁴² Ibid.

american “political rights” discourse. We have seen that despite all these pushes, Chamorros still have not seen a significant change in the quality of their lives.

Jeff Corntassel, in his article, “Toward Sustainable Self-Determination: Rethinking the Contemporary Indigenous-Rights Discourse,” argues that the “rights” discourse is a damaging component of the “politics of recognition.” Corntassel writes “the framing of rights as political/legal entitlements has deemphasized the cultural responsibilities and relationships that indigenous peoples have with their families and the natural world that are critical for their well-being and the well-being of future generations.”¹⁴³ We can see how this directly helps to quicken the mechanism of separation so prevalent in colonial logic. The colonizer attempts to hegemonically separate indigenous peoples from their responsibilities and instead make them believe that political rights are the goals to strive for.

Prioritizing the “rights” discourse is not only dangerous because of its separation aspect, but also because it also helps reinforce the structure of impossibility attached to colonial structures. Corntassel strengthens his argument against the “rights discourse” by stating:

Strategies that invoke existing human rights norms and that solely seek political and legal recognition of indigenous self-determination will not lead to a self-determination process that is sustainable for the survival of future generations of indigenous peoples. Additionally, indigenous mobilization strategies of surveillance and shame have not been effective for generating substantive changes

¹⁴³ Jeff Corntassel, “Towards Sustainable Self-Determination: Rethinking the Contemporary Indigenous-Rights Discourse”, *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, (2008): 108.

in existing human rights norms and customary international law.¹⁴⁴

Just as dictionaries will not lead to language revitalization, a “rights discourse” within a “politics of recognition” framework will not lead to true Chamorro decolonization/self-determination.

III. Gai Respetu Yo’: An Attempt To Clarify My Respect

At this point, it may seem as if the only thing I am doing here is completely criticizing and disowning the hard work that my ancestors have poured into what they believed would be the best possible situation for Guåhan and the Chamorro people. At this point, it is important to for me to once again reiterate that in no way, shape, or form am I attempting to disrespect or speak ill of my elders, friends, or family who embodied the spirit of Minatatnga¹⁴⁵ and who have fought or are fighting through these logics. I have nothing but Guinaiya¹⁴⁶ and Respetu¹⁴⁷ for them and view them all as inspirations. It is because of the work that they have done that I am here today fighting the way I am. Rather than feel disrespected by my critique, I am hoping that they will find my analysis of the situation simply a natural continuation of their hard efforts. It is my hope they will find this reimagining humbling because all that I have come up with is in essence a continuation of the intellectual genealogy they have passed onto me.

I am not arguing that working within the system has absolutely no effectiveness or place in the entire spectrum of decolonization tactics, rather I critique the primacy it has been given as well the line of thought advocating these techniques as “savior.” Rather, I believe these colonial approaches to decolonization can be

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Chamorro for “Bravery, Fearlessness, Valiance”

¹⁴⁶ Chamorro for “Love”

¹⁴⁷ Chamorro for “Respect”

utilized as defensive moves that help to prevent further damage to indigenous peoples. They can help prevent further damage, but we must realize they do not have any curative aspect to them. I understand that in the most immediate and urgent times, these victories that occur within the system can absolutely help save indigenous lives and change pressing indigenous realities. Working within the system should definitely not be the goal we are working towards, but it is also important that we do not be idle as decisions are made within the system that can affect our realities. For example, it would be detrimental to not be present at a meeting that may effectively propose a burial ground as the site of a new military firing range. Thus, we can look at these moves within the system as defensive moves, which have been extremely important at protecting our people, land, and livelihood.

Many critics may argue that this viewpoint is hypocritical and nullifies my argument. Yet, this viewpoint is not mine alone. Jeff Corntassel helps to explain how this is not an exercise in hypocrisy by writing:

While in this article I am not advocating a complete abandonment of a rights-based discourse, as it can be a useful tool for facilitating political maneuverability and opening new indigenous spaces within the state-centric system, I am urging that communities act to assert their powers and responsibilities as nations in order to promote an indigenous-centered discourse on sustainable self-determination.¹⁴⁸

A complete abandonment of these state-centric approaches is not what is being

¹⁴⁸ Jeff Corntassel, "Towards Sustainable Self-Determination: Rethinking the Contemporary Indigenous-Rights Discourse", *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, (2008): 121.

advocated here, but rather a gradual move away from these colonial logics into a reconnection to an indigenous rooted form of decolonization.

This point is further emphasized by renowned linguist and political commentator, Noam Chomsky, in his book, *On Anarchism*. In this book, there is a transcription of an interview done in which the interviewer questions Chomsky regarding how anarchists view the welfare state. The interviewer asks Chomsky whether anarchists, being opposed to authoritative institutions like the state, agree with right-wing tactics to demolish welfare programs implemented by the government. Dr. Chomsky hits the metaphorical nail on the head with his response:

Well, it's true that the anarchist vision in just about all its varieties has looked forward to dismantling state power. But right now it runs directly counter to my goals: my immediate goals have been to defend and even strengthen elements of state authority that are now under severe attack. And I don't think there's any contradiction there —none at all, really.¹⁴⁹

When pushed further as to why there is no contradiction, Chomsky writes:

There are practical problems of tomorrow on which people's lives very much depend, and while defending those kinds of programs is by no means the ultimate end we should be pursuing, in my view we still have to face the problems that are right on the horizon, ... So I think that it's completely realistic and rational to work within structures to which you are opposed, because by doing so you can help to move to a situation where then you can

¹⁴⁹ Noam Chomsky, *On Anarchism*, (New York: The New Press, 2013), pg. 39.

challenge those structures.¹⁵⁰

Chomsky's points show that without these defensive moves, a substantial amount of damage would have been unleashed on our people. Saul Alinsky in his book, *Rules for Radicals*, tells us that we must not be naïve enough to meet people where we want them to be, but rather to meet them where they are.¹⁵¹ It is for this reason that I do not criticize or look down on those Chamorros who have fought battles within the system. I rather view everything they have done as stepping-stones in the transformation to a more effective form of decolonization and self-determination.

One important thing to point out is that my ancestors fought for what they thought was best for our people based on what was available to them *at the time*. The time period in which these discourses on how decolonization was manifested is particularly important for this analysis. Renowned critical theorist Michel Foucault argues that statements of a discourse are only true within a specific historical context. There is no necessary continuity between different historical periods regarding how to talk about certain things, thus discourse is historically defined and may change as the times change.¹⁵² According to Keith Camacho, "The language of loyalty continued to be the primary medium of communication between the colonizer and the colonized. Colonial powers had often considered their interactions with Chamorros in terms of loyalty and disloyalty. The language of loyalty continued to suit Chamorro

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 40-41.

¹⁵¹ Saul Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals*, (New York: Random House, 1989).

¹⁵² Stuart Hall, *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications & Open University, 1997).

needs because of its political and spiritual power and appeal.”¹⁵³ We saw how the discourse changed from demonstrating loyalty to america and fighting for incorporation and citizenship to requesting a more autonomous form of self-government. Times are changing and I am hoping that the next decolonization discourse to become prevalent is one that frees itself of the colonial cage and the colonial chain.

I argue, that today, instead of being defensive, we need to make some offensive moves. If these defensive moves are shields helping us to get protection from the colonizer throwing rocks down to us in our caves, we need to begin to climb out of that cave at some point. This is what these offensive moves are aimed at doing; lifting us out of the conditions that require us to utilize that shield in the first place. These defensive outcomes may change things temporarily, but we must ask ourselves if, for example, independence for Guåhan will only effectuate the process of being “in-dependence?” This means that if we received political “independence” but still adopted colonial governmental models that never worked for us our government may fail and our people may starve. In turn, we may turn to our former colonizer, america, for aid, money, resources, and advisement, thus just continuing in a state of “dependence” on the former colonizer. Subsequently, by staying in colonial approaches to decolonization, we are simply running circles in the structures of impossibility.

IV. Conclusion

Through an analysis of Chamorro-english dictionaries, it was shown how colonial logics of separation, hegemonic limiting of indigenous imagination, and co-optation of

¹⁵³ Keith L. Camacho, *Cultures of Commemoration: the Politics of War, Memory, and History in the Mariana Islands*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2011), 90.

indigenous peoples into colonial systems operate. Dictionaries were shown to “objectify” languages and demonizing them subsequently leading to a separation of indigenous communities with their languages. Colonial logic then tried to persuade us that dictionaries were the only solution to effective language revitalization; no other tactic would work, because dictionaries are the “savior.” Lastly, these logics ultimately convinced our people to concentrate their language revitalization efforts upon the creation of these dictionaries.

