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SEXUALISED CITIZENSHIP
IN PRINT CULTURE:
an ethnography of
Filipinos in Australia

Shirlita Africa ESPINOSA
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
The University of Sydney

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degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Sydney

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Statement of Original Authorship

I certify that this thesis submitted to the University of Sydney for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy is my original work and contains no material previously published by another person. It contains no material submitted for the award of a degree or diploma in any university. Contributions made to the thesis by others are explicitly acknowledged. The interviews done for this thesis were obtained with the approval of the Human Research Ethics Committee of the university.

Shirlita Africa Espinosa
5 September 2012

Abstract

This study is an ethnography of Filipino migrants in Australia that specifically traces the growth of their print material culture and examines the relationship between their production and the sexualisation of the community due to hyperfeminised migration. I interrogate the forms by which Filipino-Australians write their responses to their racialised and gendered marginalisation in the last 35 years. Some of these forms are the ethnic newspapers' imagining *and* construction of the 'Blacktown Filipino', women's anthologies that implicate the usability of the 'mail-order bride' subjectivity, fictional works which problematise the role and reveal the complicity of ethnic gatekeepers, elderly people's narratives that disclose a 'hidden' migration, and solidarity and activist newsletters' uniqueness of function in forging the emergence of a recognisable 'minority' group. The readings of these collective formations intersect with race, class, gender, ideological and other intra-Philippine social contradictions which constructed and continue to influence Filipino-Australian reactions to the multicultural politics practised in the host country. Through its print material culture, the community makes sense of its migration and the painful realities by which the birthing of a selfhood is forged. As a collective production, these writings are a kind of remittance sent to the old country, a sign of the 'unfinishedness' that characterise migrations. I also argue that the forum of culture by which print material culture as resistance to sexualisation is played out is concomitant with the conservatism that undergirds the success of a 'multicultural' nation. Within multiculturalism, the political is culturalised, resulting in the dilution of meaningful migrant formations. Because the 'Filipino woman' in Australia is a symptom of the global feminisation of women's labour in a profit-driven economy, how the community responds to their minoritisation is crucial to their survival in the years to come.

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In an essay I wrote for Ford International Fellowship, I had my usual convoluted way of *not* answering my own question but in the end, I described this journey as a promise of happiness—of a promissory time where desires will be fulfilled—yet it is also a painful encounter with my own incompleteness, the unfinishedness of my own life. At the end of this journey, of which this piece of materiality is a trace, it is time to give thanks to those whose support and belief in what I can do sustained me. With them and through them, I face this 'unfinishedness' which, after all, confronts us all.

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Shirfita

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Sexualised citizenship in print culture: An ethnography of Filipinos in Australia

Introduction

Not very long ago, in 1995, in the Sunday magazine *Good Weekend* widely circulated in Australia as a supplement to the Saturday editions of *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age*, Filipino women were categorically described as 'disposable wives' (Barrowclough 1995, 48). The cover illustrates a balding, heavy-set Caucasian man slouching, apparently watching television, reaching for a 'drink'. Right next to the couch is a six-pack, not of beer, but of tiny brides in their white wedding gowns. The article features the fate of women who ended up as quadriplegic, dead, missing, abandoned, beaten up, among other forms of tragic end. Around the same period, in *The Filipino Herald*, a Sydney-based tabloid, was a front-page article 'talking back' to the Australian-produced magazine: 'The over emphasis given to breakdown of marriage between a Filipino wife and an Australian husband gave way to a stereotype perception that such relationship is creating a 'social problem' in Australia (Perdon 1995a, 1). In the same issue was an announcement promoting the play 'Inday: Mail-order Bride' staged in Darwin, Northern Territory and another article on 'Successful Filipino Australian marriages' (Perdon 1995b, 13). These are clear attempts of the community to create a dialogue, to counter the racist and sexist representations, to have a say at all. However, in the same issue was a page promoting 'Mrs. Philippine-Australia Beauty Pageant '95'. A collage of photos of married women vying for the title displays their petite, foreign bodies; one of them would win the infamous title for which they were being crucified, a paradox seemingly missed by everyone involved.

The example above gives a clear depiction of two phenomena: first, the gendered migration and the racialised, feminised and colonialist relations that describe Filipino migration in Australia; and second, the emergent print culture of a community in making an effort to respond to the challenges of its marginality, with the tensions and contradictions that come with the demands of migration. If Filipino-Australian print cultural production has been unusually more gendered than, say, Vietnamese-Australian, it is for a reason. The contemporary dispersion of Philippine-born nationals either as temporary labour migrants in Europe, the Middle-east and East Asia or as permanent residents in the United States, Japan, Canada and Australia is very much characterised by a feminisation of labour where women migrate as nurses, maids, carers, entertainers, prostitutes and wives. Because of the feminisation of poverty in the Philippines, a result of the Marcos policy to send Filipinos overseas, many Filipino women move to first-world destinations by marriage or other forms of cohabitation with the white male. The gendered migration to Australia, however, attracted attention to Filipino women specifically for 70 per cent of them are married to 'long-time' and other overseas-born Australians as of 1998 (Australia Bureau of Statistics 2006).¹ The stream of women taking chances by writing letters to foreign men or by publishing personal information in catalogues and newspapers that started in the 1970s continues until today. The hyperfeminised migration gained notoriety with the spate of domestic abuse and murders which the Centre for Philippines Concerns-Australia (CPCA) count at 44 Filipino women and children victimised since 1980 and on which the *Good Weekend* article focused (CPCA Brisbane 2011).

¹ A shocking figure the media uses to terrorise its public but not quite as staggering if compared with immigrant women from (white) The Netherlands, Germany and New Zealand based on the same report.

The sexualised migration of Philippine-born women to Australia does not simply reflect the situation of the Philippines economically and its position as a postcolonial, peripheral nation in global geopolitics. It also reveals some specificities about the Australian history of immigration and its colonialist and racist past. One of such is the high rate of intermarriage between Filipino women and white Australian males from non-English speaking backgrounds who themselves occupy the lower rungs in the hierarchy of Australianness. In Chapter 4, where I discuss an anthology of Filipino women achievers, the presence of women married to Italian, eastern European and Greek men is noticeable. What this reveals is the racialisation of non-Anglo Australians, their subsequent stratification as working class, and the traffic of 'brides' as an effect of a kind of emasculation by the dominant Anglo culture. The economic and racial capital involved in participating in the exchange of bodies transnationally is, to a degree, available to these men, derogatorily called 'wogs' in Australia. This relative position of privilege in the racial hierarchy, however, does not extend to black 'Australians'. When a 'mail-order bride' marries an 'Australian', it almost always is a racial claim, an entitlement available to white people. Indeed, in my three-year stay in the country, I have not made the acquaintance of a Filipino married to a 'black' Australian. The 'intervention' of the 'mail-order bride' here indicates the continued disenfranchisement of Aboriginal Australians as a class, economically and politically, that bars them from the first-world exercise of buying wives. While I do not suggest that 'black' Australians would necessarily follow the privileges of a moneyed white man, this difference does point out the unevenness of power of what stands as 'black' or 'white'. On the other hand, Filipino women's response to 'blackness' might yield a different trajectory as well; the fetishism for whiteness and *mestizness* is a legacy of Philippine colonial history.

