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In 2003, President George W. Bush declared “democracy through education” to be a central facet of the invasion and occupation of Iraq. The idea of winning Arab hearts and minds to the cause of Western democracy was touted as a liberatory endeavor which would “help Iraq reclaim its heritage” and “bring it into the family of nations.” Too, raising Iraq up from its fallen civilizational state and educating burqa-clad Afghan women perpetuated an ideology of US exceptionalism and benevolent occupation in the Middle East. These forms of pacification are hallmarks of a racialized empire that works through tutelage rather than overt military force.

But as Malini Johar Schueller’s compelling and thoroughly researched *Campaigns of Knowledge* makes clear, this pedagogical strategy is as old as US colonial ambition. Beginning in 1898 with its colonization of the Philippines, “the creation of a suitable pedagogical subject through schooling emerged as a central technology of US power overseas,” one that, like the invasion and occupation of Iraq more than a century later, “speaks to a singular vision of America as savior following a pattern of a politics of violence followed by a pedagogy of recovery in which schooling was central” (3). *Campaigns of Knowledge* establishes a cultural history of weaponized education in the colonial Philippines and post-WWII occupied Japan that doubles as a history of ideas undergirding and justifying US empire. Most prominently this is a history of exceptionalism and imperial uniqueness, naturalized hierarchies of whiteness and masculinity, the complex but always inferior positioning of racialized others, especially “Orientals,” and overarching ideas about the proper place of other nations vis-à-vis US postwar hegemony.

Accordingly, *Campaigns of Knowledge* is committed to a comparative methodology that examines the contrasting racializations of Filipinos and Japanese as a specific form of imperial governance. In the Philippines, military and civilian administrators saw schooling as a way of combatting Filipino nationalism and insurgency, diffusing claims for self-rule by positioning Filipinos as “little brown brothers” in need of civilizational uplift (32). Such “humanitarian imperialism” draws on familiar tropes of developmental belatedness and produced Filipinos as a backward people (48). In contrast to this “tropicalist Orientalism” in which Filipinos were contented, lazy, simple, and in need of education, the Japanese were conceived of as overly educated in feudal cultural forms that “tended toward totalitarianism” (38, 159). Characterized schizophrenically as
mechanistic, obedient, and imitative yet—the result of Japan’s military prowess during
WWII—as possible threats to US cold war hegemony, the Japanese needed to be
reeducated away from native values like ultranationalism and militancy.

While carefully attending to these differences, Schueller more importantly argues that the
unique histories of the colonial Philippines and occupied Japan together work to confirm
the “continuity” of education in zones of US militarism across time and testify to “the
ubiquity of U.S. tutelage as an arm of empire” (15, 16). From the viewpoint of US military
leaders and educational administrators, both Filipino and Japanese pedagogical subjects
needed to become “almost but not quite” American—pliant to American values of
freedom, industriousness, consumerism, and democracy but only as individuals. Collective
demands for political autonomy, self-rule or rights were time and again
quashed in both Japan and the Philippines as US tutelage sought to create subjects
improved by US values but also content never to fully inhabit those values as
authoritative subjects.

Although Schueller unpacks this dominant ideology of tutelage, she also interrogates
how tutelage fell short of its managerial goals as it was resisted by Filipino and Japanese
writers, teachers, and students. Mobilizing a longstanding postcolonial methodology of
contrapuntal reading, Campaigns of Knowledge contributes to a large body of postcolonial
resistance work by showing how tutelage both crucially shaped Filipino and Japanese
subjects even as it produced forms of dissonance, excess, and difference incompatible
with the tutelary regime. Its chapters on native resistance especially showcase the book’s
interdisciplinary methodology and the strengths of its wide-ranging approach to tutelage
and its discontents, along with its diverse archive of textbooks, short stories, novels, films,
memos, interviews, and essays.

