

Background

While attending college in Hawai'i, I learned about a genre of literature from the region of the world that I am from, yet had never encountered: Pacific literature. Because I found the literature to be relatable and interesting, one could imagine my excitement of the literature, of wanting to read and learn as much as I could about it. It was like re-connecting with a part of myself that had been missing for so long.

When I returned to my home island of Guam, I was a very strong advocate for Pacific literature and made it one of my missions to incorporate the genre in the courses that I taught (both at the secondary and post-secondary levels), mainly because there were no courses at the secondary level which focused on the genre and, at the post-secondary level, there were also no Pacific literature courses offered at the Guam Community College, though there were a few courses offered at the University of Guam. The words of Pacific scholar Vilsoni Hereniko (2000) were also a driving force behind the work I did (and still do) as an educator and as an advocate for Pacific writing and publishing on Guam: "Micronesia is a late-comer to the literary scene. The absence of any major novelists, playwrights or poets up to now has often been claimed to be the result of an educational system that did not emphasise creativity" (p. 27). As an educator and a writer from Micronesia, I want my students to make connections with what they are learning in my class, to see the value in their own stories and experiences, and to write and publish those said stories and experiences.

In addition to incorporating academic and creative literature from the Pacific into my classroom curricula, I have also shown Pacific films (for example, Vilsoni Hereniko's *The Land Has Eyes*, Niki Caro's film adaptation of Witi Ihimaera's *Whale Rider*, and Marc Forby's *Princess Kai'ulani*). I opt to show Pacific films so that my students can gain other vantage points of the region. Guam is very Americanized, to the point where many of its people know more about the United States than about the Pacific peoples and cultures. Films such as the ones previously mentioned help me as an educator, as a Pacific educator, to show my students what other parts of the Pacific are like.

This is where Dr. Lola Quan Bautista's *Breadfruit and Open Spaces* comes in. In 2013, I watched a screening of the film at the Guam Community College, and after watching it, I knew I had to purchase a copy. *Breadfruit and Open Spaces* touches on the struggles of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) migrants, who reside in the Gill-Baza Subdivision in Yigo, Guam. The documentary shows how the migrants deal with and even overcome their struggles. For my students, however, the film does more than demonstrate what the FSM community in the Gill-Baza Subdivision is facing in terms of sewage issues; it also highlights their cultural practices and beliefs. Perhaps one of the most beautiful things that I have witnessed the film do is assist our community on Guam with trying to remove our racist lenses and have real, albeit difficult, discussions about the racism that exists on Guam, particularly between Chamorus and the FSM migrants.

Educator's Bio

Kisha Borja-Quichocho is an instructor at the University of Guam. She has published work in *Storyboard 10*, *The Space Between*, *The Offending Adam*, *The Indigenous World 2011*, *The Indigenous World 2012*, *Storyboard 15*, the first Micronesian Anthology (forthcoming), the *Micronesian Educator* (forthcoming), and Ala Press's *Home(is)lands* (forthcoming). Her research, writing, and creative interests focus on and are inspired by the Chamoru culture and identity. Kisha is also an actress on *Nihi!*, a children's television show on Guam which promotes the Chamoru language and culture. Kisha loves singing, dancing, and laughing with her daughter Lina'la`, writing poetry, and participating in meaningful projects and work.

The lesson that I created is based on *Breadfruit and Open Spaces*.

Teaching Procedures

1. Prior to watching *Breadfruit and Open Spaces*, I provide background information on the director and producer of the documentary, Dr. Lola Quan Bautista as well as the location of the film.
2. We watch *Breadfruit and Open Spaces*.
3. After watching the documentary, students engage in small-group discussions, addressing the following questions:
 - What did you learn through the film (about the FSM community, particularly the migrant Chuukese community on Guam)?
 - Were you familiar with the struggles that were identified in the documentary?
 - What racist notions/ideas exist on Guam about our sisters and brothers from the FSM?
 - Why do you think ethnic tensions exist on Guam?
 - How can we remove our racist lenses on Guam?
 - How do you think the film can be used to educate others on Guam?
4. Following the small-group discussions, the students then have a whole-class discussion, sharing their responses from the small-group discussions.
5. After the discussions, I go over how to write a tanka poem, which is a poem that consists of five lines, each line containing a certain number of syllables, the sequence of which is: 5 / 7 / 5 / 7 / 7
(*Note: I have my students write tanka poems to challenge them to be creative and to be deliberate with their word choice.)
6. Students are then asked to write their own tanka poems based on the theme(s)/issue(s) brought up in *Breadfruit and Open Spaces*. They are given 7-10 minutes to create their poems.
7. Students are asked to share their tanka poems. After each student shares her/his tanka poem, everyone in the class snaps their fingers (instead of clapping; snapping is a sign of support in the slam poetry scene, but I have adopted the practice and have encouraged my students to engage in it whenever supporting their fellow peers).
8. As a supplemental assignment, students are assigned to write reaction papers to *Breadfruit and Open Spaces* for homework.

References

- Bautista, L. Q. (Director). (2013). *Breadfruit and open spaces* [documentary].
- Hereniko, V. (2000). Mapping the territory: Emerging writers in the Pacific. *Conversations* 1(2), 26-34.

Examples of Student Tanka Poems

Examples of student tanka poems (reflect film's themes and issues):

The people struggle
Yet they still have each other
Family will stay
Promised brother and sister
Means that we are forever

Tristan Santos

Ew! Look at her skirt
Why would she wear that on Guam?
She wears it as respect
She uses it for comfort
She wears it for her culture.

Leah Castro

You're a strong woman
Despite the stereotypes
Her modest skato
Supervising, she is queen
Family is all she needs.

Jenesse Cepeda

We don't realize
What is happening on Guam
With Micronesians
Based on how they are living
And also how they're treated

Allan Santos

We are all human
We need to be sensitive
Some are different
Treat them with respect as well
As you want to be treated

Regina Manuntag

The people on Guam
Tend to judge Micronesians
By their appearance
But should study their culture
To better understand them.

Abigail Cabanting

Farming food feeds all
All meeting up at one place
The outside kitchen
Living harmoniously
Breadfruit and open spaces.

Franklin Dueñas

Take care of the Land
Promised brother, Mwanichi
The land will provide
Promised sister, Finichi
You are its Voice, its Keeper

Edward Biacan

Engraved in their hearts
Memories of their past time
Where land is their soul
And sweat is their evidence
Nothing will hinder their truth.

Dermang Ngiralmuut

Our people and theirs
Sharing an island as one
Is what we should do
Growing, learning, changing with
Breadfruit and open spaces.

Mary Tenorio