Next, it was revealed that dictionaries acted as a metaphor for the larger decolonization movement. It was shown that dictionaries are to language revitalization what state-centric, colonial approaches are to decolonization: simply not enough. Through an examination of historical pushes for decolonization, examples of the “politics of recognition” were ubiquitously found. For a large part of history, Chamorros have fought for what they believed to be the best situation, but did so by fighting within colonial institutions, systems and logics. The “politics of recognition” acts as an amalgam of the three colonial logics emphasized and is a demonstration of colonial success. The current political situation of Guåhan and material conditions of Chamorros show that these approaches have not been the “savior” we have been looking for.

Finally, it was shown that a fundamentalist approach is not adopted towards state-centric approaches to decolonization. It is acknowledged that these approaches act as defensive moves that help the problems of tomorrow, so they do have a place in the realm of decolonization methodologies and tactics. However, the argument is to resist the prioritization and romanticizing of these colonial tactics to decolonization, as well as give a realistic perspective on what these colonial approaches can really accomplish. Members

of our community that have engaged in state-centric approaches should not be denigrated or demonized, but rather they should be able to see past colonial approaches and only use it as a vehicle for something greater and more Chamorro-rooted.

In an article by linguist Donald Topping named, “Saviors of Languages: Who Will Be the Real Messiah?” he questions the role linguists really play in language documentation and revitalization. Topping discusses the push by himself and many of his colleagues to fly across the Micronesian region and work with the indigenous peoples. From this endeavor, a number of dictionaries were produced on these various Micronesian languages, and linguists felt they really helped contribute to the communities they worked with. However, Topping looks back and discusses how language conditions are, for the most part, exactly the same. With the exception of a couple, most of the dictionaries were largely ignored or been used by tourists, rather than the communities to which the language belongs to. Most of their work has disappeared and many of the people they worked with changed paths and instead became involved in politics. Topping illustrates the failure of the linguistic approach and rather advocates for a reimagination of language revitalization:

One could argue, correctly, I think, that without the linguistic groundwork, the efforts now going into language revival and retention would be severely crippled. However, the time has come for linguists to take a back seat, and, if called upon by the leaders of these movements, to provide information. That is to say, the linguist’s role is not to lead, but to provide support when asked.¹⁵⁴

Topping’s final words resonate with me and culminate into the answer we all have been

¹⁵⁴ Donald Topping, “Saviors of Languages: Who Will Be The Real Messiah?”, *Oceanic Linguistics* 42, no. 2 (2003): 528.

searching for. Topping says, “I must conclude, however, that the real saviors of the endangered languages will be the people who speak them, not the linguists who talk about them.”¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

Chapter 3. Hita Ha' Ni Ta Aliligao: We Are The Ones We Have Been Searching For

“As language is the umbilical cord of a people, we recognize the centrality of, and the necessity to promote the Chamorro language, in any effort of the Chamorro people. We cannot afford to treat issues of language separate from land, immigration, economic development, and political status concerns. For Chamorros, these issues are all intrinsically bound together in our struggle to exercise our inalienable right of self-determination.”¹⁵⁶

On Friday afternoons, Java Junction was no longer an ordinary coffee shop. This small coffee shop located in a small mall in Guåhan, transformed into a space of learning, a space of resistance, and a birthing ground of Chamorro revival. You see, every Friday afternoon, a group of Chamorros gathered at Java Junction to learn Fino' Chamoru. It was the location of the Fino' Chamoru language pocket overseen and taught by Michael Lujan Bevacqua. Each class, we studied different lessons, learned new vocabulary, practiced grammar skills, and most importantly, spoke the language with one another. Starting from a small group of around three to four people, the language pocket grew to the point where there were twelve to fifteen of us gathered in this tiny coffee shop every week. The classes were entirely free and nobody was required to come. Each person who showed up did so out of curiosity or out of a pure desire to learn the language.

I found Lujan Bevacqua's language pocket at just the right time. As my language learning journey was getting nowhere with my dictionaries, I knew I needed to find another approach; an approach that allowed me to use and breathe the language. That was when I found what I was looking for in a small corner of a yellow flyer advertising various drink specials the coffee shop was promoting, a small announcement mentioning

¹⁵⁶ Laura Souder-Jaffery and Robert Underwood, *Chamorro Self-Determination: Right of a People*, (Guam: Micronesia Area Research Center, 1987), 1.

that Lujan Bevacqua offered free lessons to anyone who wanted to learn how to speak Fino' Chamoru. I automatically took down his email address and began one of the greatest journeys I have ever taken.

I still remember the raw emotions I experienced meeting every Friday with these like-minded people. As we talked about why we wanted to learn the language, made jokes in the language, and developed genuine friendships with one another, I knew this pocket would lead me to language success unlike my “dictionary worship” days. The language was no longer something I read off a book, it was something I spoke. The language was no longer an object of study, but a part of my life as a Chamorro. After a few lessons at the pocket, it was also no longer a source of frustration for my grandmother. Now, the words and sentence structures I used were much more familiar to her and she happily conversed with me in Fino' Chamoru. The language pocket gave me the gift of reconnecting with my grandmother in her first language. I felt connected, enlivened, empowered, and most importantly, I finally felt that the language belonged to me and I to the language.

These three emotions will form the foundation for this chapter. This chapter will expand on the metaphor of dictionaries and colonial approaches in the previous chapter by equating the language pocket to a more Chamorro-rooted approach to decolonization free of colonial logics. It will be shown that revitalizing indigenous languages are not just acts of linguistic revival. They are also acts of reconnection to indigenous traditions, acts of political empowerment and resistance, and lastly, acts of community/grassroots building. Beyond this, this chapter will show how these language pockets are not only a metaphor for a Chamorro-rooted decolonization, but are also a method of Chamorro-

rooted decolonization based on Chamorro values, epistemology, and lived circumstances. In order for indigenous self-determination to be meaningful, it should be economically, environmentally, and culturally viable and inextricably linked to indigenous relationships. Language revitalization can serve as the link needed.

I. Hafa na manguekuentos hit put I Fino'-ta?: Language as Reconnection

It is common to hear that languages are simply a means of communication. They are used to communicate messages from sender to receiver, and beyond that they serve no purpose. Language is viewed as being a medium having no substantive quality inherent within itself. Despite how common this sentiment is, it is one of most widely flawed beliefs regarding the role of language in social life. Languages are definitely a tool of communication, but they resemble much more than that, they serve as a tool of reconnection to our springs of tradition within our cultures.

Noenoe Silva, a professor of Political Science at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, emphasizes this, "By revitalizing the language, we revitalize our lives and our spirits. It's a thing that is so nourishing to people emotionally and spiritually. If we can talk about this in terms that are real to people, then people will see that."¹⁵⁷ Ron Lagaña, director of the Chamorro Studies division of the Guam Department of Education, describes the importance of Fino' Chamoru to the Chamorro people by saying, "Komu ti un na'siña I fino'-mu, ni ngai'an na un siente I espiritun I mañainata, sa' ginen enao I fino'-mu na gumigiha hit mo'na gi direchon taotao para minaolek para I manchamoru. Yan enague na impotante na para un tungo' I lenguahhi-mu sa'

¹⁵⁷ Personal Interview with Noenoe Silva conducted in January 2014.

enague' I malago' I mañaina-ta.”¹⁵⁸ By opening the eyes of our people to the larger meanings and uses of language, we can finally awaken the power of language that has been silently sleeping.

One of the most prominent scholars who speaks on the importance of language to indigenous peoples and to reconnection is the Kenyan novelist and scholar, Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o, through his books *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* and *Something Torn and New: An African Renaissance*. He speaks more specifically to how colonization has concentrated on language due to its vast importance to the minds and hearts of a people. In his book, Thiong'o argues that the imposition of foreign rule and forced colonial education systems makes colonized peoples see their past as a “wasteland of nothingness” which they need to move as far away from as possible. Colonizers present themselves as the cure to the destruction they have caused and also brainwash colonized and indigenous peoples into questioning the morality of engaging in national liberation struggles. The cure to this brainwashing largely lies in changing ideologies towards native languages.¹⁵⁹

“The choice of language and the use to which language is put is central to a people's definition of themselves in relation to their natural and social environment, indeed in relation to the entire universe.”¹⁶⁰ While the bullet was the means of physical

¹⁵⁸ Personal Interview with Ron Lagunaña conducted in August 2013. Translation for “If you cannot access your language, you will never feel the spirit of our ancestors because it is from your language that we are steered forward in the direction that is the best for the Chamorro people. That is why it is very important to learn your language, it is the desire of our ancestors.”

¹⁵⁹ Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Something Torn and New: an African Renaissance* (Philadelphia: Basic Civitas Books, 2009).

¹⁶⁰ Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind: the Politics of Language in African Literature* (New Hampshire: Heinemann, 1986), 4.

colonization, language became the means of spiritual subjugation and mental colonization. Language was a powerful tool of colonization because language does not simply include words, but rather has a suggestive power beyond the surface meaning of words. When one learns a language, one learns to view the world in that language's particular cultural lens.

