

The Limits of the Third Space: Postcolonial Dislocation and Linguistic Rupture in Domingo Landicho's "Munting Kayumangging Amerikano"

Marcwani P. Pal-ing 

Author Information:

Department of English, College of Arts and Social Sciences, Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology, Iligan City, Philippines

Correspondence:

marcwani.pal-ing@g.msuiit.edu.ph

Article History:

Date Received: July 28, 2026

Date Revised: August 8, 2026

Date Accepted: August 10, 2026

Date Published: August 28, 2026

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.67903/ijroms0367>

Document ID: 2026IJROM0367

Recommended Citation:

Pal-ing, M. P. (2026). The limits of the third space: Postcolonial dislocation and linguistic rupture in Domingo Landicho's Munting Kayumangging Amerikano. *International Journal of Research on Multidisciplinary Studies*, 1(7), 374-384. <https://doi.org/10.67903/ijroms0367>

Abstract. Migration has profoundly shaped Filipino social and cultural life, yet its consequences on identity and cultural continuity remain underexplored in Philippine regional literary scholarship. While postcolonial discussions often interpret Homi K. Bhabha's concepts of hybridity and the Third Space as productive sites of cultural negotiation and resistance, this study argues that Domingo Landicho's short story, "Munting Kayumangging Amerikano," presents hybridity as a lived condition of postcolonial dislocation. Employing a qualitative literary design based on close reading and thematic analysis, the study examines key textual scenes involving linguistic barriers, bodily discomfort, and intergenerational encounters. Guided by postcolonial frameworks, including Bhabha's hybridity, Fanon's corporeal alienation, and materialist critiques of the Third Space, the analysis investigates how language, body, and familial relationships reveal the affective costs of postcolonial identity. The findings demonstrate that hybridity in the narrative functions not as a creative synthesis, but as a causally reinforcing feedback chain of estrangement. The child's over-reliance on English creates a primary linguistic gap; this symbolic rupture manifests somatically as a bodily rejection of the ancestral environment and touch; and this physical withdrawal ultimately causes the failure of intergenerational kinship and cultural memory. Collectively, these findings show that migration extends beyond geographical relocation, producing deep, enduring ruptures in identity and belonging. By bringing an underrepresented Tagalog short story into direct dialogue with canonical postcolonial theory, this study contributes a contextually grounded reading of the Third Space, one that foregrounds the material costs, fractured inheritances, and lived complexities of the Filipino migrant experience.

Keywords: Academic Performance; Creating Presentation; Internet Navigation; Technological Skills; Video Editing; Word Processing

Introduction

Migration has long shaped Filipino family life, not only through physical separation but also through its lasting effects on language, memory, and cultural transmission. According to the World Migration Report 2024 by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the number of migrants in 2020 increased by 128 million from 153 million in 1990, and this vast increase in data solicits an idea of opportunity in migration, especially in economic and network. In the same report, migration is treated to be a catalyst in raising living standards, reducing poverty supporting families and communities in origin countries. This notion is supported by the study of Adams & Page (2005), which presented a dataset that covered more than 70 developing countries, encoding in their data on poverty, inequality, international migration, and remittances. From this dataset, it was statistically revealed that both international migration and remittances reduce poverty. In a broader implication, the findings suggest that international migration is not only about individual mobility or demographic change but is also considered as a macro-scale mechanism that aids in poverty alleviation in origin countries.

Though similar field of studies yields relative conclusions, Philippine regional literature reveals its more intimate consequences, particularly the fragmentation of identity across generations. Emerita Quito (1983) on her seminal work recognizes this line of reasoning as central to her defense of regional literatures, arguing that they delineate what is indigenously Filipino from what is not. Operating at the level of grassroots Filipino philosophy, regional literature articulates the most concrete expressions of a people's psyche. In this way, it responds to the cultural fragmentation brought about by migration. Narrowing it to kinship, to some extent, regional texts expose how migration reconfigures relationships between grandparents, parents, and children, often producing cultural gaps that cannot be easily repaired.

Domingo Landicho's "Munting Kayumangging Amerikano" presents a poignant portrayal of this rupture through the return of Agapito and his American-born child to a rural Philippine setting. For background, the author, Domingo Landicho served as a professor at the UP Diliman wherein he became a Professor Emeritus, which is a title given for outstanding academic records, leadership, and service. Writing more than 50 books including poetry, short fiction, novels, plays, children's literature, essays, literary criticism, earned him multiple Palanca awards, CCP Balagtas Awards, awards from the Institute of National Language, Catholic Mass Media Awards. Internationally, he was also a recipient of the Southeast Asian Writers Award (S.E.A. Write Award) in 2003. Going back, the story "Munting Kayumangging Amerikano" tells of the return of a Filipino migrant, Agapito, along with his American-born child, to a rural Philippine setting, where they are received by Tandang Intin, the child's grandfather and the proud father of Agapito. However, the story does not solely depict the act of returning of Agapito to his hometown but rather centralizes on John "Dyun", the grandson of Tandang Intin and son of Agapito. The boy, despite having a "kayumanggi" body, is marked by a totally foreign and alien culture, hinted at by American language, behaviour, and sensibility; unexpectedly, this was not something that Tandang Intin or the town neighbors had imagined the son of Agapito to be. Looking at it broadly, the story voids the concept of reunion as a momentous event of reconciliation, but rather a quiet confrontation with loss, misunderstanding, and irreversibility. The presence of John "Dyun" reveals rupture, challenging assumptions about heritage, belonging, and cultural inheritance.