Most scholarly works that elaborate on Filipino-Australian migration do stress its gender aspect but place it in relation to the question of multiculturalism. In a way, my work follows these strong currents in the discourse; however, in a rather unusual and audacious turn, I veer away from the common treatment of the topic. I do not focus on the victimisation of the Filipino woman, the vilification of the white man or the valorisation of the community in saving itself from the 'shameful' 'mail-order bride' reputation. While the use of theories on race, sex and coloniality lends itself easily to making sense of Filipino-Australian migration vis-à-vis multiculturalism, I use the same theories to claim that the Filipino exists *outside* the fantasy of a successful multicultural Australia. I argue, using print culture as the basis, that the Filipino is the collective exception by which Australia defines its patriarchal and heterosexual multicultural nation. Although patriarchy and sexuality are necessarily racial—an 'intersectionality' that signals the operations and the failures of a culturally pluralist nation—the Filipino woman is Australia's sexual other (Crenshaw 1991). The otherness is expressed by different sectors of the community, in different forms of print culture, and by the dynamic exchanges of the community and Australia.

Locating Filipino-Australian scholarship

The contribution of this study to the larger scholarship on migration and cross-cultural studies rests on its uniqueness of focus to take on research on Filipino-Australian migration, an under-researched field, but in particular to channel attention to sectors of the community such as the elderly and the activists. Furthermore, I raise questions about the politics of being 'Filipino', being a woman, being working class,

being old, being 'ethnic' and being 'Australian' in Australia. The readings I render are, I believe, provocative as they unsettle common perceptions of the immigrant and avoid a simplistically valorising approach to the subjectivity of the struggling Filipino-Australian. By choosing to work on newspapers, literature and other print production, I bring to fore the very existence of materials that, ironically perhaps, most Filipino-Australians hardly know about. Anthologies that had been meticulously put together but circulated poorly, newsletters of social importance that were produced in some states but remained unread in other states, or maybe even novels that are a compelling read but too expensive for Filipinos, are examples of migrant efforts to write a history that are not widely shared, or are, to put it bluntly, cultural throwaways. This work undertakes to salvage some works from oblivion and contextualise their materiality to the broader narrative of Filipino-Australianness. I tried to show how migration for most Filipinos is *property ownership* while their print culture is an *exhibition of that ownership*; a formulation I borrowed from James Clifford's (1985) abstraction of the Western subject's constitution as material-centred producer.

In the beginning of the research, my expectations were about gathering the official background on the production and consumption of these works from the people involved. But taking on the challenge meant exposure to 'lesser' known narratives (and real-life practices and events) such as unpaid domestic labour among the elderly, the racial relations among comrades involved in solidarity, the old antagonism between 'native' and *mestizos* from the Philippines and other themes. There are indefinite possibilities to further study the Filipino community in Australia; hopefully this thesis offers a distinct ethnography that will contribute to the

growing, but still generally under-researched, scholarship on Philippine-born Australians.

This study is conscious of its departures from the main corpus of scholarly works that attempt to describe the characteristics of Filipinos in Australia. Indeed, there was an effort on my part to veer away from the 'mail-order bride' because of what I perceived as a saturation of the topic that has been scrutinised from the right, the left and the centre. However, the spectre of the 'mail-order bride' haunts the community's literature, and I venture to say that every facet of its migrant life is traceable to her spectre. The early appearances of the 'mail-order bride' as an academic topic—mainstream media had corralled the issue early on—were by Whitta (1988), Cooke (1987), and Boer (1988). All three works tackle the emerging human trafficking of women through the bride trade conducted by agencies and the subsequent murder cases diagnosed as a result of the cultural clashes in an interracial marriage. These works, particularly Boer's (1988), emphasised the Philippines' extreme poverty and foregrounded the discussion of migration to Australia with the problem of prostituted women. These writings frame the Filipino woman as victim of 'society', without agency, but uncritically situate the female migrant in a 'vampiristic' relationship with no regard to the global division of sexual labour.

The 'mail-order bride' as an academic inquiry continued well into the following decades as illustrated by the works of David (1991), De la Croix (1996), Enkelmann (1997) Roces (1996) and Coulbourn (2002). Two works gave specific attention to the question of filmic and broadcast media representation and its

accountability in relation to gendered violence suffered by the migrant women: Marshall's (1997) effective critique of *The Adventures of Priscilla: Queen of the Desert* (1994) for its condemnable portrayal of the Filipino woman and his astute reading of a TV-movie *Mail Order Bride* (1987), and Saroca's (2002) informed feminist critique of news on Filipino women and their moral accountability to the victims of masculine chauvinism and racism. On the other hand, there are scholarly works that have risen above the question of oppression towards the agentic and radical potential of these women migrants. Bursian (2005) investigated Philippine-born women, amongst other ethnic groupings, and their uses of the Australian welfare state and its public infrastructures to facilitate their newfound lives; while Coulbourn interrogated the new 'bicultural' identity of Filipino women claiming how 'they are now more Australian than Filipino' (2002, 180). Tibe-Bonifacio (2004, 2009) similarly surveyed women from the community and the extent and depth to which they use their Australian citizenship in their everyday encounters as 'lived activism' with the white Australian world. Das (1997) looked at the women in relation to issues of health and empowerment while Clark (2004) looked at their resistance in the state of Tasmania, Gee (2002) wrote of the serviceability of language to the women of Greater Bendigo, and lastly, Chan (2001) studied the ways by which 'Filipinas dance their way to acceptance'. I have yet to find a study on Filipino men in Australia.

As the pathologised representation of the 'mail-order bride' subsided in recent years, so did the academic output on the topic. The Filipino-Australian community has been studied from many different angles lately, such as: Lazzarini's (2009) look at migrants' practice of 'intergeneration financial transfers', a term used to separate what children send to their parents overseas from the aggregate

remittances; De la Cerna's (2007) work on child rearing practices; Nical's (2000) language usage and attitudes among migrants; David's (1995) description of Filipino-Australian families; Plows (2000), Cayetano-Penman (2000), and Das (1997), all wrote on certain aspects of the community's health and well-being. Furthermore, there are scholarly works that target a certain geographical area's ethnographic features, most of which centre on the growth of the community in a state or territory (Jabinal 2007; Clark 2004; Gee 2002; Chan 2001; Roces 1996; Channell 1986; Holmes 1988; Soliven 1998).