This point is further emphasized in Roger Wilson Spielmann's book entitled *You're So Fat: Exploring Ojibwe Discourse*. In this book, Spielmann discusses the core prominence of language by saying that language provides a direct connection with the wisdom of the elders. Through learning the language, one is able to prevent assimilation into another culture because one is able to hold on to the worldview that grounds their relationships. He further emphasizes that language is a window of connection.

The philosophy, worldview, spirituality, and culture-specific ways of thinking and doing things of a people are built right into the very structure of their language. It is a route to seeing history and an alternative way of reconstructing a more accurate and representative picture of history.¹⁶¹

Language carries with it values which form the basis of a person's identity and thus acts as a memory bank of a peoples' experience. The power of language lies in the fact that culture is almost indistinguishable from the language that makes possible its beginning. Thus in the case of english, Chamorro society for example began to view the world through the english lens, and stopped viewing it through a Chamorro lens. As Fino' Chamoru is beginning to die out, so are the values and culture that inherently went along

¹⁶¹ Roger Wilson Spielmann, *'You're So Fat!' Exploring Ojibwe Discourse* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 238-239.

with the language.¹⁶² This could not be made more clear than through the words of Anne Marie Arceo when discussing the prevalence of Chamorros in prison, “Anggen un atan todū enao, guaha problema gi enao na litratu. Hafa gi tano’-ta na todū I problema, gaige gi famagu’on-ta yan I taotao-ta. Pues, para guáhu, anggen sigi ha’ matai I lenguahhi, ya un chule’ I lenguahhi ginen I taotao, siempre guaha ti kabales giya siha.”¹⁶³

Thiong’o says the danger lies in language’s role as a carrier of images and how this begins to implant in indigenous children a view of the world that does not speak to their lived realities. The child begins to see the world and where he/she stands in that world as defined by the colonized language, thus becoming dissociated and divorced from their immediate environment and society. For example, when my family and I were trying to speak to one of our nieces in Fino’ Chamoru, she interrupted us and proudly proclaimed, “I am not Chamorro, I am english.” Not only did she reject her Chamorro heritage, but she also identified not as an american, but rather with the colonial tongue in which she spoke. In this manner, language successfully completes the colonial project by making youth identify with the colonizer, rather than understand their colonized status.¹⁶⁴ Ngugi shows how language has been one of the main focal points of colonial energy. Through the language, colonizers were able to complete the agenda of separation by changing the worldview of the colonized.

¹⁶² Ngugi wa Thiong’o, *Decolonising the Mind: the Politics of Language in African Literature* (New Hampshire: Heinemann, 1986).

¹⁶³ Personal Interview with Anne Marie Arceo conducted in August 2013. Translation for “If you look at all of that (Chamorro crime statistics), there is a problem with that picture. What is it about our land that all of our problems are found in our children and our people? In my opinion, if the language continues to die, and you take the language from the people, they will not be complete.”

¹⁶⁴ Ngugi wa Thiong’o, *Decolonising the Mind: the Politics of Language in African Literature* (New Hampshire: Heinemann, 1986).

Language is worldview, so to change the language, is to change the worldview. On a more positive note, there have been acts of resistance and instances of reconnection to the memory bank colonizers attempt to erase. The language pocket is a perfect example of this reconnection to not only Chamorro values and worldview through the language. These classes are not only about learning the language in a purely linguistic fashion, but through these language classes, we are taught the stories and values surrounding the language, something that definitely cannot be done through dictionaries. There have been multiple occasions in which people relate to a particular word. They never knew what the word meant until the class, but it brought back so many memories; memories of their grandmother or grandfather saying this word multiple times to each other or memories of them hearing this word at a barbeque or party. Upon hearing this word, they were instantaneously reminded of their family and of their experiences living as a Chamorro through the language. Not only did the language reconnect to them to traditional values, but it helped them more deeply connect to their elders who hold a vast amount of knowledge about Chamorro values and epistemologies.

For example, one of the participants in a Fino' Chamoru pocket, Ryan Santos, a native of Guåhan and future medical student, says:

The pocket has been truly a blessing for me and my family. Our language connects our families both past, present, and future. For me, I am able to reconnect and strengthen my relationship with my grandparents and parents. I am truly blessed to be able to communicate with them in their first language before they pass on. It is also a privilege to continue our language with my kids one day.

So that they too will be connected to their parents, grandparents, and great grandparents even if they have never met them. This pocket connects us all.¹⁶⁵

Another participant in the language pocket, Querida Dydasco, a native of Guåhan and student in Honolulu, emphasized this point of reconnection by saying, “I want to be able to hold a conversation with the elders, and I would love the same for my children. Learning the language will not only create a sense of pride, but it will help myself and my children to gain a greater respect for our culture.”¹⁶⁶

These anecdotes illustrate the powerful memory bank that language truly is and its ability to reconnect people to this essence of what being Chamorro truly means. The pocket helps them access the language which in turn allows them to access reconnection to their grandparents who hold vast amounts of knowledge. This is the first step in accessing this memory bank, and it will not be the last. As Haunani Kay Trask said in her book, *From A Native Daughter*, “decolonizing through language is important because thinking in one’s own cultural referents leads to conceptualizing in one’s own world view, which, in turn, leads to disagreement with and eventual opposition to the dominant ideology.”¹⁶⁷ For those that attend, they are beginning to witness this epistemological shift aimed at utilizing Chamorro referents to think about the world.

While Ngugi’s arguments and the language pocket show the cultural importance of language, it is important to ask why reconnection to the separated is of importance to us in the agenda of decolonization/self-determination. First of all, getting the Chamorro people to speak the language and begin to see the world according to a Chamorro lens

¹⁶⁵ Personal Interview with Ryan Santos conducted in March 2014.

¹⁶⁶ Personal Interview with Querida Dydasco conducted in March 2014.

¹⁶⁷ Haunani-Kay Trask, *From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawaii* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999), 43.

may help Chamorros see the values necessary for this Chamorro-rooted decolonization. This new lens is formed through the language and the images and symbols embedded into that language. Beyond this, the words of Taiaiake Alfred are again relevant:

The only way we can survive is to recover our strength, our wisdom, and our solidarity by honoring and revitalizing the core of our traditional teachings. Only by heeding the voices of our ancestors can we restore our nations and put peace, power, and righteousness back into the hearts and minds of our people.¹⁶⁸

Alfred says that since separation/disconnection is the core of indigenous problems, reconnection is the true cure to issues of colonization. Once more the words of Noenoe Silva are useful in discussing reconnection. She wrote:

Colonialism creates these cultural bombs that explode and they explode individually within our psyches. We hate ourselves, because we want this other thing. Part of the cure for this is to instill our own ways, our own languages and practices, and ways of thinking. You cannot get to those ways of thinking fully without accessing the language.¹⁶⁹

Despite this, Alfred and Silva are not naïve enough to give into the colonial logic of indigeneity being “trapped in the past.” Alfred is realistic and writes, “Tradition is the spring from which we draw our healing water; but any decisions must take into account contemporary economic, social, and political concerns.”¹⁷⁰ It is not about reconnecting with our past and enacting things exactly as they were. Rather, it is about awakening

¹⁶⁸ Taiaiake Alfred, *Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto*, (Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2009), 9.

¹⁶⁹ Personal Interview with Noenoe Silva conducted in January 2014.

¹⁷⁰ Taiaiake Alfred, *Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto*, (Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2009), 53.

these traditions and principles then using them to address our contemporary problems. By doing this, Alfred also challenges notions of authenticity and acknowledges indigenous agency in making decisions regarding our cultures.

More specifically, Vine Deloria and Clifford Lytle demonstrate how reconnection through language is directly tied into indigenous decolonization/self-determination:

Language is the first glue that links peoples together, and the major emphasis in self-determination should be the preservation of language where it still exists and the cultivation of it where it has eroded or fallen into disuse. Language is the key to cultural survival and cannot be considered in isolation; it is and must be the substance of self-determination.¹⁷¹

Perhaps, the most important political implication of language as reconnection can be found in a gem of a quote found in Jeff Corntassel's article by Taiaiake Alfred:

It is still true that the first part of self-determination is the self. In our minds and in our souls, we need to reject the colonists' control and authority, their definition of who we are and what our rights are, their definition of what is worthwhile and how one should live, their hypocritical and pacifying moralities.¹⁷²

Revitalizing Fino' Chamoru will allow Chamorros to reconnect/redefine themselves and start drawing from the spring of tradition needed to position a Chamorro existence in this world.

¹⁷¹ Vine Jr. Deloria and Clifford Lytle, *The Nations Within-The Past and Future of American Indian Sovereignty*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 251.