Central to "Munting Kayumangging Amerikano" is the notion of hybridity. At its core, the concept of hybridity is not foreign in the study of post-colonial as it is fairly expounded by Homi Bhabha in his book *The Location of Culture* (1994). However, unlike celebratory interpretations of hybridity as cultural enrichment or creative synthesis, Landicho's narrative portrays hybridity as cultural dislocation. The child, branded as a hybrid identity, does not guarantee him access to both Filipino and American worlds, resulting into estrangement that the child suffers, as seen in how he behaves, his discomfort with the local environment, and his emotional distance from his grandfather. All of these points to the fact that hybridity, especially understood in regional literatures, emerges not as empowerment but as the erosion of cultural continuity.

This study is grounded in postcolonial theory, particularly the concept of cultural hybridity as articulated by Homi Bhabha. Accordingly, in *"The Location of Culture"* (1994), Homi Bhabha frames hybridity as a space of cultural ambivalence and negotiation. Furthermore, the concept of hybridity is further expounded by Bhabha as he postulates a sort of "third space", this third space is where indigenous and colonial cultures meet and begin producing new and emerging identities. While Bhabha's work emphasizes hybridity as a site that unsettles colonial authority, this paper adopts a critical reconfiguration of hybridity to foreground its lived consequences, specifically, loss and dislocation. In the Philippines, many studies would argue that migration is shaped by colonial histories and global labour systems. In relation to this, San Juan, E., Jr. (2011) posits that developing countries such as the Philippines is branded as the world's biggest exporters of labor, leaving the Philippines still controlled by global capitalism. Contextually, hybridity in this case does not show a defiance but rather an estrangement. The story "Munting Kayumangging Amerikano" is a vivid and effective literary example of such a situation, annotating the ways in which postcolonial hybridity impairs familial ties, changes the usage of language, and confuses the sense of self over the span of time.

Research Questions

This paper argues that "Munting Kayumangging Amerikano" dramatizes postcolonial hybridity as cultural dislocation rather than enrichment, using the figure of the child to expose the breakdown of cultural inheritance under migration. Through the story's language use, body behaviour of each significant character and interaction between them, this paper goes to unveil how Landicho's story critiques dominant narratives of migration as progress but seeks to expose how migration also foregrounds loss, estrangement, and irreversibility- features that are believed to be existing in similar situations to developing countries.

Specifically, this study aims to:

1. examine how cultural hybridity is represented as dislocation in the child's identity;
2. analyse the role of language and embodiment in articulating postcolonial loss; and
3. evaluate the socio-cultural implications of disrupted cultural continuity within Filipino migrant families.

Literature Review

The study at hand implements postcolonial theory as its grounding base. Postcolonial theory is an interdisciplinary approach that considers the influence of colonial histories on the aspects of identity retaining, culture, and power relations in the societies that have been colonized in the past. Commonly defined, postcolonial theory is a literary theory or critical approach that deals with literature produced in countries that were once, or are now, colonies of other countries. Walton (2023) defines postcolonialism

theory as a "body of thought primarily concerned with accounting for the political, aesthetic, economic, historical, and social impact of European colonial rule around the world in the 18th through the 20th century." From this standpoint, the theory mentioned looks into the after effects of colonial power domination, which in the context of this study is easily navigated into language, education, migration, and cultural practices. Given the long history of colonization that the Philippines have endured under the Spanish and American period, postcolonial theory remains significant in understanding ongoing conditions related to subjectivity, social mobility, and cultural belonging.

Central to postcolonial theory is the question of identity formation under colonial and postcolonial conditions. Power derived from colonialism does not limit its reach to political influence and control but further expands it in reshaping people's way of thinking, behaving and imagining themselves. As a response to this dominating control, Anithalakshmi, K. H. (2022) posits that writers of post-colonial tend to embed their voices of resistance through postcolonial texts, in hopes of reclaiming lost histories and reimagining cultural identities. However, this form of subtle opposition does not guarantee the completeness of one's identity, for identities formed under colonial power are often unstable, fragmented, and negotiated within unequal power relations as seen and witnessed in *Noli Me Tangere* through characters like Crisostomo Ibarra and, Maria Clara whose identities are shaped, fractured, and constantly negotiated within Spanish colonial power structures. Migration then, in this case, cannot be interpreted as merely as personal choices but rather, in informed by structural histories rooted in imperial expansion and global capitalism.

One of the most influential concepts in postcolonial theory is Homi K. Bhabha's notion of cultural hybridity. In 'The Location of Culture, Bhabha' (1994) investigates the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized, arguing that hybridity emerges from the unequal and unjust interactions between the two. He further expounds this through the statement: "This side of the psychosis of patriotic fervour, I like to think, there is overwhelming evidence of a more transnational and translational sense of the hybridity of imagined communities" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 5). In this case, Homi Bhabha stipulates that behind the very singular definition of nationalism lies a hybrid community, constantly shifting and shaped by transnational exchanges.

By extension, Bhabha (1994) also introduces the concept of a "Third Space," which he describes as a space of cultural negotiation and hybridity. As he explains in his book, "It is that Third Space, though unrepresentable in itself, which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning of symbols and culture have no primordial unity or fixity, and that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized, and read anew" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 37). This space cannot be understood as fixed or static; rather, it is fluid and constantly shifting, as it is mechanized from the interaction between the colonizer and the colonized. Thus, it is conceptual in nature. From all these definitions, Bhabha (1994) recognises the fragility of cultural pureness and fixed identities as hybridity encompasses the ability to disrupt, resulting in unwanted derangement of power, which by extension, is facilitated in the Third Space mentioned as it is referred a site of ambivalence, where dominant narratives are challenged and re-signified.