While my work is locatable amidst these scholarly efforts to explain the Filipino community as migrants, I found only two works that tackle print culture: first, Capili's (2009) study of the literary writings by Filipinos as Southeast Asians, and second, Lee's (1999) study on the perception by a focus-group of *The Philippines Times*, a newspaper based in Victoria. Although my research straddles the in-between space that connects the two theses' shared preoccupation with print culture, my work departs from theirs because I anchor my study of migrant cultural production in the broader processes in the making of a migrant community. On the other side of the world, Vergara (2009) analysed the *Philippine News*, the most prominent of Filipino newspapers in the United States, while Bonus looked at Filipino-American press in general as 'alternative spaces' where migrants are 'agents in the remembering, reconstruction, and representation of their collective identities' (2000, 130).

The structure of the thesis

Through a study of Filipino-Australian print culture, this thesis explores the many facets, intricacies and tensions of the migrant lives of Filipinos in Australia. It is foremost a description of the segments of the community that comprise a complex network of relationships as they struggle to find their footing as a minority group in multicultural Australia. It is, in other words, an ethnography of Filipino-Australians (for some, it is 'Australian-Filipinos'), in particular, of some of the recognisable sub-groupings in the community: 'Blacktown Filipinos', journalists and publishers, writers, editors and other gatekeepers, the 'mail-order bride', Spanish-Filipino *mestizos*, the elderly and last, the activists. As I will explain in Chapter 1, writing this migrant ethnography from the inside-outside position of a fellow Filipino but not a migrant, informs the very core of this research project where my subjectivity shapes the way I 'perform' ethnography. I approached this ethnographic project from the area of migrant print culture where actors, participants, producers and consumers all converge in defining the community not as a homogenous group practicing one identity but rather as contending forces that show the strains that partition the group. I argue and show in the chapters that follow that print culture produced in (permanent) diaspora is a minefield of sources that reveal the immediate past of this fledgling community where history is made through cultural productions but at the same time print culture itself is writing that history. The chapters hope to demonstrate that Filipino writings are the responses of the community as Australia's sexual other that expose culture more as routes rather than simply as roots of their belonging.

Looking at the print culture of Filipino-Australians within the context of multiculturalism, it is compelling to see how representations of coloniality and the coloniality of representations define feminised migration from the Philippines vis-à-vis Australia's racist past. Although Australia does not have deep political and cultural relations with its Southeast Asian neighbour like the imperial United States, its status as a Western nation and as an economic giant in the Asia Pacific region along with the weakened position of the Philippines in the age of neoliberalism dictates the colonial and sexualised interpretation of Philippine migration. I show in this study how this uneven relationship is inscribed not only in the representations of each other but is carved in the very materiality of the community's responses in print. The existence of ethnic publications, newsletters, anthologies, newspapers, even the development of a certain literary 'genre' I hesitantly call the 'mail-order bride', points to the cultivation of resistance literature but also of a complicitous print culture as the community's answer to the challenges of being kept peripheral. What sits at the heart of all this is the spectre of the 'mail-order bride' to which the community's print culture, its political leanings, its (in)visibility in the larger society, and the very economy of sexualised labour it provides to Australia, are profound responses from those who appropriated the hybrid name *Fil-oz* for themselves.

Central to my framing of this ethnography are feminist, postcolonial and class critiques to unpack the racialisation, feminisation and class subjugation of ethnic enclaves in the first-world such as Filipino-Australians. I outline in Chapter 1 the challenges of conducting an ethnographic study of a people who are like me but not quite the same as me, and the appropriateness of self-reflexive migrant qualitative methods. Within the elaboration of the methodology are anecdotal

stories that enriched the conduct of the research. Chapter 2 is an engagement with theoretical approaches that I thought most useful for a study of print culture: representation, coloniality and materiality. Much of the discussion revolves around multiculturalism which is undeniably central to contemporary Australia. Chapter 3 is a historicising of ethnic Filipino newspapers while situating this print culture formation in the growth of the Filipino community in western Sydney. I frame this discussion within the cultural geography of Australia's migrant history and the expansion and dispersion of its cities. Indirectly, this explains the construction of 'Blacktown Filipinos' subjectivity—both elitist and racist. These three chapters set the method and the framework and then introduce 'the Filipino community'.

Chapters 4 and 5 run a common thread as they focus on the 'mail-order bride', the woman, sexuality and embodiment. Chapter 4 discusses two anthologies as recuperative efforts of Filipino women to rectify their sexualised representations and to mitigate their damaging effects. The gender and class politics embedded in the production of the anthologies is revealed to be counterproductive rather than a mine with great radical potential. I also highlight in this chapter the importance of women's writing to the cause of the 'mail-order bride'. Chapter 5 argues that the normalisation of representations of the 'mail order bride' is written on her body but also on the erasure of the 'male order'. The discussion focuses on the archetypal but transgressive subject which fictional and nonfictional literature constructs.

Chapters 6 and 7 describe the 'hidden' migration of some sectors of the Filipino community: the Chinese-Filipino, the Spanish-Filipino and the elderly people. While both chapters call attention to class relations behind these streams of

migrations, each has its own specificities and arguments. Chapter 6 outlines the complex social stratification of Filipinos migrants as it intersects with the economic wealth that Australia opens up. Chapter 7, on the other hand, questions the uses of the elderly as unpaid domestic workers by their immigrant children. The last chapter, Chapter 8, takes the readers to the past and the present of Filipino migrant activism within the transnational context of solidarity. Historicising the emergence of the community as a political body, this chapter looks at the serviceability of newsletters as material markers of the development of Filipino-Australian solidarity and the raising of migrant consciousness.

Chapter 1

Writing Filipino-Australianness: A migrant ethnography

The kiss crosses cultures,
proving mutual recognition.
Yet mutual is not symmetrical.

Anna Tsing (1993, 213)

How does one write an ethnography about oneself? How does a Filipino woman researcher working in and on Australia start explaining she is not a migrant or a 'mail-order bride' if she could not possibly be *anything* else? Writing an ethnography of Filipino-Australians is an exercise fraught with desire and disavowal, but with ambivalence and affection at the same time. For a woman who is in the process of becoming Australia's sexual other while doing ethnography, this meant rising above moments of denigration but also giving in to provocation. I raise this for I explore in this chapter the epistemic advantages of doing ethnography amongst Filipino-Australians amidst the social disadvantages of undergoing this subjectification. Introducing the profile of Philippine-born community necessarily means a historicising of its feminised migration at a specific junction in white Australia's path towards a multicultural nation. In this chapter, I establish the particularities of conducting migrant ethnography on one's 'own' people in the context of contradictory racist practices hiding behind cultural pluralism. The ethnography that leads to analysis of Filipino diasporic print culture reveals the trauma of the community's feminisation in its psyche. The very materiality of these publications is where the history and growth of the community are inscribed within the broader context of Australian multiculturalism.

Who is the 'Filipino' in Australia?