¹⁷² Jeff Corntassel, "Towards Sustainable Self-Determination: Rethinking the Contemporary Indigenous-Rights Discourse", *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, (2008): 106.

II. Ha Na'metgot Hit I Fino'-ta: Language as Empowerment/Resistance

It is at this point that we can expand on the importance of language by showing that not only is language a means of reconnection to tradition, but it can be weaponized and used as a political tool. This tool can be wielded for empowering the indigenous political subject or for resisting colonial logics, approaches, and systems. Weaponizing language can help fight the hegemonic limiting of indigenous imaginations through opening up new tactics of resistance and open new political spaces for indigenous peoples. Once indigenous peoples reconnect to their languages and their worldviews, they are better suited to challenge hegemonic ideas and can present alternatives that interrupt the mechanics of colonialism.

One example of the weaponization of language can be found in Guåhan's recent history. In March of 1978, all it took was a simple birthday request to get the literal and metaphorical fires of Chamorro resistance blazing. The then wife of Robert Underwood, a Chamorro scholar, educator, activist, and former congressman, went to the local newspaper, the *Pacific Daily News* (PDN), to put an ad in the newspaper in honor of Underwood's birthday. However, the PDN rejected her ad because she wanted to place the ad in Spanish, since she was Mexican, and this would be her way of telling her husband happy birthday in her heritage language. When she was told she could not place the ad in Spanish, she went on to ask if she could place the ad in Fino' Chamoru instead. This request was also rejected, and this is when the firestorm brewed.

On March 26, 1978, the Chamorro rights organization "PÅRA" or "People's Alliance For a Responsive Alternative" or "Stop" in Fino' Chamoru, began to watch the embers of the local newspaper, *Pacific Daily News* (PDN), flash as they burnt these

newspapers. Around 300-400 people gathered at the local “Latte Stone Park” together to burn and cancel their PDN subscriptions, sing Chamorro songs, and take the protest throughout the entire business district of Guåhan ending at the PDN headquarters. They went around chanting “PÅRA PDN” which literally means “Stop the PDN” and also took turns saying speeches regarding the language policy and the importance of Fino’ Chamoru.¹⁷³

This event birthed “PÅRA” and also demonstrated some of the first Chamorro activism/resistance/protest models that Chamorros at the time saw. This story helps to place this piece into a genealogy of Chamorro resistance and activism which understands and emphasizes the prominence of Fino’ Chamoru. It helps to show how one group gathered together to interrupt the well-propagated hegemonic idea that Fino’ Chamoru does not have a place in the media or the larger realms of society. Language activated resistance within them and they used this weaponization of language to empower themselves. This monumental protest shows the true power of language revitalization/weaponization. Language revitalization as an issue has the potential to become a rallying point for political activation. The first step of reconnection to a Chamorro worldview can push language into the political arena and cause Chamorros to fight for the language’s well-deserved place in Guåhan society.

Delving deeper into how weaponization of language works, it is important to understand the symbolic power that a colonial language and indigenous language have within society. In multilingual societies, languages are never equal in power. One always dominates the other and pushes/territorializes the other language to certain domains. This

¹⁷³ Laurel Monnig, “Proving Chamorro”: Indigenous Narratives of Race, Identity, and Decolonization on Guam, (Ph.d diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2007).

can be seen in Guåhan as english pushed Fino' Chamoru out of Chamorro society. This power play works through the language's representation. It is common that the underprivileged language is negatively labeled and perceived as being inferior to the dominating language.¹⁷⁴ These languages have also been perceived as less usable. *The Guam Recorder* as well as the prevalent "english as progress" ideology helped to frame Fino' Chamoru in this negative light.

The weaponization of language can help upset this imbalance of power between languages, which represents the imbalance of overall power between colonial ideas and the ideas of the colonized. Leena Huss and Anna-Ritta Lindgren explore this weaponization as "language emancipation."

Language offers a tool for the breaking down of power hierarchies. By the emancipation of a language, we mean improving the position of an underprivileged language through political efforts and language planning. It is a process where the language and the linguistic environment of the people are changing so that the structures of inequality are broken down and circumstances more favorable to equality are created.¹⁷⁵

The PDN protest used the imbalance of power between languages to speak out on the unfair power structures of colonialism at the time. By protesting and advocating for Fino' Chamoru to be included in the newspapers, they were in essence advocating for Chamorros to be able to participate in more political spaces and have a greater presence in Guåhan. Huss and Lindgren write, "Language emancipation is not the core of the

¹⁷⁴ Leena Huss and Anna-Ritta Lindgren. "Introduction: Defining Language Emancipation", *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 209, (2011).

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

movement, but often it is a very important part of it.”¹⁷⁶ The PDN protest demonstrated how Fino’ Chamoru was one part of PÅRA’s overall agenda of Chamorro emancipation.

Language can be weaponized as resistance against these imbalances of power and as rallying points for other indigenous issues, but the language can also empower indigenous communities. Language can become a building block for political power and for uniting communities. In places where linguistic diversity has been affirmed, and power over related realms has been devolved, indigenous peoples express an increased sense of empowerment and capacity to realize their own agency. The colonizers have always known the political power of linguistic barriers and Robert Lee Nichols brilliantly illustrates this political power by writing:

The capacity of colonized peoples to speak languages that differed from those of the colonizing forces around them has been used to subvert the logic of imperialism in very practical ways. Those in a position of dominance have tended to recognize the power implicated in linguistic barriers and have sought to remove these obstacles to render colonized peoples more legible to centralized control.¹⁷⁷

Michael Lujan Bevacqua compliments Nichol’s point about the weaponization of language as smokescreens, which unite speakers of the language and leave the colonized out of the conversation. “Language is definitely at the center of decolonization because it will start to create that screen and some people don’t realize just how valuable that can be. The language gives you this certain sense of identity that is independent of your

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 6.

¹⁷⁷ Robert Lee Nichols, “Struggling with language: Indigenous movements for linguistic security and the politics of local community”, *Ethnicities* 6, no.1 (2006): 37.

colonizer.”¹⁷⁸

Historically, he talked about how Chamorros would use the language against the Japanese colonizers by giving them snide remarks in Fino’ Chamoru and then telling them they were words of praise. He says that we cannot underestimate this daily power. They are all small ways in which people get a sense of sovereignty and a source of pride. “It can be the accomplishment, secret language feeling, and all these point to the idea that Chamorros are stronger with the language than they are without it.”¹⁷⁹ Through speaking the language, this source of pride and sovereignty can have empowering effects on the psyche of the Chamorro. This process can begin to shatter hegemonic glass ceilings of the Chamorro imagination.

During the language pocket, the beginning of this shattering occurs. While many of us that went to the pocket went primarily to learn the language, we eventually ended up becoming more political about issues in Guåhan. Due to the history we learned behind the language and from talking about current events in Fino’ Chamoru, the pocket served as a gateway for us to be exposed to a critical perspective of current events in Guåhan. There were many times when we came to the pocket and would hear about various political events such as rallies, protests or workshops. Many of us would have never went to these types of events before the language pocket, but the pocket not only opened us up to these political spaces, but also opened these political spaces to us. I remember one particular session that we had involved a discussion of the military buildup and their plans to use Pãgat, an ancestral Chamorro village, for their firing ranges. We talked about these issues as much as we could in Fino’ Chamoru and then further inquired what we

¹⁷⁸ Personal Interview with Michael Lujan Bevacqua conducted in July 2013.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

could do to stop the taking of more land. For many, the language provided this opportunity for us to engage in other political issues that we may have never before been exposed to or accepting of. The language pocket provides the possibility and opportunity for the development of a critical consciousness.

One of the participants in the language pocket, Alex San Nicolas, a native of Guåhan and Forensic Science graduate student, made the link between learning the language and politicization. In reference to the pocket, he says:

It is a powerful and necessary paradigm shift that is critical in the perpetuation and evolution of the Chamorro people. This movement satisfies a basic need for individuals to feel belonging in a community, by empowering and challenging people of many backgrounds to learn the Chamorro language. The fact that it is perpetuated by young people also highlights an important step for the Chamorro community: to develop and sustain itself by creating a new generation of people who express interest in Chamorro issues.

As Hermes, Bang, and Marin write in their article, “Designing Indigenous Language Revitalization,” “We suggest that language revitalization is a site of *survivance*—a cross between survival and resistance in which ongoing processes of cultural continuity and change unfold.”¹⁸⁰ Expanding on their argument, I argue that language revitalization is not only survival and resistance, but also empowerment that resists the dictate of colonial dependence and defrosts the Chamorro imagination.