Early interpretations of hybridity often emphasize its productive potential. Voicu (2009) mentions several proponents of the said interpretations, expounding on how hybrid individuals function actively in the "Third space" described by Homi K. Bhabha. One of those is Papastergiadis (1997), who calls hybrid identity a lubricant for it aids more than one culture to interact smoothly. Meaning, the individual can move freely from one culture to another allowing them to transact, facilitate and bridge cultural boundaries that non-hybrid individuals tend to face. Stacking up from this, Taylor (1991) explores and expounds on the postcolonial term "transculturation," it is presented as the means the ongoing exchange and transformation that happens when cultures meet, positioning hybrid individuals as capable of understanding the process internally as their identities are shaped by multiple cultural influences. From these standpoints, hybridity is understood as something strategic, allowing those categorized as hybrid individuals to subvert colonial dominance and generate new cultural expressions.

Although Bhabha's formulation of hybridity emphasizes cultural negotiation and the productive possibilities of the Third Space, other postcolonial scholars have also questioned whether hybridity can always be viewed as a productive experience. Parry (2004), and Dirlik (1994) provide critiques that point toward the material and structural conditions behind postcolonial identities. Their arguments suggest that cultural hybridity cannot be separated from the unequal relations of power, economic conditions, colonial histories, and global structures that influence how identities are formed. Parry (2004), for instance, emphasizes the importance of considering the historical and material conditions of colonialism in understanding postcolonial experiences. Similarly, Dirlik (1994) points out the continuing influence of global capitalism in shaping postcolonial conditions, while Ahmad (1992) questions approaches that separate cultural and literary identities from wider relations involving class, nation, and power. From these perspectives, hybridity may not always function as a smooth negotiation between cultures because the interaction between cultures may happen within conditions that are already unequal.

These critiques are important to the present study because they provide a basis for looking at the less productive side of hybridity. Rather than presenting dislocation as a completely new alternative to Bhabha's concept, this study applies these existing critiques to a Philippine literary context. Domingo Landicho's *Munting Kayumangging Amerikano* provides a particular case where the consequences of cultural hybridity can be seen through the experiences of a child who is placed between different cultural environments. In the story, dislocation is not only presented through cultural difference but is also seen through language, bodily experience, and the relationship between the child and his grandfather. In this manner, the study looks at how the concerns raised by materialist critiques of hybridity can be seen within the everyday experiences of a Filipino migrant narrative.

Building from these critiques, the present study approaches hybridity as a condition that may result in cultural dislocation rather than meaningful cultural synthesis. This does not completely reject Bhabha's understanding of hybridity as a space of negotiation. Instead, it gives attention to the unequal conditions in which this negotiation takes place and to the possible consequences experienced by individuals within such conditions. In the context of migration, being exposed to different cultures does not automatically result in a complete or balanced sense of belonging. Instead, the meeting between inherited cultural identities and acquired affiliations may result in linguistic rupture, bodily discomfort, and weakened cultural and familial connections. Through this perspective, hybridity is understood not only as the meeting of cultures but also as an experience that may involve loss, distance, and difficulty in maintaining cultural continuity.

The relationship between language and identity can also be understood through Fanon's (1952) *Black Skin, White Masks*, which discusses how colonial experiences become connected to language, cultural identification, and the body. For Fanon, language does not only function as a means of communication because the use of a particular language can also be connected to social recognition and one's position within a cultural environment. In this sense, language may become a way through which a person attempts to identify with or gain acceptance from a particular cultural group. This relationship between language and identity is also connected to the body, since the body can become a visible marker through which differences and forms of exclusion are experienced. Fanon's discussion is relevant to the present study because the story's treatment of language and the child's bodily responses shows that cultural dislocation can be experienced both through communication and through one's physical encounter with an unfamiliar environment. Although Fanon's analysis is grounded in the context of French colonialism, his discussion of language, identity, and the body provide a useful foundation for understanding how colonial and postcolonial conditions may influence the experiences of migrant subjects. In Landicho's narrative, language and the body therefore become connected ways through which cultural belonging and estrangement are experienced.

Narrowing this into the Philippine context, cultural hybridity is closely tied to migration and is fully shaped by colonial histories and global labor demands. Recent data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA, 2024) estimated that 2.16 million Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) worked abroad during the period from April to September 2023. In a broader sense, this migration number is also factored in on the reproduction of linguistic and cultural hierarchies inherited from other countries. For example, it is widely known in the Philippines that embodying or practicing English, Western norms, and American cultural values often become markers of success and modernity, leaving indigenous languages and practices marginalized. In this context, then, instead of powering hybrid individuals, they tend to be disconnected from local cultural frameworks as they grow in a space that is contaminated by unequal power structures.

This study, therefore, conceptualizes hybridity as dislocation: a condition in which cultural identity is suspended between inherited origins and acquired affiliations, without achieving meaningful synthesis. In the book, *"The Postcolonial Book Dictionary"* by Pramod K. Nayar, published in 2015, Nayar (2015) defines this as the sense of cultural and social alienation experienced by the migrant when seeking to adapt to a new society/country. The alienation referred here is navigated through the loss of language, weakened kinship bonds, and fragmented memory. In this sense, hybrid individuals may possess pluralized cultural markers but lacks a deeper bond in either of them, establishing a form of void.

Applied to literary analysis, this framework allows for a critical examination of how postcolonial forces are embodied in everyday life. As mentioned, hybridity can be navigated primarily through language and behavior. And in a similar process, the story *"Munting Kayumangging Amerikano"* allows for a clearer understanding of the concept mainly through the child's body, language, and relational disconnection, which in this case is considered as lived condition.

