

ASIAN AND ASIAN AMERICAN THEOLOGY – CONSULTATION
(JOINT SESSION WITH THE LATINX THEOLOGY CONSULTATION
AND THE BLACK CATHOLIC THEOLOGY CONSULTATION)

Topic: Reclaiming our Roots
 Convener: Stephanie M. Wong, Villanova University
 Moderator: Craig A. Ford, Jr., St. Norbert College
 Presenters: Cecilia Titizano, Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University
 David de la Fuente, Fordham University
 LaRyssa Herrington, University of Notre Dame

This joint panel, entitled “Reclaiming our Roots,” examined how under-recognized communities can draw upon the lived religious experience and wisdom of their peoples, especially when the retrieval of that heritage is complicated by cultural-linguistic translation and fraught with the fracturing of memory itself in histories of oppression and dispossession.

First, Cecilia Titizano explored how Quechua/Aymara relational epistemologies challenge Catholic Social Thought. Unlike Catholic moral theology, which assumes that humans alone bear God’s image, Andean peoples view all things as alive and aware through the same *Ajayu* or spirit. Aymara and Quechua scholars emphasize holistic cognitive and embodied relationality, where living well means attuning to sacred wisdom sustaining and creating *Pacha* (all that is). This cosmology impacts epistemology, where knowledge is best understood as a mode of thinking-feeling or *sentipien*. Ethnographers, inspired by Peruvian anthropologist Guillermo Salas Carreno, seek a worldview that transcends Western metaphysics and scientific methods, recognizing all things’ interconnected existence. For Titizano, the Andean moral cosmos sees *Pacha* as the first enfleshment of the Trine God, revealing multiplicity and relationality.

Second, David de la Fuente presented “Saving Kapwa: Investigating Decolonial Pneumatology Among Filipino-American Catholic Charismatics.” He grounded his reflection in his experience of the Filipino Catholic Charismatic community *Bukas Loob sa Diyos* (Open to the Spirit of God; BLD) in Newark. For members of the BLD network, charismatic Catholicism 1) offers a way of being proud, rather than ashamed, of Filipino identity in the wake of Spanish and American colonialism, and 2) makes legible decolonial healing as a social salvation in the Spirit. In explaining this, de la Fuente highlighted the Filipino indigenous value of *kapwa*, which refers to a shared inner-self or intersubjectivity. Charismatic communities can facilitate this re-embrace of the Filipino self, forging a “sacred self” that intensifies a sense of both spiritual healing and pride in being Filipino. Finally, de la Fuente addressed how healing can serve a liberative role especially in communities scarred deeply by colonial exploitation and damaged self-image. For example, in BDL, there is a distinct focus on “renewing families.” Filipino American charismatics define family widely—not parsing some relatives as close and blood-related versus others as distant or lesser-related. While this is often couched in a conservative theological vision, De La Fuente argued that this restoration of Filipino kinship practices functions as a decolonial resistance to Western colonial conceptions of the family unit.

Lastly, LaRyssa Herrington presented her dissertation research on Marian popular piety in the Africana diaspora. She argued that the existential rupture of forced diaspora and enslavement necessitated the creation of Black religion and identity. As Fred Moten and others have pointed out, traditional forms of representation in written language and historiography have failed to capture this rupture, and scholars must attend to the performative character of African diaspora lived religion. As an example of Africana Marian popular piety, Herrington relayed a narrative of the 1739 Stono Rebellion in South Carolina, an account given by the great-great-grandson of the uprising's leader, Cato. The narrative weaved in and out of memory, demonstrating the dynamics of what Johann Baptist Metz calls "corporate memory" and exemplifying how marginal movements performatively communicate dangerous memories to interrupt the complacency of the mainstream.

During the question-and-answer period, the audience expressed appreciation for this panel interrogating the challenges of "reclaiming our roots" when the roots may be torn asunder, inaccessible, or re-planted. Bryan Massingale asked whether M. Shawn Copeland's discussions of solidarity might be useful in Herrington's work, and how the Filipino American psychologist community might regard the charismatic Catholicism discussed by David De La Fuente. Andrew Prevot asked the entire panel, especially Cecilia Titizano, about language and translation, since in all three cases the research involved decisions about whether and how to translate indigenous terms in the modern English-speaking academy. The panelists were thoughtful and articulate in engaging all these questions.

STEPHANIE M. WONG
Villanova University
Villanova, Pennsylvania