III. Hita I Fino’-ta: Language as Community

The history of colonial approaches to decolonization in Guåhan’s past is rich with

¹⁸⁰ Mary Hermes et al., “Designing Indigenous Language Revitalization”, *Harvard Educational Review* 82, (2012): 385.

examples. From petitions to demonstrations of loyalty to pushes for citizenship, we have always searched for answers in the wrong places. The argument thus far has been that language is important not only because it helps to reconnect us to our traditions, but also because it can be politically weaponized for resistance and empowerment. Once this process is done, the final step is for indigenous communities to fully take part in community, grassroots projects that operate according to Chamorro values, beliefs, and practices. Language revitalization can serve as an example of these community projects.

This means not engaging in the “politics of recognition,” which places the focal point on the colonizer. The colonizer is the one who will tell the colonized they acknowledge that the colonized are now free and recognized, distinct peoples. This final step demands that indigenous peoples no longer wait for the key of self-determination to be handed to them, but instead work towards inventing the key themselves. The overarching goal is to build a community that acts decolonized and self-determined long before any political recognition by the state.

Sustainable self-determination as a process is premised on the notion that evolving indigenous livelihoods, community governance, relationships to homelands and the natural world, and ceremonial life can be practiced today locally and regionally. Sustainable self-determination seeks to regenerate the implementation of indigenous natural laws on indigenous homelands and expand the scope of an indigenous self-determination process.¹⁸¹

Shifting the focus to everyday acts of decolonization/self-determination is a top priority

¹⁸¹ Jeff Corntassel, “Re-envisioning Resurgence: Indigenous Pathways to Decolonization and Sustainable Self-Determination”, *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education and Society*, (2012): 119.

for this final step.

All of these goals can be embodied in the burgeoning field of Anarcha-Indigenism. Anarcha-Indigenism is a theory in political science, which merges anarchism and indigenism. According to political scientist Richard Day:

Anarcha-Indigenism is an emerging body of academic and activist theory and practice that works across and in between traditions of anarchist and indigenous political theory. If anarcha-indigenism 'is' anything, then, it is a meeting place, a site of possibilities, a potential for mutual aid in common projects within, outside, and against the dominant order.¹⁸²

Anarcha-Indigenism is based on an interlocking analysis of oppression without privileging one over the other. It attempts to see how anarchists, feminists, and indigenous peoples can work together in their struggles. The original merging of these two theories occurred through indigenous peoples fighting against forms of oppression that anarchists have general critiqued such as capitalism and its inherent exploitation, rampant individualism, and the power of the state. Through anarcha-indigenism's turn away from state-centric methods of liberation, it leaves open the possibility and opportunity for engaging in our own "on-the-ground strategies of freedom and liberation."¹⁸³ Anarcha-indigenism allows for the radical imagination of these alternative systems.

In line with this overall philosophy of anarcha-indigenism, the politics of everyday resurgence acts as the anarcha-indigenist answer to decolonial logics and

¹⁸² Richard Day, (paper presented at a conference for the Affinity Project, accessed February 11, 2014).

¹⁸³ Glen S. Coulthard, "Subjects of Empire: Indigenous Peoples and the Politics of Recognition in Canada", *Contemporary Political Theory* 6, (2007): 12.

manifestations. According to Jeff Corntassel in his article, “Re-envisioning resurgence: Indigenous Pathways to Decolonization and Sustainable Self-Determination,” decolonization comes from moving beyond political awareness and purely symbolic gestures to moving to everyday examples of community resurgence.¹⁸⁴ Every indigenous person is in an act of struggle and resistance, and it is in everyday practices where decolonization is reimagined and re-enacted and where the true hope of decolonizing praxis lies. “It is in these daily and often intimate acts that decolonization resides, exploring and living with the contrasting claims of oppression and privilege, complicity and resistance. There is theory, sustenance, and power in these daily acts of resistance.”¹⁸⁵ In order to achieve this, it takes the shift from being in struggle to everyday resurgence; without this shift, indigenous people will always be play victims of colonialism.

This indigenous resurgence means being able to move and imagine life beyond the concept of the state. Andrea Smith in her groundbreaking book *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide*, conceptualizes this struggle-everyday resurgence- in a different way. She writes, “If we only engage in the politics of taking power, we will have a tendency to replicate the hierarchical structures in our movements. It is also important to make power by creating those structures that model the world we are trying to create.”¹⁸⁶ It is through this frame that we must tip the scale and move beyond the politics of recognition in order to bring decolonization to fruition. We must

¹⁸⁴ Jeff Corntassel, “Re-envisioning Resurgence: Indigenous Pathways to Decolonization and Sustainable Self-Determination”, *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education and Society*, (2012).

¹⁸⁵ Aman Sium et al., “Towards the ‘tangible unknown’: Decolonization and the Indigenous Future”, *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education, and Society* 1, (2012): XI.

¹⁸⁶ Andrea Smith, *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide*. (Cambridge: South End Press, 2005), pg. 187.

create the structures that will model our world.

Indigenous peoples throughout the world are already engaging in acts of decolonization through everyday acts of resurgence, and these everyday acts are centered on the community. The community becomes the focal point for engagement in anarchy-indigenism. According to Alfred:

On a collective level, communities must engage in projects to fundamentally transform the colonized political culture within their communities and reinvigorate governance based on traditional values. It may sound simplistic, but in the context of highly divided communities, just sitting together and having a conversation with Elders can sometimes be transformative.¹⁸⁷

Just as Topping said in regards to our languages, it is not only the community who speaks the language that will save it, it is also the community that will save themselves from the cages and chains of colonialism.

Corntassel describes how the brilliance of anarchy-indigenist community approaches is that they reestablish responsibilities and relationships with one another, many of which have been severed by colonial interventions.

It is critical to begin with indigenous community-based responsibilities in order to open new pathways for sustainable self-determination. For substantive decolonization and community regeneration to take place on a wider scale, the identification and implementation of nonstate, community-based solutions should

¹⁸⁷ Taiaiake Alfred, “The Politics of Recognition: A Colonial Groundhog Day” (paper presented at the annual meeting of Chiefs, 2010).

take precedence.¹⁸⁸

A renewed sense of responsibility not only creates a thriving community, but also provides the individual with a role and empowers them with a sense of place and belonging. By giving someone a responsibility, they are being included in the project and thus feel a sense of ownership over that project. It is by these decolonial logics that community-based approaches are much more effective than state-centric approaches that do not necessarily involve the community on a substantive level.

Once again, the language pocket serves as the perfect example of this responsibility-based, everyday resurgence. The pocket creates a structure of community coherence that a typically Chamorro-rooted world would look like. The pocket serves as a collective of people who are willing to put in the hard work required to learn the language and revitalize it overall. Those at the pocket do not wait for the language to be handed to them, but rather acquire it themselves. This is the ethic that will bring upon a Chamorro-rooted decolonization/self-determination. Those who attend the language pocket are forming a community that embodies the attitude required for meaningful change in the Chamorro community.

The language pocket also displays community responsibilities and relationships. For many of the classes, one person was in charge of choosing a vocabulary wordlist that covered a particular topic. For example, one week “the home” could be the topic and various words such as chair, sofa, kitchen, and living room would be written in Fino’ Chamoru and used as the focal point for the lesson. In addition to this, the classes had a

¹⁸⁸ Jeff Corntassel, “Re-envisioning Resurgence: Indigenous Pathways to Decolonization and Sustainable Self-Determination”, *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education and Society*, (2012): 121.

large dialogue component. After we learned the lesson of the day, we would practice them with a partner. This dialogue component meant that you had to pay attention and learn while you were there. If you did not learn the lesson of the day, your partner would not be able to efficiently practice, and you would be causing them a disservice. On a level beyond the structure of the language pocket classes, the pocket embeds these community relationships in those who attend by affecting them on an everyday level. One of the participants, Jon Guerrero, a native of Guåhan and professor of psychology at the University of Guam, said:

As my vocabulary in Chamorro expanded and my sentences began to build I noticed a change in my awareness of how I perceive myself, my relationships, and my culture. The way I viewed relationships was supported and defined in the language that I was learning. Making these connections with my day to day experiences and then hearing myself verbalize them *gi i fino'-hu*, a feeling of fullness or completeness sets in.¹⁸⁹

Jon's story demonstrates the paradigm-shifting potential of language revitalization projects that help to re-establish community relationships for the betterment of a people.

These examples show that language revitalization projects can contain all the possibilities for thriving community collaboration. Once communities feel they are in charge of portions of their lives and empowered, they can begin to engage in meaningful language revitalization work. As Jon Guerrero continues to say about the language pocket, "The pocket meetings I think have a sense of hope for the future of the Chamorro language. The pocket meetings have drawn people from different lifestyles and

¹⁸⁹ Personal Interview with Jon Guerrero conducted in March 2014.

communities, and in a way, have created a new community of people serious about learning and strengthening the language.”¹⁹⁰ The beauty of language revitalization lies in the fact that a person cannot revitalize a language, only a speech community can. Built into effective language revitalization tactics like the language pocket is the structure of unending possibilities, much different from the structure of impossibility inherent in “dictionary worship” tactics to language revitalization.