Guided by these theoretical perspectives, the present study analyzes four interrelated dimensions of hybridity as dislocation: language, body, memory, and kinship. Language is examined as a means through which cultural knowledge and belonging are communicated, while the body is considered as a site where unfamiliarity and exclusion can be experienced. Memory reflects the continuation or disruption of cultural knowledge, while kinship represents the familial relationships through which cultural identities and practices are passed from one generation to another. These dimensions are treated as connected rather than completely separate from one another because the loss of language, bodily unfamiliarity, disrupted memory,

and weakened kinship may contribute to the same experience of cultural dislocation. Therefore, this study does not claim to introduce a new critique of Bhabha's concept of hybridity. Instead, it applies existing critiques of hybridity to a Philippine regional literary text and examines how the consequences of migration can be experienced through language, the body, memory, and familial relationships. Through Munting Kayumangging Amerikano, the study therefore demonstrates how postcolonial cultural dislocation can become an embodied and intergenerational experience.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative literary analysis grounded in close reading and thematic interpretation. Close reading in this context uses the text's language, tethered with a careful and sustained interpretation, to understand the deeper meaning and nuance within the data. Given that the text in this paper provides a clear view in investigating cultural hybridity and dislocation, close reading provides an appropriate analytical approach. In this method, nuances in the short story *Munting Kayumangging Amerikano*, such as gestures, speech patterns, narrative tone, and sensory details, become a vessel for interpreting how postcolonial identity is represented and contested by the characters, mainly Dyun and Tandang Intin. Furthermore, other than close reading, this paper's method is also complemented by thematic interpretation. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), this approach is widely used in qualitative analysis as it allows the study to identify recurring patterns within the text that illuminate the experience of postcolonial hybridity. In literary works, themes and patterns are always present, bearing and subtly hinting readers with meanings that are subject to interpretation in order to produce meaning in context. In this study, thematic interpretation is therefore used to organize recurring patterns found within the story and connect these patterns to the broader concepts of cultural hybridity and dislocation.

Data Source

Categorically, the selection of textual scenes is not abstract and random but is deliberate and theoretically motivated. By doing so, the analysis avoids informally presenting the results of the data analysis and instead clusters relevant textual moments according to the concerns of the study. The primary data of this paper is the short story *Munting Kayumangging Amerikano* by Domingo Landicho, with particular attention given to scenes involving language use, the child's bodily discomfort, and intergenerational encounters between the child and Tandang Intin. These scenes were selected because they provide the clearest textual representations of the study's central concern with hybridity as cultural dislocation.

Coding and Analytic Procedure

To be more precise, number one, language use refers to the discourse participated in by the child, Dyun, and Tandang Intin, his grandfather. The analysis and interpretation of these exchanges will be used in revealing how linguistic gaps and the inability to communicate mark the breakdown of cultural transmission. In this manner, the focus on language use does not perpetuate language merely as a medium of communication, as expected from its conventional role, but also as a repository for measuring the adaptability of cultural values and belonging. Second is the investigation of bodily discomfort, which in this case can be seen through the uneasiness experienced by the boy due to the unfamiliar climate and environment in which he finds himself. Scholarly speaking, the body in this case becomes a site of postcolonial dislocation, and moments that capture this discomfort speak not only of cognition but also of how cultural identity is embedded and shaped by sensory familiarity. The bodily responses of the child are therefore interpreted as textual indications of his distance from the cultural environment in which he is placed. Lastly is the exploration of hybridity through kinship and familial continuity, and to solicit a scholarly answer, this is done through the encounters between the child and his grandfather. What will be looked at here is how migration interrupts the passing down of cultural memory and familial ties, often resulting in misunderstandings, emotional distance, and failed recognition. Memory in this case is considered alongside kinship because the family serves as one of the primary means through which cultural knowledge and identity are passed from one generation to another. Underlying these three is the postcolonial framework, wherein the data will be guided accordingly and interpreted in a manner that explains the structural consequences of migration, colonial history, and global power relations. The method is more interpretative rather than descriptive, seeking to provide groundwork on how the text from the story builds or expounds the meaning of loss, belonging, and identity as themes from the story.

Following Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic approach, the researcher first read the complete story repeatedly to become familiar with the narrative and its significant textual details. Relevant passages were then identified and grouped according to the three analytical dimensions of language, body, and kinship. The

researcher then examined the patterns appearing within and across these groups in order to determine how the different dimensions contribute to the construction of cultural dislocation. The three categories were not treated as completely separate from one another because linguistic rupture, bodily discomfort, and weakened familial relationships may work together in producing the child's sense of cultural distance. The analysis also considered textual moments that could complicate the interpretation of hybridity as dislocation. Passages that suggested cultural connection, adaptation, affection, or negotiation were not automatically excluded simply because they did not directly support the study's central argument. Instead, these moments were considered alongside instances of rupture and alienation to determine whether they qualified, complicated, or strengthened the interpretation of the narrative. This process was undertaken to avoid relying only on textual evidence that confirms the initial thesis.

Translation and Fidelity

In instances where Tagalog dialogue or expressions are used, the original language is retained when the wording itself is significant to the analysis. English translations are provided when necessary to make the discussion accessible to readers who may not be familiar with Tagalog. The translation process considers not only the literal meaning of the words but also their contextual meaning within the story. The translated expressions are compared with the original Tagalog wording to minimize changes in meaning and preserve the intended context of the dialogue. When a direct translation may remove a culturally significant meaning, the original expression is retained and its meaning is explained within the analysis.

Researcher Positionality and Limitations

The analysis of the text is conducted by a single researcher; hence, the interpretation is dependent on the researcher's reading of the story and engagement with the postcolonial framework. This does not mean that the interpretation presented in this study is the only possible reading of 'Munting Kayumangging Amerikano'. Rather, the interpretations are grounded in the textual evidence and are continuously related to the theoretical framework guiding the study. The researcher also acknowledges that familiarity with the Philippine linguistic and cultural context may influence the interpretation of language, kinship, and cultural practices presented in the story. Such familiarity provides contextual understanding but also requires reflexive awareness of possible assumptions brought into the reading of the text. Moreover, since the study focuses only on one literary text, the findings are not intended to be generalized to all Filipino migrant experiences or all representations of postcolonial hybridity. The single-text design instead allows the study to provide an in-depth interpretation of how cultural dislocation is represented within the particular narrative. The limitation in generalizability is therefore acknowledged while recognizing that the specificity of the text provides an opportunity to examine closely how language, body, memory, and kinship intersect in the representation of postcolonial identity.