The 'Filipino' in Australia is a 'Filipina'. As a sexual other of Australia—necessarily a racial other as well—Philippine-born naturalised citizens are collectively feminised as the group known for its 'mail-order brides'. The gendered specificity of their migration positions the community as an underclass doubly and easily discriminable for not only the weight of being non-white, specifically what Hage (1998, 18-19) calls 'Third World-looking people' (instead of the euphemistic 'non-English speaking background') they share with others but also the unbearable weight of being 'the whore' immigrant class in Australia. I reflect the refusal of many members of the community to succumb to totalising imperialist attitudes that accompany such naming by placing the term 'mail-order bride' under quotation marks. While a very minor form of resisting, in this way, I do not participate in naming them as such. The everyday use of such widespread term points to a vantage point of an ethnocentric subject with considerable power to do the 'ordering': the woman, the social relations in 'white multiculturalism', the management of Australia's national space, and the 'breeding' of future nationals as half-caste. As Norma Hennessy, a figure in the Philippine community in Adelaide, claimed, the 'source' cannot possibly conceive of such name to refer to oneself (2004, 86-89). The power that underwrites such a naming of a woman as 'bride' and then as someone 'ordered' via the postal system—a thing, an object, like a gadget that arrives in a package—is the kind of governmentality that rendered the group I 'studied' for this research both highly visible but also hidden from view as legitimate in the Australian landscape.

The sexualised treatment of Philippine-born women—best captured in the term 'Filipina', a name almost already couched in hyperfemininity—is also the reason I avoid using it, instead I use the less redundant 'Filipino women'. While these choices do not exactly improve the representations, they nonetheless express a deliberate dissociation from the appropriation of 'Filipina' and the 'mail-order bride' in the Australian media.

To say that the 'Filipino' in Australia is a 'Filipina' is a political evaluation but also gives direction as to how my analyses are centred. While feminised as a collective, the community is constituted by men and women by which some members are more feminised than others: 'men' feminises 'women', 'the rich' feminises 'the poor', the 'mestizo' feminises the 'native', 'Ilocano women' feminise 'Visayan women' (discussed in Chapter 4). It is important to keep in mind that while the 'subject' and 'object' of the study are 'Filipinos in Australia', a blanket term with all its traps and conveniences, I maintain the 'internal multiculturalism' amongst Filipinos. Lumping all of 'them' into one basket uniformly labelled as 'Filipinos'—gendered in the masculine as it is already—might court the danger of homogeneously treating them as one undifferentiated mass of people; this is a critique often hurled at orientalist discourses in the social sciences. Ethnographic studies of cultures and peoples—the goal of which is to 'describe' if not 'define'—almost always invite the problem of rendering a group as monolithic if not a harmonious lot where conflicts and interests are swept under the rug in the name of a recognisable collective. Just as 'Australians' are not ontologically the same, Filipinos who have migrated to Australia's six states and two territories are not the same either. Not only are they not the same, they also have taken geographically-

determined 'Australian' traits. People I have interviewed took note that Filipino Sydneysiders have taken on characteristics (and arrogance) dissimilar from Filipinos in Adelaide or Darwin. The haughty air of the city dweller over an Alice Springs resident may carry over to migrants, too.

Geo-ethnic divisions are, of course, even more accentuated by class, gender, sexual orientation, profession, linguistic hierarchies, amongst other classifications, that are pertinent to identity formation and social relations. This is why a Filipino woman accountant residing in Newtown in Sydney has probably more affinity with an Australian woman based on shared cosmopolitan desires, material consumption and neoconservative views than with a 'mail-order bride' in a secluded mining region in Western Australia. While keeping that in mind and not omitting the nuances of such a reading of the 'collective', this research has nonetheless treated 'Filipinos' in Australia as more or less exhibiting substantive ethnic similarities (oftentimes couched as 'national' traits). It is assumed that these similarities are significant enough to temporarily suspend the polysemic and layered identities of Filipinos even before migration. 'Filipinos' in this research are Philippine-born who migrated as adults, born in the Philippines but raised in Australia, and those whose birthplace is Australia with one or both parents ethnically Filipino.² Although I have used quotation marks in this chapter introduction to signify that the 'Filipino' identity is under siege, they are dropped later on for the sake of their recognisability as an ethnic group in Australia.

² This definition will almost always not be inclusive as there are people who will exceed the grasp of these categories. For instance, there may be Filipino-Americans or Japanese-Filipinos born outside the Philippines but have been residing in Australia. Nonetheless, I believe that majority of Filipino-Australians (or Australian citizens who 'identify' with 'Filipinoness') fall under the three major categories above.

In the 2006 national survey by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), there were 120,540 Philippine-born migrants in Australia and 160,366 who claimed Filipino ancestry.³ Following the trickle of Spanish-Filipino *mestizos* who migrated in the late 1960s after the relaxation of the strict White Australia policy, thousands of Filipino women started to arrive in the 1970s. Either through correspondence of friendship with the intention of pursuing a romantic relationship or someone an Australian met in a visit to the Philippines, the flow of migration has been established. The highest percentage of arrivals was in the years 1981 to 1990; the increase was twice as much as that of the percentage of all overseas-born ('Community Information Summary: Philippines-born' 2006). This proved to be the most definitive of diasporic exits from the Philippines to Australia (Perdon 1998; Hennessy 2004; Jackson 1993). This 'second wave' of Philippine-born migration was to significantly expand in number through the family reunion policy of the government. Mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, aunts and uncles have come and formed their own families, thus exponentially expanding Filipino settlement in Australia, which peaked in 1987 to 1988. I would suggest that while the visibility of migrating 'ethnic' women troubled Australia, the growing influx of brown-faced 'Asians' in the 1980s equally contributed to the national anxiety manifested in the 'emergency' of the 'mail-order bride'. As early as 1982, the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs released *A Bride for All Reasons: Report on a Pilot Survey of Filipino Brides*. The study displayed the aforementioned panic and anxiety but also preventive strategies in its statistical exposure of the *problem* singularly associated with this ethnic group.

³ In 2011, the Australian Bureau of Statistics conducted a national census but figures are not ready for publication at the time of writing this thesis. Compare the 'official' 2005 figure of 120,540 Philippine-born Australians to the unofficial 'stock estimate' by the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (2010) as at December 2010 of 302,120, excluding 40,007 temporary and 3,465 irregular migrants that include the undocumented or those who are overstaying in Australia.