Language revitalization as a process privileges community empowerment over production and marks a shift from communities as consumer to communities as producer. Theoretically, this also underlines the need to shift the paradigms away from approaching language revitalization and documentation as a process of resuscitation and hospice for a dying language and toward playful engagement and relationship building with a living language.¹⁹¹ Renowned linguist and language revitalization scholar Lenore Grenoble states the case simply by saying, “In order to be successful, a revitalization program must be driven by the community of people who do or will use the language. This almost always requires one or more language activists, or drivers.”¹⁹²

At this point, I would like to clarify that there are other everyday resurgence projects that help move beyond the “politics of recognition” that do not involve language. The peoplehood model of indigenous peoples helps to illustrate the other components of the core of indigenous life.

If one thinks of peoplehood as the interlocking features of language, homeland,

¹⁹⁰ Personal Interview with Jon Guerrero conducted in March 2014.

¹⁹¹ Mary Hermes et al., “Designing Indigenous Language Revitalization”, *Harvard Educational Review* 82, (2012): 396.

¹⁹² Lenore Grenoble, “Linguistic Cages and the Limits of Linguists”, *Indigenous Language Revitalization: Encouragement, Guidance & Lessons Learned*, (2009): 64.

ceremonial cycles, and sacred living histories, a disruption to any one of these practices threatens all aspects of everyday life. These daily acts of renewal, whether through prayer, speaking your language, honoring your ancestors, are the foundations of resurgence.¹⁹³

In a chapter entitled “Speaking Difference To Power: The Importance of Linguistic Sovereignty,” Thomas Belt and Margaret Bender use the metaphor of a hand to illustrate the various components of sovereignty or what Corntassel would call peoplehood. They say that “Though each finger certainly has abilities, it is only when they come together as the complementary fingers of a hand that they can grasp, manipulate, threaten, and so forth, in the way that really allows them to fulfill their potential as human fingers.”¹⁹⁴

Just as the Chamorro language pocket is concentrating on one of those fingers, there are examples of everyday resurgence projects in these other areas of land, history, homeland, and ceremony. Another example of this is through the youth poetry group in Guåhan named “I Sinångan-Ta” or “Our Words.” This group serves as a space for the youth to engage in poetry, and they also host monthly poetry slams at various venues throughout the island. One of the group’s founders, Melvin Won-Pat Borja, said that the big goal of the organization is to “create a community of young critical thinkers, authors and writers. Our goal is to eventually have these young authors become part of the (literary) canon. We're trying to empower these kids to know that their writing and their

¹⁹³ Jeff Corntassel, “Re-envisioning Resurgence: Indigenous Pathways to Decolonization and Sustainable Self-Determination”, in *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education and Society*, (2012): 89.

¹⁹⁴ Thomas Belt and Margaret Bender, “Speaking Difference To Power: The Importance of Linguistic Sovereignty”, *Foundations of First Peoples’ Sovereignty*, (New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc., 2008), 187.

voice is important and it will be heard.”¹⁹⁵

I Sinangan-Ta helps to engage the youth in Guåhan to think critically and realize their full potential, just as Anarcha-Indigenism’s main goal is to help communities realize they have a substantial amount of political power without the state and colonial institutions.

Other than poetry slams, one of I Sinangan-Ta’s main activities is hosting workshops in the school that aim to give a space for the youth to write without limits about whatever is on their mind. They want the youth to draw on their experiences and realize that anybody can engage in writing and poetry. Won-Pat Borja said;

When (students) think of writing, they have this stereotype of what poetry is and what writing is. We're trying to say that is not necessarily 'Roses are red and violets are blue,' and Shakespeare. Whatever is going to allow you to deliver your message to a given audience, that's what we want. We try to focus on empowering the students to feel like their message is important, what they say is important.¹⁹⁶

Not only does this organization help the youth realize their potential, it also aims at defrosting their imaginations and making them realize that they have a place in a realm that they have been told they could never really be a part of.

The reach of anarcha-indigenist philosophies and acts of everyday resurgence is definitely not just localized to Guåhan. Many other indigenous communities engage in these types of projects. One such illustration is that by our Oceanic brothers and sisters, the Kanaka Maoli of the islands of Hawai‘i. In an article entitled “Kuleana Lāhui: Collective Responsibility for Hawaiian Nationhood in Activists’ Praxis” by Kanaka

¹⁹⁵ Lacey Martinez, “I Sinangan-Ta”, *Pacific Daily News*, October 13, 2008, accessed March 10, 2014. <http://decolonizeguam.blogspot.com/2008/10/sinangan-ta.html>.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

Maoli scholar/activist Noelani Goodyear-Ka'ōpua, she describes a resurgence project Kanaka Maoli are engaging in involving Kalo or the taro plant. In 2005, it was discovered that the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa obtained patents on various kinds of Hawaiian Kalo, and this outraged many Kanaka Maoli, especially those who were dedicated to cultivating Kalo. They organized around the issue and engaged in various acts of resistance.

This included chaining and blocking the doors of the School of Medicine, marching across the main road running alongside the UHM campus, dismantling the garden outside the University administration building, and permanently reclaiming that space by building an 'ahu (altar) to honor Hawaiian kūpuna.¹⁹⁷ At the same time, Goodyear Ka'ōpua talks about the various strategies, tactics and reasoning that were utilized when rallying around these issues. Not only was there resistance, but there was also resurgence. There was not only confrontation and self-defense, but also nurturing and pro-creation.¹⁹⁸ She ends by saying that Hawaiian social movements will be more effective if they are about getting Hawaiians back to the land, rather than only getting land back to the Hawaiians. This logic ties in perfectly with the PÅRA story at the beginning of this section; not only was there resistance to PDN in regards to language, but there is everyday resurgence in Fino' Chamoru language pockets. This Kanaka Maoli solidarity story truly shows that language is not the only issue we need to be working on as indigenous peoples, rather, all of these realms need to be defended and nurtured.

All of these realms need to be fulfilled and concentrated on as everyday

¹⁹⁷ Noelani Goodyear-Ka'ō pua, "Kuleana Lāhui: Collective Responsibility for Hawaiian Nationhood in Activists' Praxis", *Affinities: A Journal of Radical Theory, Culture, and Action* 5, (2011): 150.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

resurgence, but this thesis places special emphasis on language due to its epistemological underpinnings as well as the fact that in Guåhan today, it is an urgent matter. As intergenerational transmission decreases with every generation, the language needs nurturing. There have been governmental initiatives to help support the language revitalization effort, but these manifest themselves in “20 minutes a day” public school classes and the designation of Fino’ Chamoru as an official language. However, none of this has been helping much. Thus, unleashing the epistemological and paradigm-shifting potential of decolonization through language inherently necessitates a revitalization of that language.

Revitalizing the language has to happen whether or not we receive any government support because if we wait for their support, we are only playing into the politics of recognition once again. Not engaging in the waiting game is a direct tenet of anarcha-indigenist thought. Anarcha-indigenism as a political philosophy is also built upon the foundation of direct action. Direct action is a philosophical tactic both attached to the long histories of indigenous people and of anarchist movements throughout the world. For indigenous peoples fighting for self-determination, direct action makes us rely and look out for ourselves, instead of rely on state authority which usually does not have our best interests at heart. This core tenet of direct action shifts indigenous peoples away from the dangerous “victim” attitude in which the colonial powers and state owe them something. Rather, it is about taking power back and not waiting for colonial, bureaucratic “permission.” According to Day, direct action depends upon and contributes

to a process of cultural revitalization.¹⁹⁹

The Chamorro language pocket embodies this non-reliance on the government and shows indigenous forms of self-reliance. In his dissertation, Brock Pitawanakwat, discusses what he calls “self-determining” forms of language revitalization. He says, “A self-determining approach to indigenous language revitalization rejects dependency on the Canadian state and instead seeks self-sufficiency. The majority of Indigenous communities already have the essential resources for language revitalization: fluent speakers and potential learners.”²⁰⁰ The language pocket holds this potential because it is a resurgence and revitalization project that is not funded in any way, but rather works through the dedicated relationship of those who want to learn and those who would like to teach. Cornassel says this is an important part of resurgence because the reliance on resources can be very damaging. The pocket fosters these relationships and calls for reciprocated effort on behalf of those who want to learn the language and those who teach the language.

Through an anarcha-indigenist framework and the mechanism of everyday acts of community resurgence, we have seen how language revitalization can be used to directly counter colonial logics and approaches to decolonization/self-determination. These projects help foster relationships and responsibilities that inevitably empower the indigenous communities. These projects are rooted in Chamorro values and epistemologies and are thus counter-hegemonic alternatives, which draw communities

¹⁹⁹ Richard Day, (paper presented at a conference for the Affinity Project, accessed February 11, 2014).