Drawing primarily on postcolonial critics like Homi K. Bhabha and James C. Scott,
Schueller combines theory with nuanced close readings to illuminate how institutional
limits and aesthetic objects destabilized the project of the US’ pedagogical empire. For
Filipino educators like Camilo Osias, the first Filipino superintendent of schools, the
liberatory potential of democratic values became a way of critiquing hegemony from
within the educational system. Elsewhere, short story writers like Edith Tiempo and
Gilda Cordero-Fernando register the anxieties of what Bhabha theorized as the “almost
but not quite” mimicry of colonial subjection. Through characters and spaces defined by
deviant sexuality and communal alienation, these writers chart how the tutelary project
failed its regulatory purpose by producing internal breakdown and disorder instead.
Similarly, for Japanese and Japanese American writers, nonnormative gender
performance, sexuality, and nonhegemonic cultural values provide powerful modes for
critiquing the racialized and gendered regime of Americanized schooling. Writers and
filmmakers like Kojima Nobuo and Masahiro Shinoda turn to “passive resistance and mourning” as alternatives to “the idea of the postwar Japanese subject newly re-formed through American tutelage and masculinities that are gentle and vulnerable in contrast to masculinities grounded in dominance” (216). Across all these readings of native resistance, Schueller makes use of James Scott’s concept of “private transcripts,” which reveal the minor forms of resistance within seeming acts of submission to power.

One of the great strengths of Campaigns of Knowledge thus lies in its mobilizing of diverse objects to underscore repeated patterns in pedagogical ideology and the resistances that it produced. This is the case in the book’s chapters on Japanese and Filipino culture makers as well as its last chapter, where Schueller draws on oral histories taken with a handful of affluent, educated Japanese citizens in 2015. These interviews extend the contrapuntal methodologies of earlier chapters while framing them within the insights of memory studies. Unlike the Japanese artists and writers who relate to pedagogical domination by cultivating alternative values outside Americanized education, the interviewees of chapter 7 came to be suspicious of education itself as teachers paid hypocritical lip service to Pax Americana after Japan’s defeat. Thus, like the aesthetic objects examined earlier in Schueller’s study, these oral histories reveal how “occupation tutelage bred more skepticism and cynicism than control” (247).

These practices of resistance are not, however, uncritically valorized, for Schueller makes clear that even necessary resistance works by omission. Ethnic and linguistic minorities in the Philippines, and Japan’s own Asian colonies, feature little if at all in the writings of resistance to US empire. In noting the exclusions of nation-making and “strategic victimhood” in the Philippines and Japan, Schueller both enables us to understand the strategies by which writers and artists decolonized the singular modernity of US empire while not absolving them of their own patterns of violence (216).

Schuller therefore critically complicates her primary narrative of imperial interpellation and resistance, a move also born out in the attention that Campaigns of Knowledge pays to the interdisciplinary nexus of Asian, Asian American, and US empire studies. Some of her individual writers, like Julie Otsuka, explicitly link Japanese resistance to occupation with memories of Japanese American internment. But more generally, ethnic America emerges as a crucial interlocutor for US imperial efforts in Asia. Schueller notes that the racialization of the Japanese in occupied Japan was informed by Japanese American stereotypes, as well as the earlier practice of Filipino pacification through tutelage. Similarly, the narrative of civilizational uplift was first used on US domestic minorities, including African Americans and Native Americans, before being exported abroad to interpellate desirable subjects of empire in the Philippines. This intersectional attention to Asia and Asian America does not collapse their differences but makes the technologies
of racialized management that connect them all the more apparent. Indeed, these moments of intraracial pedagogy within a racialized US regime are particularly intriguing and invite further scholarship on how racialized governmentality functions between different nonwhite populations and not only between racialized subjects and white America.

*Campaigns of Knowledge* ambitiously contributes to a range of disciplines, opening a robust conversation between postcolonial education studies, US empire studies, Asian American studies, Japanese occupation studies, and postcolonial Filipino studies. In bringing these overlapping fields into closer contact, Schueller provides an invaluable history of US pedagogical subjugation and the strategies of resistance produced by education as an imperial technology. The continuation of education as “war by other means” in more recent US imperial holdings only attests to the lively legacy of what Schueller has identified as the US’ tutelary empire.