The 'first wave' of Philippine-born migration, on the contrary, was thoroughly a masculine labour migration. Before the close of the nineteenth century, there were around 700 people in Australia from Las Islas Filipinas (not yet the Philippine nation-state) ('Community Information Summary: Philippines-born' 2006). Brought to Australia as pearl divers in the thriving local economies in Western Australia and Queensland, 'Manilamen' as they were called, together with Japanese and Chinese labourers, participated in the early 'multiculturalism' in Australia. A successful *ilustrado* businessman named Heriberto Zarcal is an oft-cited pioneer in the pearling industry in the Northern Territory; he was even considered as the revolutionary government's 'diplomatic agent' in Australia in preparing the country's transformation as a new nation-state (Ileto 1993, 22-30). This 'first wave' of masculine migration integrated well with the local Aboriginal communities, marrying into and raising families; one such example are the Cubillos whose life stories are preserved in Inez Cubillo Carter's (2000) rich narrative. Her family bears the name of a Filipino pearl diver who had ten children with a Larrakia-Scottish woman. These nineteenth century migrants such as Carter's forefather, Antonio, were male, peasant class and 'native': the 'ideal' subject position to travel overseas for work. Antonio entered Australia in 1895 under the Indentured Labour Scheme and subsequently established a cross-cultural Filipino-Aboriginal family (Lee 2007). The physique and virility of these 'natives' had been at one point a target of suspicion in the ensuing 'White Australia' policy. By 1947, the number of Philippine-born in Australia dipped to a low of 141 individuals ('Community Information Summary: Philippines-born' 2006). This gendered migration to Australia would be repeated decades later in the person of the 'mail-order bride'.

When stricter immigration policies were implemented wherein skilled migration leading to permanent residency and temporary labour migration, also known as Visa 457, are the only openings, the profile of Filipino migrants in Australia has changed. This 'third wave', in comparison with the composition of the second, comprises educated, middle-class, English-speaking professionals who are pigeonholed as a human resource, in largely accounting and information technology.⁴ Between the second and the third waves, there was the migration of a small number of Spanish-Filipinos in the early 1970s. Even though 'brides' still continue to come—the internet being a site of meeting instead of newspapers or catalogues—migrants from the Philippines have experienced a 'gentrification', so to speak. This increased the number of all-Filipino families, residential concentration in metropolitan areas with high 'ethnic' concentration, and a consolidation of community and cultural efforts to organise. The change in profile is also accompanied by a drastic reduction of migrant intake; from the record high of 37 per cent of all Philippine-born migrants who arrived from 1981 to 1990, to approximately 20 per cent from 1991 to 2000 ('Community Information Summary: Philippines-born' 2006). After migrants from New Zealand, Britain, India and China, Filipinos come next in terms of Australia's intake of immigrants over the same period (Australia Bureau of Statistics 2007a).

⁴ Historicising Filipino-Australian in this way has become a cliché, a kind of 'grand' narrative of waves of migration typified in 'encyclopedic' scholarship (Marginson 2001; Pertierra and Wall 1988) and local community scholarship (Hennessy 2004; Perdon 1998; Jackson 1993). This kind of historicising—a reliance on the obvious and romanticised—pervades Filipino-Australian scholarship which my work somewhat reinforces. (I thank Dee Hunt for pointing this out). Interrogating this historiography is significant—less for tracing the culpability of its 'historians'—but more for the usefulness in establishing the serviceability of that kind of history. While there are slight shades of differences in historiography—while some glide over the 'mail-order bride' like Pertierra and Wall's (1988) five-sentence discussion, others like Marginson's (2001) revolved around it—the histories have taken on a dominant narrative that to escape from it requires a subversive rewriting of this history. For instance, in Chapter 6, I raise the question if there really was a 'Spanish-Filipino' migration as opposed to *mestizo-Filipino* migration.

Before 'second wave'/bride migration was a small number of students allowed to enter Australia under the Colombo Plan. Also, Spanish-Filipinos and some 300 nurses were allowed to practice in Australia in the 1960 (Marginson 2001). Later, political exiles during the Marcos regime have settled in Australia. These four smaller patterns have often been cited as prelude to the supposedly less legitimate 'mail-order bride' migration.

Following the migratory pattern in Australia where metropolitan cities are the first choice of settlement, most Filipinos live in the suburbs of Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. Predictably, almost half of Filipinos reside in New South Wales (47 per cent), followed by Victoria at 22 per cent and then Queensland at 16 per cent ('Community Information Summary: Philippines-born' 2006). The graph below shows the distribution of Filipinos by state in 2006 and the chart that follows gives the exact number of migrants excluding Australian-born claiming Filipino ancestry:

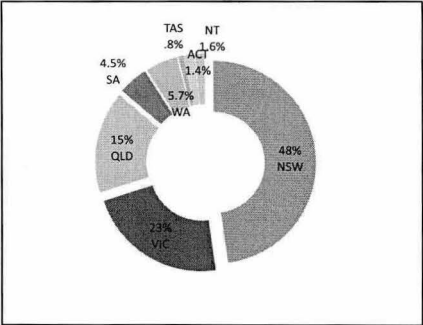


Figure 1 Population of Philippine-born Australians by state, 2006

State	Philippine-born Australians
New South Wales (NSW)	57 720
Victoria (VIC)	27 340
Queensland (QLD)	18 710
South Australia (SA)	5 440
Western Australia (WA)	6 830
Northern Territory (NT)	1 880
Australian Capital Territory (ACT)	1 660
Tasmania (TAS)	960

Table 1 Population of Philippine-born Australians by state, 2006

Despite the change in migration intake, for instance, temporary workers in Western Australia being men, the Filipino community still bears the legacy of its feminised migration. In 2006, 42,680 of Philippine-born are males while 77,854 are females (Australia Bureau of Statistics 2007b). Ten years before, males numbered 32,326 while females 60,623 (Australia Bureau of Statistics 2007c). The graph below on the comparative intake of Philippine-born per state by sex in 2006 demonstrates the high sex ratio gap. See, for instance, the big number of female migrants in Queensland over male migrants.

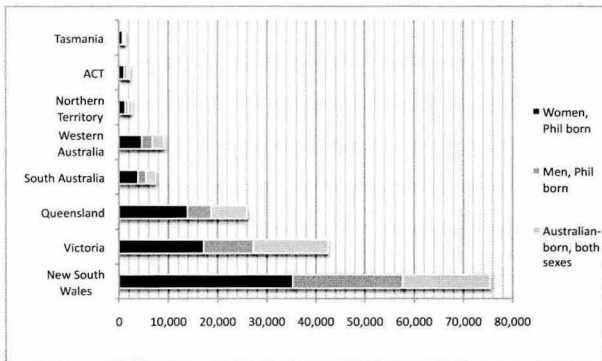


Figure 2 Population claiming Filipino ancestry in Australia by sex by state in 2006

Filipinos have a high rate of attaining citizenship at 92 per cent compared to other overseas-born at 75 per cent ('Community Information Summary: Philippines-born' 2006). No wonder that in a government-sponsored survey, *Living Diversity: Australia's Multicultural Future*, Filipinos are declared to have the 'most global perspective' (Ang *et al* 2002, 14) but ironically they, too, 'seemed to be less settled than average' hinting at their desire to move to other countries (Ang *et al* 2002, 44). This dis-ease in immobility is reflected in the increasing number of dual citizenship holders among Filipino-Australians. For the period of January 1, 2004 to December 31, 2010, 1,933 Australians from New South Wales reacquired their Filipino citizenship under the Citizenship Retention and Re-acquisition Act of 2003 (Consul Anthony Reyes, email message, June 1, 2011).⁵