²⁰⁰ Brock Pitawanakwat, *Anishinaabemodaa Pane Oodenang – A Qualitative Study of Anishinaabe Language Revitalization as Self-Determination in Manitoba and Ontario*, (Ph.d diss., University of Victoria, 2009), 228.

away from the power of colonial co-optation.

Part IV. Conclusion

This chapter illustrated the reimagining and manifestations of a Chamorro-rooted decolonization movement as opposed to a movement rooted in the foundation of colonial logics. It was shown that attempting to “decolonize” under colonial frameworks such as recognition are largely ineffective because the focal point is still the colonizer. A social movement moving the center from the colonizer to the “colonized” holds the most potential. It is pointless to wait around to be recognized by colonial powers that we are self-governing people, rather we should begin to engage in everyday acts of resurgence that show our community our strength, wisdom, and independence.

Fino’ Chamoru was shown to be one of the most powerful outlets of this community resurgence which moves away from the “politics of recognition.” Language is the key to reconnecting with our values and ways of knowing. Language presents a different way of viewing the world and holds the memory bank of a people. Language can also be politically weaponized to resist colonial logics and empower indigenous communities fighting for a political voice and for more political space. It can shatter the glasses of hegemonic illusions. Lastly, through an anarcha-indigenist framework, language revitalization can be an act of everyday resurgence, which builds a community that defies colonial logic. It builds a community that already acts decolonized and self-determined.

The Chamorro language pocket hosted by Michael Lujan Bevacqua was used as the primary example of the power of language revitalization projects and their connection to a new face of decolonization. Through this pocket, relationships and community are

fostered strengthening Chamorro solidarity and these classes are done without the aid or assistance of government bureaucracies demonstrating a true “self-determining” potential. This language pocket also provides the epistemological tools and “language emancipation” needed to confront colonization on an everyday level. It is through this language pocket and other projects similar to it in the realm of land, ceremony, and history that Chamorros are waking up and no longer waiting for the keys to unlock the chains squeezing our necks to be handed to us by the colonizer. Revitalizing the language is changing all of that for us. We are now realizing the key to decolonization has been within us the entire time. We, the Chamorro community, will realize that we are the savior we have been looking for.

Kao un hungok enao? Ayugue I kinahulo’ I linahyan. Ayugue I finakmatan I linahyan. Ayugue I taotao Chamoru ya ni ngai’an para bai in fanmamatkilu ta’lo.²⁰¹

²⁰¹ Chamorro for “Do you hear that? That is the sound of the rising of the masses. That is the sound of the awakening of the masses. That is the sound of the Chamorro people, and we will never be silent again.”

Conclusion (I Finakpo')

“With the help of the Marianas club and UH professor Brant Songsong, Kuper has turned a corner of the restaurant into a buzzing classroom. Chamorros from across the island meet every Saturday morning to practice vocabulary, sentence structure, and casual conversation.”²⁰²

These are the opening words of an article that was written about the final part of this journey: the Fino' Chamoru language pocket that I now teach here in Hawai'i. As the article said, every Saturday morning at 10:00 a.m., a group of us gather at Kaka'ako Kitchen, a restaurant with outdoor seating and great food, to learn the conversational basics of Fino' Chamoru. The name we chose for our language pocket here in O'ahu is “I Finakmatan I Hila' ” which means “The Awakening of the Tongue.” The language pocket is absolutely free and open to anyone interested in learning the language. It has been quite an amazing experience so far. We have Chamorros and non-Chamorros coming from all over the island; some driving as long as an hour just to attend the language pocket.

Every time we meet, we emphasize that the language must be spoken and not just written or read. We need to speak the language in order to give life to the language and have it awoken. Every class, we learn a different grammar lesson, various vocabulary words, and ultimately practice dialogue with one another. We play games, create fun situations for dialogues, and create poems and stories. Another beautiful aspect of the pocket is that those involved can determine what we learn for those particular weeks. We always make sure to discuss what direction we should go in and what we should learn in

²⁰² Molly Solomon, “Chamorro Voices: Finding a Connection Home Through Language”, *Hawai'i Public Radio*, Accessed February 2014. <http://www.hawaiipublicradio.org/content/chamorro-voices-finding-connection-home-through-language>.

the following weeks. If anybody has a particular interest, we concentrate on that lesson for the next week.

Past learning the language, the pocket has helped to build a vibrant diasporic Chamorro community out here in Hawai‘i. For many of us currently in the diaspora, hearing the Chamorro language is a rare experience. We cherish this feeling and many will do whatever they can to achieve this. By coming to the pocket, one does not only learn the language, but for that hour and 15 minutes, we feel more deeply connected to home. Fino’ Chamoru helps us remember the islands and people we came from, and helps anchor us to a sense of belonging and community.

With this vibrant community, we have been able to open up new political spaces at “I Finakmatan I Hila’.” As diasporic Chamorros, it is more difficult to be updated and aware of the issues occurring in the homeland, but our language pocket has provided this information outlet as well as a space of politicization. One example of this politicization is our recent push to protect one of the Mariana Islands, Pagan, which the u.s. military wants to take for firing range purposes. One Saturday morning, I told those who were there about what was going on and whether or not they would want to be involved in a display of solidarity with those working on the issue in the Mariana Islands.

To my surprise, it was an overwhelmingly positive response with everyone agreeing to hold signs with various phrases written in Fino’ Chamoru protesting the taking of Pagan. It was quite amazing because many who come to the pocket have little to no previous involvement with these social justice issues, but after coming to the language pocket, they are so willing to throw themselves into this work. One of the most spectacular responses we received was when one of those who attends the pocket and is a

member of the united states military, agreed to hold a sign of protest with us. Although being a part of the military himself, he began to realize how wrong land taking for these militaristic purposes was. I am glad the language pocket provides these opportunities for reimagination, and that we are able to create these spaces even if we cannot physically be in the homeland.

The genealogy is quite beautiful. I went from being a young boy who hated the language, to a young teen who wanted to learn the language through dictionaries but failed miserably, to a young man finally starting to learn the language through language pockets, and now finally, to a slightly older man who now teaches his own language pocket. I guess the largest revelation has been that my personal life journey of trying to learn the language is the overall metaphor for decolonization in Guåhan.

The young boy I was represents the dormant state of colonial acceptance or unawareness of a colonial situation. The young teen I was represents a slight awakening to the realities of colonization and an attempt to engage and resist this colonization, however unsuccessfully due to the use of colonial logics. The young man attending the language pocket is where I view the current state of decolonization in Guåhan. We are now at a state where we are beginning to realize our mistakes and further realize that engaging in colonial approaches to decolonization has been largely self-defeating. We inevitably still make mistakes and dabble in colonial logics every now and then, but at least we are starting to wake up to alternatives. The ultimate goal for Guåhan and the Chamorro people would be to finally teach its own language pocket. By this, I mean that I truly believe there will be a day when the Chamorro community of Guåhan as a whole will begin to fight for decolonization and do so in a Chamorro-rooted manner.

At the beginning of this thesis, some basic arguments and tenets were proposed. The first asked how Fino' Chamoru ended up so dormant today and how did language colonialism play a role? In chapter 1, this question was explored and an analysis of the various colonial regimes' language oppression showed that colonizers forcefully concentrated on language issues. From the Spanish to the Americans to the Japanese and to the Americans again, the eradication of Fino' Chamoru or utilization for colonial purposes has always been a core part of the colonial agenda. The attempts to make Chamorros feel that the language was detrimental to any form of progress was directly related to the overall colonizing mission of instilling inferiority complexes and making Chamorros view our ways as a "wasteland of nothingness." However, throughout this process, Chamorros resisted language oppression and were active in continuing to speak Fino' Chamoru. It was not until post-World War II when the fabric of Chamorro society was completely changed that the drastic shift to English occurred. The history of language oppression in Guåhan helped to illustrate colonization in Guåhan in general.

With this understanding of history, it became easier to understand how this inferiority complex was instilled and how Chamorros were taught to believe that English was the savior. Equipped with this historical knowledge as well as the overall colonial picture, Chapter 2 looked at attempts to document the language and how these attempts have failed for revitalization efforts. In this chapter, the use of dictionaries alone as a language revitalization plan was critiqued. Through an analysis of five Chamorro-English dictionaries, it was shown how dictionaries embody three main colonial logics: separation of colonized people from their traditional roots, the limitation of indigenous imagination

through hegemonic assimilation, and lastly the co-optation of indigenous peoples into colonial systems.

Following this analysis, an analysis of decolonization methods in Guåhan was done. Just as Chapter 1 utilized language oppression as a way to analyze the overall colonial picture, Chapter 2 attempts to better understand the manifestations, obstacles, and complexities of decolonization through looking at attempts at language revitalization. Deriving from this attempt, it was argued that attempts at decolonization and language revitalization have failed because they have been rooted in colonial logics and methods. Just as it is impossible to learn a language through a dictionary alone, it is impossible to decolonize if one works through the system of the colonizer alone.