Results and Discussion

Language Use: Linguistics Gaps and the Breakdown of Cultural Transmission

In this part of the paper, this dwells more on the child Dyun and Tandang Intin attempt to communicate with each other from all sections of the story, these selected language use exposes the profound breakdown of cultural transmission marked by linguistic gap.

Table 1. Linguistic Gaps and the Breakdown of Cultural Transmission in Landicho

Textual Evidence (Close Reading)	Interpretation (Thematic/Postcolonial)
<i>Tandang Intin: Hindi ba ito si Dyun?</i>	This initial question represents Tandang Intin's fundamental failed recognition. The question asked by Tandang Intin represents the misalignment of what a kin should look like and what he expected against what he saw to the child (Dyun). However, the challenge of recognising him is not anchored that the child had changed physically but because of perhaps demeanor, aura that the child is emitting. Conclusively, it is doubt that Tandang Intin is expresses from his question.
<i>Dyun: He's ma-grandpa?</i>	Dyun's response immediately introduces the linguistic barrier and the cultural gap in kinship terms. In the Philippines, kinship is recognised through localized versions of English honorifics such as, <i>Lolo</i> , <i>Tatay</i> , <i>Nanay</i> , <i>Kuya</i> , <i>Ate</i> . However, the use of the English word "grandpa" in this context introduces Tandang Intin to a culture foreign to him. Though it is a small lexicon in a bigger discourse, this was able to facilitate and interrupt the familial bond that Tandang Intin is trying to build with Dyun, and hence interrupts also cultural transmission.
<i>Tandang Intin: Ano ba'ng sinasabi niya?</i>	This highlights the grandfather's total lack of comprehension. The wanting of Tandang Intin into translating what Dyun said previously, signifies his will to connect with Dyun, but at the same time this also reminds Tandang Intin that communicative, linguistic barrier is sat upon them. Language in contrast to its purpose in discourse, becomes the core and source of distance and confusion.

(Agapito aided in translating what Dyun said to his father)	The necessity of Agapito's intervention underscores the parent as the translator and cultural mediator. Having a linguistic barrier established between the grandparent and the grandson marks a fall to their familial kinship, however, though broken, the connection between them lingers in a thin ice as this was aided by the parent of the child, Agapito. This intervention by Agapito only proves that any failed linguistics or cultural links demands external intervention to function.
Tandang Intin: Ako nga Dyun.	After Agapito's translation, Tandang Intin confirms his identity, but the exchange is dry and clinical, shadowing a feeling of forced recognition and emotional distance.
Dyun: Wha' you say?	Dyun's inability to comprehend Tandang Intin's simple Tagalog confirmation reinforces his linguistic alienation. Responding with "Wha' you say" to Tandang Intin's direct response reinforces and strengthens the linguistic barrier between them. Moreover, this also proves that the English language is his cushion language in dealing with any unfamiliar entities.
Tandang Intin: Baka sipunin ka, Dyun.	The grandfather's concern moves from identity to physical welfare (worrying about a cold) because Dyun is left unclothed. In the Philippines, this is a common phrase indicating care and kindness, aiding to strengthen connections. However, as it is followed by a complaint from Dyun, this agenda failed to land its purpose.
Dyun: It's too hot around.	This shift to the child's complaint (analysed under Bodily Discomfort) uses English as the expression of physical dislocation. In the Philippines, the climate follows a different temperature in comparison to other countries and by this reason is Dyun registering it as something alien and foreign, and by stating how uncomfortable Dyun is, his body then is recognised as being acclimatized to the environment and America, which basically means his body rejects the "homeland" that he is expected to live.
Tandang Intin: Ano ba'ng mainit?	The final question repeats the confusion. As assumptions cloud the Tandang Intin in understanding Dyun, he fails to recognise the source of the discomfort that the child is hearing. From this question, there's no recognizable shared reality between them, only proving how Dyun's hybridity is categorized as dislocation in comparison to Agapito.

Bodily Discomfort: The Body as a Site of Postcolonial Dislocation

The focus of this section is Dyun's body and how his body reacts to the native environment of his grandfather Tandang Intin, analysing the internal tension of the child Dyun's hybrid identity, signifying the body as foreign vessel to the Philippine environment.

