

***Rolling the R's* by R. Zamora Linmark**

REFLECTION PAPER

Write a 2- to 4-page reflection paper (typed, double-spaced, with 1" margins) answering one of the following questions. Remember to provide sufficient textual evidence — properly cited with page numbers — to support your claims. Be prepared to share your responses at our next class meeting.

1. For the kids and other inhabitants of Kalihi Valley, religion and other spiritual icons and symbols take on more of a secular, nontraditional significance in their everyday lives. For instance, Edgar proclaims his reasons for attending catechism class are anything but holy:

Cuz Mr. Lee, my catechism teacher, is one hot fox, that's why. And after every class, he take us Rollerworld, Farrell's, and to the movies. And we no gotta pay anythin' cuz he overly rich plus he get one nice car. (9)

Explore the role that religion plays in these characters' lives and throughout the novel. First, determine what message(s) the author is trying to portray about religion — Roman Catholicism, in particular. Then choose one or two of the characters or situations that speak to these portrayals, and discuss what you think religion means to these characters or in these situations, using specific examples from the text to support your claims.

2. The issue of identity denial comes up in the chapter, "The Two Filipinos," when Nelson Ariola openly dismisses his Filipino heritage and tells Mrs. Takemoto, "I'm sick and tired of being called a Filipino...I'm not like them...I don't want to be called a dogeater or a gardener for the rest of my life" (68). Yet Nelson is not the only one dealing with such an identity crisis, as other characters are coming to grips with their own identities as sexual beings or even as American citizens, for instance. Choose one or two of the characters and discuss how these characters are embracing and/or denying their identities. First, explain exactly what these identities are. Then consider the circumstances that have led them to the "crisis" at hand and the ways these characters cope with or even solve their problems.
3. One of the most popular images of Hawaii (especially in travel brochures) is that of the idyllic, beautiful sunset by the beach as waves crash nearby a seaside hotel, the area dotted by perfectly formed palm trees. Consider the different ways this novel subverts this idealistic portrait of Hawaii. What did Linmark intend to do in this portrayal of Honolulu? What was his message?