Lastly, Chapter 3 argues that there is definitely hope for both language revitalization and effective decolonization. This requires looking past colonial logics and returning to indigenous traditions and rooting our decolonization praxis in these traditions. Continuing to look at decolonization through analyzing language revitalization, a Fino' Chamoru language pocket was used as the basis of analysis in this chapter. Just as dictionaries embodied colonial logics, the language pocket embodied effective decolonial logics and possibilities. These three decolonial, indigenous-rooted logics were language as reconnection to indigenous traditions, language as act of political empowerment and resistance, and lastly, language as act of community/grassroots building.

Utilizing the theories of “anarcha-indigenism” and “everyday resurgence,” it was shown that it takes a community that is united and rooted in Chamorro values to truly free the Chamorro people. While we may engage in other tactics to help protect us from impending harm, we need to realize these defensive moves are not the end goal. Creating

this decolonial Chamorro community is the end goal, and the way to do this is in everyday acts of resurgence and decolonization, not by engaging in state-centric “politics of recognition.” This community would be reconnected to a Chamorro framework, have an unlimited imagination, and not be co-opted to colonial institutions. A lot of work is still required, but as long as we work with each other and for each other, it is not impossible. There is no structure of impossibility built into a Chamorro-rooted community for both aspirations of decolonization and language revitalization.

At this point, I would like to point out the possibilities for future research and various ways that this current research could be expanded. First, continuing the analysis of history, a future project would include a comprehensive analysis of all language revitalization attempts in Guåhan as well as including revitalization attempts of Fino’ Chamoru by communities in the diaspora. This thesis is primarily concentrated on using language revitalization to analyze decolonization, and subsequently concentrates on the utilization of dictionaries and the language pockets.

It is important to point out that there are so many other imaginative projects that could be done. Some of these include starting a charter school, implementing a Master-Apprentice program, creating children’s television shows in Fino’ Chamoru, and starting a music coalition dedicated to reviving Fino’ Chamoru music. In addition to these new creations, it is very easy and possible to incorporate Fino’ Chamoru into existing projects. For example, Chamorro dance groups could start holding their meetings in Fino’ Chamoru and explain dance instruction in the language. This can help incorporate dance and language into one avenue of revitalization. Many of those involved in other cultural aspects such as weaving, blacksmithing, fishing, and traditional medicine can start to

inquire how to describe their creation processes in Fino' Chamoru as well as the plants or fish they are connected with. This simple bridging can prove to be extremely powerful. Those who already know Fino' Chamoru can partner up with these individuals or groups and do a knowledge exchange where one person learns the language and the other learns skills such as weaving or dance.

Another possibility for future research would be to do a comparative approach of other language revitalization projects similar to the language pocket being done by other indigenous groups throughout the world. This thesis concentrated solely on Chamorros, but the world of language revitalization is much larger, and a future study should definitely take this into account. There are many other indigenous peoples working to revitalize their language, so it would be interesting to do a comprehensive analysis of their methods, successes, obstacles, and overall attitudes towards language revitalization. For example, how do groups that engage in language nest models of language revitalization differ in effectiveness from those groups that primarily concentrated on mandating the language legally? Through this comparative approach, not only will a more informed Fino' Chamoru language revitalization plan be developed, but a network of revitalization solidarity could be established with these other groups.

With this comparative approach, another issue to be analyzed would be their attitudes and thoughts regarding the connection of language revitalization work to issues of decolonization, self-determination, and sovereignty. These issues need to work closely together because they can greatly compliment each other as this thesis has shown. They can feed off of each other, inform each other, and work together. Language revitalization

can help bring upon effective decolonization just as effective decolonization can make language revitalization more possible.

With these prospects for future research, my ultimate hope is that this thesis can serve as a stepping stone for the development of Chamorro reimagination and for the creation of further projects/research on Fino' Chamoru revitalization. If this thesis at all helps someone see the link between decolonization and language revitalization or inspires someone to begin learning Fino' Chamoru, then it has done what it is supposed to do.

At this critical point, it is important at the end of this thesis, to do a call to action for Chamorros to start learning Fino' Chamoru. For that purpose, I return to the interview with my grandmothers. One final question I asked both my grandmothers was how their thoughts have changed regarding Fino' Chamoru. They both did not teach their children the language and both previously thought that English was the only way to success. However, when I asked them how that perspective has changed after the birth of their grandchildren who did not speak Fino' Chamoru either, their answers made me nearly tear. For all those Chamorros reading this who are wondering whether or not to learn Fino' Chamoru, please listen to the words of my grandmothers.

My maternal grandmother, Estella Meno Gofigan, said: *Ta necessita tumungo' enao sa' yanggen ti ta kontinua este, siempre matai I kottura-ta. Debi di ta tungo' I languahhi-ta, debi di ta fanguentos, munga ma na'matai, munga ma na'para sa' ta necessita I yo-ta kottura sa' sigi ha' humanao hulo'.*²⁰³ At the same time, my

²⁰³ Personal interview with my grandmother Estella Meno Gofigan conducted in August 2013. Translation for “We need to know that (Fino' Chamoru) because if we do not continue this, our culture will definitely die. We should learn our language, we should talk, do not let it die, do not let it stop, because we need our culture to continue to move up.

paternal grandmother, Magdalena Chargualaf Kuper, echoed these thoughts by saying: “Siempre pa’go debi di ta fa’na’gue todú I famagu’on sa’ komu ti ta fa’na’gue siha, siempre taya’ I lenguahhi-ta. Siempre todú ingles, siempre amerikano pao asu.”²⁰⁴ It made me nearly tear hearing how their thoughts have changed so drastically. They are calling on us, the youth, to continue the language. Both my grandmothers expressed regret not teaching Fino’ Chamoru to their children and grandchildren, but now they are both more than supportive in my quest to learn the language. They sit down with me and teach me, converse with me, and most importantly, let me know that I am on the right path. The important message is that it is not too late to learn the language, and that we should begin to learn the language. All it takes is these acts of everyday conversation with those who know the language and are willing to help you.

We must understand that Fino’ Chamoru, our mother tongue as Chamorros, is extremely important and that we are better off having our language than we are without. While I have never taken the stance that one is not a Chamorro if one does not Fino’ Chamoru, I whole-heartedly argue that it enriches the Chamorro psyche and livelihood, and is something we should feel we need. Learning our language can help us connect to our roots as Chamorros as well as connect us to each other in a way we have never known before. Once this community is built, I have no doubt in mind, decolonization and Chamorro self-determination will be right over the horizon. Remember, if we give life to

²⁰⁴ Personal Interview with my grandmother, Magdalena Chargualaf Kuper, conducted in June 2013. Translation for “Today, we definitely need to teach all of the children (the language) because if we do not teach them, they will surely have no language. If everything is english, they will definitely just be americans in Chamorro bodies.”

our tongues, we will make our people brave and fearless, or rather “Na’la’la’ I Hila’-ta, Na’matatnga I Taotao-ta.”

In December of 2013, in the middle of writing this thesis, I found out that I was going to be a father. As soon as I found this out, I knew the work I was doing was urgent because a new generation is arriving. From that day forward, I vowed to make sure my daughter would live and breathe Fino’ Chamoru. I wanted her to be able to communicate with my grandmother in her first language and for them to have that connection. My daughter, Inina Concepcion Naputi-Kuper, is going to be a breathing example that challenges the structures of impossibility telling us it is too late to save our language. I hope that she shines light on the hopes of all of those who want to learn the language, and lives out her namesake as Inina means, “that which illuminates.” I thought it would be appropriate to genealogically sequence the format of this thesis. As the beginning dealt with my grandmother’s story and the middle told my story of language learning, I am hoping that the end of this thesis can set the stage for my daughter’s future story not yet told. May this thesis help to guide her story just as I wish her future story will guide the story of Fino’ Chamoru’s future.

Haga-hu, esta hu tungo’ na gof apmam asta ki para un taitai este, lao yanggen un taitai este, puedi ha’ ha na’ magof hao. Haga-hu, annai hu sodda’ na mapotge si nana-mu, kumati yo’ sa’ gof magof yo’. In nanangga hao, Inina. Hågu umina I lina’la’-måmi I saina-mu siha. Hu tuge’i hao nu este na tinige’. Puedi ha’ mañodda’ hao animu ginen I

tinige'-hu yan un tungo' na antes di mafañagu hao, esta hãgu I lina'la'-hu. Hu gof guiaya hao haga-hu. Nihi ta na'la'la' i hila'-ta kosaki sina ta na'matatnga hit.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁵ For her, no translation will be needed. May this be the case for all Chamorros in the near future.

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