Table 2. Bodily Rejection and Somatic Dislocation

Textual Evidence (Close Reading)	Interpretation (Thematic/Postcolonial)
Dyun: "It's too hot around," sabi ng bata. Tandang Intin: "Ano'ng sinasabi niya, Pitong?" tanong ni Tandang Intin kay Agapito. Agapito: "Mainit daw, Tatang." Tandang Intin: "Ano ba'ng mainit?"	The child registers the fundamental element of the environment in the Philippines, which is the heat, describing it as an intolerable condition, immediately expressing it in English ("It's too hot around"). However, the most bewildering part is the fact that Tandang Intin, being a native in the Philippines, failed to recognise the discomfort of Dyun. In the Philippines, heat is considered as a universal reality in the country as it enjoys the tropical weather. This failed recognition signifies a rupture in shared sensory reality between Dyun and Tandang Intin. From the complaint of Dyun, it considers the country's temperature as hostile towards his fragile body, which is accustomed to or reset by the temperate, resource-rich climate of America.
Agapito: "Sanay ho sa Amerika ang katawan niya, Tatang."	This line is the ultimate explanation and the core of the postcolonial analysis as the body is explicitly declared as conditioned by the colonizing power, which in this case is America. Furthermore, attaching the word "sanay" only states that there is an existence of the "other" one of which Dyun's body is situated in, rejecting the body's capability to adapt to the native weather condition. Instead of mind alone, the body of Dyun becomes a site of postcolonial dislocation, which exposes his foreignness to the land of his grandfather.
"Maghubad ng makapal na suot ang apo. Ngayoy nakahubad lamang si John."	The need to immediately shed "makapal na suot" (thick clothes) upon arrival is a non-verbal cue of the bodily mismatch. Symbolically, the thick clothing described represents the cultural layering, assuming as the clothing mentioned is a response to American style, American weather expectations. Accordingly, it must be forcibly removed to interact or to align with the new environment. However, this assumption has failed for even after removing the cloth, Dyun still feels alienated, not able to conveniently interact with the environment he's in, suggesting how the symbolic thick clothes are actually a foreign comfort that cannot be shed immediately.
"Ngunit iyon ay nakahulagpos sa kanyang pagkakapigil. Tumakbo ang bata sa kandungan ng kanyang manugang..."	When Tandang Intin attempts to touch Dyun's arm, the child "nakahulagpos" (slips away). From the passage, Dyun actively avoiding any form of intergenerational touch and physical kinship from his grandfather is what fuels the dislocation that this paper argues. This does not mean though that the child sees his grandfather as an enemy. The action of Dyun going to his mother, which is symbolically the link to the Philippine and mediator, only reveals that Dyun is seeking for a familiar kin, a shield that he can shelter on from his grandfather and the weird environment that he's in. In this case, a pure and raw resistance against being re-rooted is shown through his bodily movement of Dyun.

Intergenerational Encounters: Failed Recognitions and the Loss of Cultural Memory

This section analyses all the encounters of Tandang Intin and Dyun, but this focuses more on the failed attempts of cultural memory and how it has consequences on emotional distance.

Table 3. Intergenerational Encounters, Failed Recognition, and Loss of Cultural Memory

Textual Evidence (Close Reading)	Interpretation (Thematic/Postcolonial)
<i>Tandang Intin: "Hindi ba ito si Dyun?" Dyun: "He's ma-grandpa?" Tandang Intin: "Ano ba'ng sinasabi niya?"</i>	This opening exchange is the core moment of failed recognition. Tandang Intin's doubt ("Is this Dyun?") is immediately met by the child's use of the English term "Grandpa.". A familial term that casually connects cultural relationship is supposed to be the localization of honorifics which in this case should be "Tatay or Lolo". However, this is not the case when there is misalignment to the language use and the cultural kinship that is trying to be built such as the uttering of "grandpa". Moreover, the response of this question "Ano ba'ng sinasabi niya?" (What is he saying?), is a recognition that a barrier between the child and him is already established.
<i>Agapito: "Siya nga ho, Tatang," sabi ni Agapito. Bumaling iyon sa bata. "Kiss grandpa."</i>	Agapito's role as a translator and prompter is crucial, tethered with the fact that Agapito orders Dyun to kiss his grandfather- as Filipino custom demands, is a clear message of Dyun's alienation of Filipino culture and how forced the act of kissing is, making it self-conscious, mediated, and devoid of the spontaneous warmth Tandang Intin craves. In this context, the traditional and customary habit of respect and affection is not shown naturally but is instructed, translated, and imposed.
<i>"Atubiling nagkintal ng halik ang mga musmos na labi n'yon sa kanyang makukulot na pisngi."</i>	The phrase "Atubiling nagkintal ng halik" (hesitantly imprinted a kiss) captures the child's profound reluctance. In normal circumstance, kissing on the cheek is an act rooted in emotion, but in this case, the text narrates it in a manner that it was purely mechanical, meaning it does not mention warm feeling that cheek kissing does, but focuses more on how the lips are imprinted on the cheeks.
<i>Tandang Intin: "Hindi magkaintindihan ang maglolo." Ka Emeng: "Pa'o nama'y sa 'Merka ipinanganak at naglolo ta'o,' katwiran ng Isa."</i>	This narrative commentary explicitly states the consequence: "Hindi magkaintindihan ang maglolo" (The grandfather and grandson do not understand each other). The indictment stating that the child was "sa 'Merka ipinanganak at naglolo ta'o" (born and became human/developed his being in America), gives out a definite description that his personhood, him being conceived at a colonizing space, results in an error, making Dyun unable to access the cultural memory stored in his grandfather.
<i>"At Inamin ni Tandang Intin, sa matatag na anyo ng apo, hindi na niya matulay ang pagbabalik sa malabong mukha ng kamusmusang lyon."</i>	This concluding reflection is the ultimate moment of loss of cultural memory. The American-raised grandson, despite the Filipino texture he was born with, strucks Tandang Intin as a "matatag na anyo" (strong form). Meaning, he realizes that trying to experience the same experience he had with his son, Agapito seems impossible to a point that he no longer heeds the "traverse the return" (matulay ang pagbabalik) of Agapito as a child, only leaving the strong, new identity of Dyun. It is signalled by this narration that what only remains is the final, devastating defeat of cultural continuity, that history is lost; only the present reality of the alienated, hybrid grandson remains.

From the analyses provided by this paper, a coherent pattern of hybridity can be solicited from Domingo Landicho's short story, "Munting Kayumangging Amerikano." To be specific, hybridity in this case does not only function as a productive space of negotiation but as a lived condition of dislocation. The story of Domingo Landicho reveals hybridity as something that does not celebrate ambivalence, resistance, and cultural creativity as compared to what Homi K. Bhabha's postcolonial theory posits.

