

Anthropology Colloquia

Fall 2013

**Vicente Rafael, Professor of History
University of Washington**

*The Wars of Translation: American English,
Colonial Education and Tagalog Slang, 1920s-1970s*

Designed as a form of counterinsurgency, American colonial education was meant to "pacify" an insurgent population in the midst of a protracted war. Key to this pacification program was the use of American English as the medium of instruction. Learning English entailed suppressing vernacular languages. It turned the colonial classroom into a site linguistic struggle, or wars of translation. Continuing through the post-colonial period, Filipino nationalists called attention to the colonizing role of English. Not surprisingly, this nationalist critique has rested on the same colonial assumptions about language and translation: that both were mere instruments for the transfer of meanings and intentions. At the same time, popular non-colonial and non-nationalist practices of translation have emerged underneath these colonial and nationalist notions. Such practices, seen in vernacular slang formed from the remains of creole Spanish, provide alternative ways for understanding the role of translation in democratizing social expression in a post-colonial context.

Vicente L. Rafael is Professor of History and Southeast Asian Studies at the Univ. of Washington in Seattle. He is the author of several works on the political and cultural history of the colonial Philippines, including *Contracting Colonialism* (1993), *White Love and Other Events in Filipino History* (2000) and *The Promise of the Foreign* (2005).



Monday,
November 18
3:30-5:00 pm
Room 261,
Social Sciences 1

For more information please email aramage@ucsc.edu