Economically, Filipinos seem to do better than other groups. In 2006, they earned a median income weekly of \$538 compared to \$488 of all Australian-born and the much lower \$431 of all overseas-born ('Community Information Summary: Philippines-born' 2006). However, figures like these that do not hint at discrepancies between white Australians, black Australians, and others in between in income, thus, not a very accurate indicator of their economic lives. In the study by Antonina Elberich (2002) of Filipinos in the Illawarra region where 90 per cent of the respondents are females, majority are in the lower class: 38 per cent receive only \$10,000-15,000 income per year; 66 per cent of the respondents were unemployed citing their primary role as carers; 31 per cent worked as housekeepers, room

⁵ In New South Wales, the breakdown is as follows: 2004: 100; 2005: 154; 2006: 330; 2007: 312; 2008: 302; 2009: 343; and 2010: 392. Request from the Embassy in Canberra for the total Australian statistics was unanswered. In a more recent inquiry, the Embassy approved 368 principal applications and 78 dependents in year 2011 alone (Glenn Fune, email message, January 5, 2012).

attendants, cleaners, cooks, kitchen hands, and so on. Filipinos, however, have a higher participation rate in the labour force than the total Australian average.

This short profile of the community establishes its place in Australia's multiculturalism as mostly 'bride' migrants whose demographic legacy is still felt today. The 'first wave' migration, together with the 'third wave' that sandwiches the 'bride' wave provides contexts in which members relate to each other. By having a precedent (Filipino-black Australian connection) that is out of touch with Indigenous Australians but with a new migration trend that brings in more and more members of the middle class, the community still has to contend with the pressure of the 'mail-order bride' as its collective signifier.

A 'southern' migration and sexualised citizenship

Filipinos prefer a northern hemisphere migration. The historical, economic, political, social and cultural ties—colonial as they are—that bind them to the United States have set this up. Lisa Lowe articulates well what we, 'Filipinos', do: 'For Filipino immigrants, modes of capitalist incorporation and acculturation into American life begin not at the moment of immigration, but rather in the "homeland" already deeply affected by U.S. influences and modes of social organization' (1996, 8). In 2004, there were 2.1 million Filipinos in the US, accounting for 18 per cent of all Asians and the third largest group after the Chinese and Indians (U.S. Census Bureau 2007, 2).⁶ More than one hundred years of geo-political interaction with the U.S. have

⁶ Compare this figure again to the 'stock estimate' of Filipinos in the United States, 3.2 million including overstaying and undocumented individuals. In Canada, the 'stock estimate' is at 667,674. The Commission of Filipinos Overseas (2010) pegs the total number of Filipinos outside the

directed a more complex migratory social pattern than is the case in Australia today. On the other hand, Canada, also a relatively newer destination, had only 328,000 Philippine-born in 2001, but nonetheless the third largest non-European group in the country (Statistics Canada 2007). This is still a much bigger figure than Australia's migration intake of 120,540 to 2006. The 'southern' migration to 'northern' Australia in the 1970s was precipitated by three not unrelated events: the opening up of borders in the age of globalisation to facilitate the movement of labourers in the service sector, the effects of neoliberal economic adjustments in the Philippines driving international prostitution and trafficking of women, (Tadiar 2004, 46-50) and the emergence of Australia as a political and economic power in the newly recognisable region of the 'Asia Pacific' (Dirlik 1998, 3-13). Until four decades ago, Filipinos never looked 'down under'; what Filipinos knew about Australia were the stereotypes that they share with the rest of the world: kangaroos, koalas, sheep, beaches and surfing.

The specifically 'bride' migration of Philippine-born nationals is documented well by Australian immigration. In 'Family Formation: Cultural Diversity in Marriages', Filipino women marrying Australians peaked from 1974 to 1998—an exceedingly long twenty-five year period—which rose 'very sharply' in 1978 and peaked in 1986 (Australia Bureau of Statistics 2006). Despite a decrease in the early 1990s, spousal migrations 'have remained high', says the report based on previously unpublished data from marriage registrations. The graph below, taken from the ABS report, dramatises the feminised migration of Philippine-born nationals within this twenty-five year period. It also shows that post-war migrants like the Italians have been less

Philippines at 9.5 million as at December 2010, half of them are temporary, half are permanent settlers.

inclined to marry 'long-time Australians'. On the other hand, the rise in marriage between Chinese-born nationals and Australians increased in the early 1990s—explained by the high intake of student migrants after the Tiananmen Square massacre.

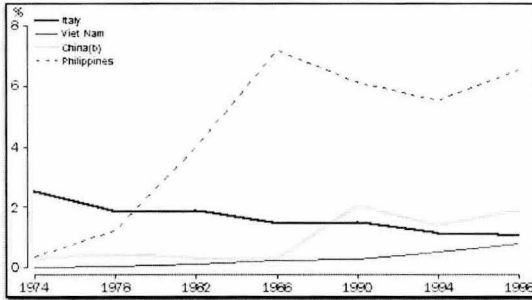


Figure 3 Overseas women marrying 'long-time' Australians, data from 1974-1998
 (b) China figures excludes Taiwan
 ('Family Formation: Cultural Diversity in Marriages, ABS 2006)

Among first-generation migrants, 32 per cent of 'brides' from the Philippines married 'long-time Australians' who I gather are 'Anglo-Celtic Australians' by ancestry. I assume this because 37.5 per cent of Filipino-Australian women are married to 'overseas-born Australians' who could be someone with Eastern European, South American, or Middle-eastern ancestries. This leaves 30 per cent of them who are married to Filipino men. Most overseas-born men and women have 'quite similar' patterns in marrying someone from their own birthplace, 'with one notable exception': the Philippines where the gendered pattern is evident: only nine per cent of Filipino males marry 'long-time Australians', 78 per cent marry their 'own' (Australia Bureau of Statistics 2006). The 'neatness' of these figures almost always cited by the media—70 per cent of Filipinas married to Australians!—are more than

enough solid substantiation to conclude a hyperfeminised migration as a mass invasion of aliens who have found Australia a 'market' of demand, without much supply, as some interpret the sexualised market 'regulation'. This feminisation of international marriage migration is not Australia-specific, according to the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (2011a): from 1989 to 2009 on a worldwide scale, 340,649 Filipino women (92 per cent) are married to foreigners while only 32, 069 Filipino men (8 per cent) are. In Australia, there are a total of 29,284 (7.86 per cent) 'Filipino spouses and other partners'. The table below shows comparative figures as to how many spouses (including grooms) and partners alike Australia took in. It is not clear whether homosexual relationships are included in these figures:

USA	154,871	41.55 %
Japan	108,245	29.04%
Australia	29,284	7.86%
Canada	15,350	4.12%
Germany	12,363	3.39%
South Korea	7,746	2.08%
Taiwan	7,613	2.04%
United Kingdom	7,436	2.0%

Table 2 Number of Filipino spouses and other partners of foreign nationals in selected countries, 1989-2009
(Commission on Filipinos Overseas, 2011b)

The diaspora of Filipinos is not unique to the Philippines as a postcolonial nation whose citizens seek permanent economic refuge in first-world destinations such as Australia and temporary labour accommodation performing dirty, dangerous and demeaning jobs (Constable 1997; Chang 2000; Faier 2009; Parreñas 2001, 2008). The exodus of women from the Philippines and their eventual settlement all over Australia is coeval with and interconnected with the feminisation of migrant labour as one of the consequences of the economic difficulties faced by the Marcos

regime in the 1970s. As Saskia Sassen suggested, 'migrations do not just happen; they are produced' (1998, 56). What was meant to be a provisional solution to the ballooning national deficit and massive unemployment proved to be an effective palliative to a suffering economy under neoliberal structuring interpreted by local technocrats as a kick off towards a more internationalist system (Tolentino 1996, 54-58). In the Marcosian era of militarised repression tolerated by the United States and plundering the nation while, at the same time, being dependent on the IMF-WB's loan to prevent the collapse of the country, it was labour migration, and, in particular, the double burden of women shouldering the more demeaning and dirtier jobs, that 'normalised' the neoliberal economy when implemented in the third-world (Enloe [1989] 2000, 177-94; Ong 2006, 195-217). The presence of *women and immigrants* in global cities today performing the 'wifely' work in high-income professional households is what Sassen calls the 'feminization of survival' (2012, 286). Because of the shutdown of manufacturing in cities utilising masculine labour and the break up of the traditional livelihood in the countryside, women must leave for personal and national survival. While Sassen's focus on global circuits draws her to nannies and carers, women as 'brides' I believe are plugged into the broader network of circuits that service global suburbia and the first-world outback. The 'mail-order bride' in Australia, the backbone of the community's migration, also coincided as well with the formation of the regional 'Asia Pacific' led by the masculine triangulation of US-Japan-Australia in the 1980s. The decade that saw the intensification of economic restructuring coincides with the feminised survival theory of Sassen (2012). More so, the opening up of Australia as a modern nation that has abandoned its racist past also dovetails with the hyperfeminisation of the Filipino woman. Changes in the immigration policies allowing non-European entrants made

possible the union of Filipino women to working class male European migrants who are discriminated against in Anglo Australia.

The visibility of non-white, 'Third-World looking persons', and females in white Australia raised the question of citizenship, particularly these migrants' sexualised citizenship. Scholars have critically evaluated the impact of statist multiculturalism in a white-economy that does not recognise racist practices that govern the everyday lives of non-white immigrants (Hage 1998, 2002, 2003; Collins 1996; Vasta and Castles 1996; Castles 1996; Ang 2001; Brah 1996; Gunew 2004). Ghassan Hage (1998), in particular, articulates how the failure to understand a paradigm shift of the ruling racial class to a pluralist one results in 'white multiculturalism'. Everyday neo-fascist expressions of white dominant culture, especially amongst the working class, are an effect of an Edenic loss: the displacement of the legitimacy of white rule but without the rhetoric to articulate the loss (Hage 1998, 22). The slipping away of power Hage later on attributes to the ravages of neoliberalism on the white working class (2003, 18). Thus, the constant reminder to 'tolerate' people indebted to the (white) Australian people's generosity: the gift of migration. Citizenship as 'gift' allows for a reading that those who received the 'gift' do not belong in Australia in the first place; thus, the collective practice of tolerating those who do not rightfully belong to the national body. The question of legitimate citizenship—to be *accepted* (not *tolerated*) into the political, civic and social lives of 'ordinary' (non-black, non-immigrant) Australians—as an avenue towards full membership in the national social fabric is based on the conditions of racial citizenship. One's proximity to whiteness—whether one is upperclass, English-speaking (with the correct accent), or born in Australia—is always already heavily premised on 'racial capital'.

Filipinos, as non-European migrants, suffer from this lack of 'racial capital'. As 'Asians' who are just 'too many' in Australia, they inhabit the space of marginality that renders them invisible but all-too-visible as well. However, the Filipino community is subjected to a 'sexualised citizenship' on top of racial otherness. I define 'sexualised citizenship' as conferment of nationality and the uses of this belonging based on the sexual division of labour and services rendered by those who receive the citizenship. The migration of 'mail-order brides' *en masse* from the 1970s is readable only through what Filipino women can do with their sex. This means performing sex, giving birth as the reproductive role of their sex, unpaid domestic labour premised on sexual differences, and other affective labour that only her (racialised) sex as a class can provide. Filipino women buy their citizenship through the exercise of their sex; the lowest 'trick' in jumping the immigration queue. Sealing Cheng's expression, 'love as weapon of the weak' (2007, 245)—an appropriation of James Scott (1985)—captures well this assignation of usability. She is not a subject of tolerance, but a usable object who *consents* to her own objectification.

"'Filipina women are more loving,'" says Roy Fittler who married a Filipino woman (in Barrowclough 1995, 51). Such is the legendary submissiveness in the Australian public's imaginary of the sexualised citizen that Filipino women are used as leverage against women who refuse submission. "'They put more into a marriage than Australian women do. They don't drink, they don't smoke, they don't hang around the house with a cigarette hanging out of their mouth,'" continues Fittler (in Barrowclough 1995, 51). This statement meant to provoke reaction from Australian women is not simply a false valorisation of the Filipino woman but racialising as well.

For 'Australian women' here meant 'white Australian women'; they who embody sexual liberation and independence are neither blacks nor immigrants. Put differently, the Filipino woman as sexualised citizen is in opposition to emancipated white women but also to all other women who are not as 'loving'. 'Loving', simply put, is another name for the sex work she has to fulfil. Her citizenship, moreover, is anchored on her reproductive promise to reproduce Australian-looking 'Australians'. This promise is a kind of collateral for the migration she is allowed to make in the first place. Citizens who are citizens for their sex are corralled into perfunctory bodily functions, almost subhuman without a will of their own. A Filipino woman giving birth is of much less value than the child she has given birth to.