Rather than treating language loss, bodily rejection, and failed kinship as three separate confirmations of the same thesis, looking closely at the text reveals that these three thematic clusters operate as an integrated, causally reinforcing cycle. Each cluster does not merely exist alongside the others; rather, one actively triggers and deepens the next, creating a loop of postcolonial alienation that prevents cultural continuity.

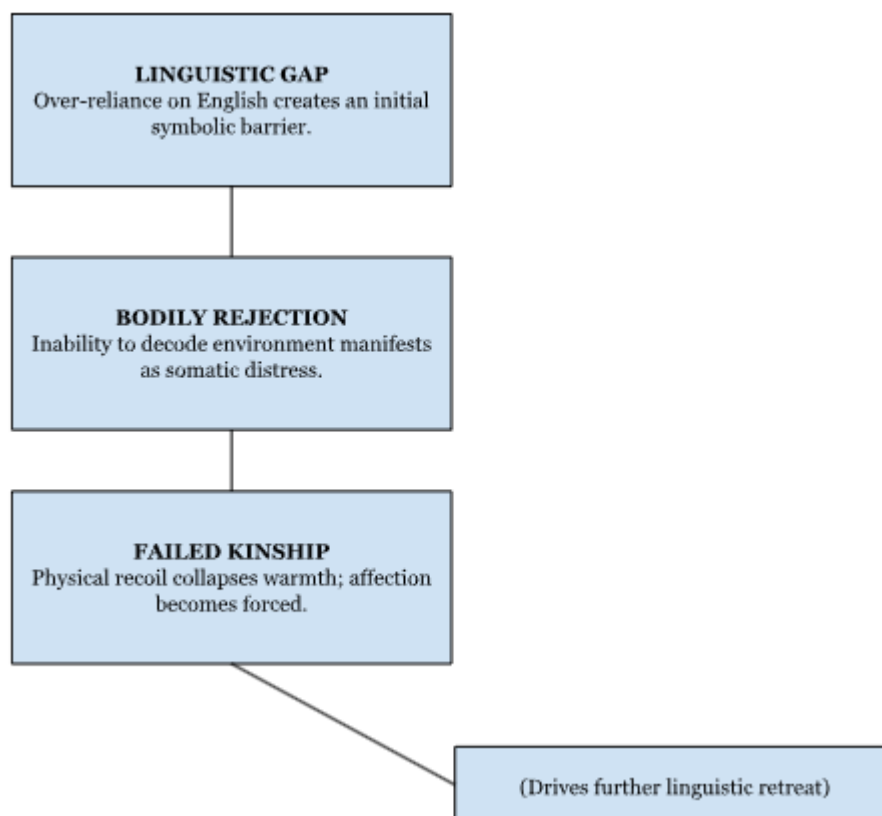


Figure 1. An Integrated Model of Postcolonial Dislocation

Across all three thematic clusters that are illustrated in Figure 1, hybridity emerges not as synthesis but as a blockage of cultural passing. Focusing on the linguistic aspect and how the child, Dyun, over-relies on the use of English reveals that language in this context does not seem to fulfill the role of a cultural vessel and mediator. This is further strengthened by Dyun's inability to understand the native language of both his grandfather and father. Furthermore, language also becomes a source of rupture, for it prevents kinship from naturally occurring between the grandfather and grandson, Dyun. What continues the communication between them is the urgency of the father, Agapito, to translate what Dyun says to his grandfather. All of these go against what language should traditionally function as: a repository of memory and belonging.

Similarly, the child's bodily discomfort reveals how hybridity is inscribed beyond consciousness and into the corporeal. To achieve cultural belonging, it is shown by the story that cultural belonging is not only learned but also embodied. Dyun's body continuously rejects the native temperature, recognising it as hostile rather than familiar. By this sense, the body of Dyun becomes an indicator of displacement rather than continuity. This observation further supports that alienation and cultural distancing are results of hybridity produced within an asymmetrical power structure.

Intergenerational encounters further cement this argument by dramatising the failure of cultural memory. At the later part of the story, Tandang Intin, the grandfather of Dyun, becomes sentimental as he realizes within himself that he could no longer "retrieve" Agapito in Dyun. The linguistic and cultural inheritance that should bind the generational gap between Tandang Intin and Dyun was unable to carry out its purpose and hence signals a void in their kinship. As observed, gestures considered as warmth-giving are not naturally practised in the story, for the kiss given to Tandang Intin by Dyun feels imposed and forced because it only happens through Agapito's instruction. From this act, it is solicited here that hybridity is shown not as a form of connection but as emotional distance.

Viewed collectively, these findings confirm the study's critique of celebratory accounts of hybridity. Looking closely at the story, what is shown is the lasting and lingering effect of colonial histories and labour migration, rather than the imagined resistance and destabilisation of colonial power. Hence, from the profile of Dyun, it is shown that migration, tethered with a hybrid identity, does not only cut geographic ties but also ties to cultural memory, sensory familiarity, and kinship in general. In this context, histories of empire and global inequality contribute to defining hybridity as non-neutral, and by this definition, they place the

migrant subject in a difficult position between the culture of origin and the culture in which he has been socialised.

Ethical Considerations

Since the study uses a published literary text as its primary source and does not involve human participants, no personal data were collected from respondents. The study observes academic integrity by properly acknowledging Domingo Landicho as the author of the primary text and accurately citing the secondary sources used in developing the theoretical and analytical framework. Interpretations are distinguished from the author's original text, and textual passages are presented in accordance with appropriate academic citation practices.

Conclusion

From the previous sections, this paper has argued that hybridity does not necessarily celebrate reconciliation but can also result in dislocation. In the story, "Munting Kayumangging Amerikano," this form of dislocation is embodied by the character Jhon "Dyun." His cultural identity is shaped by the intersection of Filipino racial heritage and American cultural socialisation, forming a hybrid subject whose external markers of "Filipinoness" cannot compensate for his internal distance from Filipino cultural memory. By examining language use, bodily discomfort, and intergenerational encounters, the analysis reveals how Dyun embodies the breakdown of cultural inheritance within a migrant Filipino family. Rather than functioning as a straightforward bridge between generations, language becomes limited by Dyun's dependence on English and his inability to communicate directly with his grandfather. His bodily discomfort further positions him as distant from the Philippine environment, while his encounters with Tandang Intin demonstrate how migration and colonial conditioning can fracture the transmission of cultural memory. Taken together, these elements show that hybridity in the story is experienced not simply as cultural negotiation but as a condition shaped by distance, unfamiliarity, and interrupted inheritance. Positioned within postcolonial theory, these reading challenges celebratory interpretations of hybridity associated with Bhabha's "Third Space." Reading closely into the story, it can be deduced that while hybridity may at some point destabilise a colonising power, the lived experience of the characters, particularly Dyun and Tandang Intin, demonstrates that hybridity can also be experienced through language, touch, memory, and absence. In this particular text, these elements do not produce a harmonious cultural space but instead reveal the difficulty of sustaining cultural continuity across generations. Ultimately, "Munting Kayumangging Amerikano" presents a critical view of migration and hybridity as unambiguous progress. Through Dyun, the story foregrounds the possibility that migration may produce forms of cultural distance that extend beyond geographic separation and into language, memory, bodily familiarity, and kinship. The story's perspective may also be read in relation to Landicho's position as a Tagalog writer, particularly in the way the narrative attends to Filipino cultural memory and the experience of cultural dislocation. However, rather than treating the author's identity as representative of Filipino migrant experiences generally, it is more appropriate to regard it as part of the textual context through which this particular representation of postcolonial dislocation is constructed. Thus, within the limits of this single-text analysis, the story reimagines hybridity not as a celebratory resolution but as a possible site of rupture.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this paper, several recommendations can be provided for future studies. First, comparative studies may be conducted using other Philippine literary texts written in different regional languages. Looking into other texts from different regional contexts may provide further understanding of how hybridity, migration, and cultural dislocation are represented in Philippine literature. This is especially important since the present paper only focuses on one short story by Domingo Landicho. Second, future studies may also focus on the transmission of heritage language within migrant Filipino families. As shown in the story, language becomes one of the factors that affects the connection between Dyun and his grandfather and, at the same time, affects the passing of cultural memory between generations. Looking into actual migrant families may therefore provide further understanding of how the use or loss of a heritage language contributes to the maintenance of cultural identity and kinship. Lastly, future postcolonial close-reading studies may consider translation-sensitive methodologies when dealing with literary texts that contain regional languages, culturally specific expressions, or translated dialogue. Paying attention to the original language of the text may help researchers identify meanings that can possibly be changed, reduced, or lost through translation. By doing so, future studies may provide a more careful understanding of how language, culture, and hybridity are constructed and represented within postcolonial literary texts.

References

- Adams, R. H., Jr., & Page, J. (2005). Do international migration and remittances reduce poverty in developing countries? *World Development*, 33(10), 1645–1669. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2005.05.004>
- Anithalakshmi, K. H. (2022). Postcolonial literature: Voices of resistance and identity. *Journal of Advances and Scholarly Researches in Allied Education*, 19(6), 614–619. <https://ignited.in/index.php/jasrae/article/view/14233/28270>
- Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *The location of culture*. Routledge.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp0630a>
- Dirlik, A. (1994). The postcolonial aura: Third World criticism in the age of global capitalism. *Critical Inquiry*, 20(2), 328–356. <https://doi.org/10.1086/448714>
- Fanon, F. (2008). *Black skin, white masks* (R. Philcox, Trans.). Grove Press. (Original work published 1952)
- International Organization for Migration. (2024). *World migration report 2024* (Interactive edition). <https://worldmigrationreport.iom.int/msite/wmr-2024-interactive/>
- Mukherjee, D. (2025). Postcolonial narratives and identity formation in contemporary literature. *International Journal of Social Impact*, 10(3), 139–148. <https://doi.org/10.25215/2455/1003019>
- Nayar, P. K. (2015). *The postcolonial studies dictionary*. Wiley-Blackwell. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119118589>
- Papastergiadis, N. (1997). Tracing hybridity in theory. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 14(1), 257–281. <https://doi.org/10.1177/026327697014001013>
- Parry, B. (2004). *Postcolonial studies: A materialist critique*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203420539>
- Philippine Statistics Authority. (2024, September 13). *2023 Overseas Filipino Workers* (Final results). <https://psa.gov.ph/statistics/survey/labor-and-employment/survey-overseas-filipinos/node/1684065069>
- Quito, E. S. (Ed.). (1993). *Pilosopiyang Pilipino*. In *Ensayklopidya ng Pilosopiya*. De La Salle University Press.
- San Juan, E., Jr. (2011). Contemporary global capitalism and the challenge of the Filipino diaspora. *Global Society*, 25(1), 7–27. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13600826.2010.522983>
- Taylor, P. (1991). *The narrative of liberation: Perspectives on Afro-Caribbean literature, popular culture and politics*. Cornell University Press.
- Voicu, C.-G. (2009). The paradigm of cultural hybridity in the postcolonial discourse. *Philologia*, 7(1), 1–10. <https://philologia.org.rs/index.php/ph/en/article/view/235>
- Walton, M. (2023). Understanding postcolonial theory. In *Literary Studies @ SLCC*. Salt Lake Community College. <https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/literarystudiesatslcc/chapter/understanding-postcolonial-theory>