As a sexualised citizen, the Filipino woman is portrayed not merely as the sexual other of Australians, both men and women. The uproar that sexualised migration caused was documented in a debate published in the *Australian Journal of Social Issues* from 1982 to 1983. Even though this is a specialised journal, the exchanges resemble 'non-expert', everyday 'Australian' opinions in letters to editors or television programs. For example, David Watkins initially suggested that 'Filipino brides are likely to be well educated, timid, modest and family oriented' in his defense against their representation by which the media exercised with impunity (1982, 73). Kathryn Robinson critiqued Watkins' nearsighted view of the migrant woman she saw as 'support[ive] [of] the stereotype' and not as a critical analysis of the 'mail-order bride' phenomenon (1982, 166). Her comment focused on the class positions that Philippine-born migrants occupy which do not lend themselves to a sweeping class analysis. In a 'further comment' by Deborah Wall (1983, 219), the 'authentic insider' voice being a Filipino woman and being once a bride to a white

Australian, she claimed that both Watkins and Robinson both 'seem to miss the point' on two arguments. One, for Watkins to realise that not all Filipino women are 'mail-order brides', such as herself, and two, for Robinson to question the brand of 'feminism' she practiced if she "'resented'" the fact that she has "'something to learn'" from 'subservient' Filipino women (Wall 1983, 219). This argument refers to the broader feminist critique that Filipino women's perceived collusion in the 'mail-order bride' industry is a symptom of the unfinished project of Western feminism in the third-world. At one point, Filipino women were pitted against white women as captured by Fittler's imagery, to which women respond with: only desperate women go for men like these—a very elitist response.⁷ Finally, Watkins's (1983, 222) rejoinder defended his position with a tangential 'wives have the real power' answer and stated that no woman must suffer at the hands of men. This repartee where three subjectivities are represented—the Australian male married to a Filipino woman, the Filipino woman married to an Australian, and the white Australian female—gives an adequate picture of how the discursive exchanges were conducted and on what grounds.

A citizenship premised on the undesirable yet usable sexual other which Filipinos possess in their 'southern' migration has captured the community singularly like no other group in Australia. While racialised citizenship is necessarily sexualised, Filipinos suffer an unmatched disrepute which is hardly ever explained as consequences of global forces, women's position as the 'second sex' or the specificities of Philippine postcoloniality. The problem of the 'mail-order bride' is a

⁷ In 2010, after presenting a paper at a conference in Australia on this topic, a 'feminist'—judging by the arguments of her presentation—approached me to enthusiastically discuss 'mail-order brides'. She pointed out how men who sponsor women are at the bottom rung of Australian society that no (white) Australian women wanted to marry them. Thus, those who did must be in very dire situations to do so.

problem because there are women who are more 'prostitutable' than others. I raise this point because doing ethnography of sexualised citizens reveals a deep-seated paranoia that this will be another study that will, once again, remind them that the whole community is more 'prostitutable' than others. The caution exercised by Filipino-Australians in general to measure their distance from the 'mail-order bride' is a latent feature of being sexualised citizens; a symptom of fear, of anxiety, of humiliation, of a sadness that does not cast a long shadow in other communities.

**Inside but out:
Towards a migrant qualitative research method**

Although this project is a study of print culture and representationality, it hinges heavily on immigrant life and the writing of a short history in a new country. The fieldwork took me to several cities in Australia but the 'initiation rites' to the Filipino-Australian community mostly took place in Sydney, New South Wales. Given the fact that I am from the Philippines—a *kababayan* (ungendered 'countryman/countrywoman') so to speak—I assumed that researching 'Filipinoness' in diaspora would be easy. This is not the case. In as much as many aspects of Australia are unfamiliar to me, Filipino migrants—their ways of living, habits, celebrations, religious activities, entertainment preferences, social classes, internal groupings, among others—are not any more familiar just because I share with them a sense of origin. The 'insider' position is a fallacy because looking like 'them' and speaking their language have conceptual limits that do not yield uniform responses. On the other hand, the 'outsider' position that I take in the field is insufficient for I become 'one of them' in Australia. On occasions where I was invited as a 'friend' to

a birthday party or a dance night out at an RSL.⁸ I find myself a participant-observer; the insider/outsider boundaries that traditional anthropology has set up are being challenged in diasporic setting.

Taking up residence in the Blacktown area—the importance of which as an ethnic enclave is discussed in Chapter 3—prepared me for fieldwork 'unofficially' for everyday living contextualised 'ethnic living' in Australia. Living at various times with young professional migrants, a working class couple, an inter-racial family, amongst others, in six different suburbs in Sydney allowed me to compare Filipino communities but more importantly, it showed the manifest power ethnic enclaves possess in propping up the violence of racism and alienation of the everyday. This led to more Filipino acquaintances of different persuasions that represent a variety of interests to me as a researcher. As a participant-observer at home, at a *fiesta*, at a beauty contest, at a birthday party, a weekend drive, a visit to a store or a remittance centre, a religious meeting, and so on, I saw how these events intersect with the central aspect of this study, print culture.

Being Filipino, however, has its epistemic advantages but also the disadvantage of familiarity; a contradiction but that which creates tension in doing ethnography. There were times when a sense of wonder (how migrants do their 'thing') suddenly turns into doubt, sometimes mistrust. As a Filipino with a strong

⁸ 'RSL' is short for 'Returned and Services League' of Australia—a reference to the veterans of war—commonly refers to the clubs designed for the white, masculine, conservative and working class. Although RSL culture is defended as a communitarian movement and an exercise in citizenship, critical views say how its very whiteness is anti-migrant and capitalistic (Crotty 2007, 183-85). Today, RSL clubs are the preferred source of cheap entertainment combining music, gambling, food and drinks. The RSL in Rooly Hill, for instance, features a Filipino band to the delight of the predominantly Filipino crowd.

social awareness of its labour diaspora, I was inclined to place a new acquaintance within a socio-political framework that does not often agree with their interpretation of their own migration. Given the colonial history of the Philippines and the unequal distribution of wealth, and the intersections by which migration uses, reinforces, changes and challenges these two strong social forces, my emplacement as a non-migrant separates me from the rest of them. The so-called *Verstehen*, 'empathetic understanding of the lived experiences of people in their natural settings', may not be as effortless as it would have been if I were amongst, say, the Maori or the Indigenous Australians (Henn, Weinstein and Foard 2006, 172). Dealing with them would have been one new clean slate.

While my 'Filipinoness' afforded me convenience, ethnicity as 'trump card', I also carry with my 'Filipinoness' openings for irritations, on both sides; more so, I do not possess the critical distance of a 'stranger'. Along with the epistemic advantage comes the difficulty in shedding prejudices about Filipinos who have left 'home'. I believe that this prejudice is not an individual's quirk; nor is it a bias without justifiable basis, for a Filipino leaving the country for Australia is never the same as an 'American' leaving for Australia. Filipinos could not possibly use the label 'expatriate' for themselves; this is a semantic somersault reserved for the citizens of the affluent world. Colonialism in the Philippines has not only set up the semi-feudal, neo-colonial labour-exporting country it is now, it has also created new class-based ridges in a worldwide market-economy that services the first-world. Settler migration and temporary labour movement have re-structured local economies in the Philippines and transform lives, practices and social relations, especially how new class formations are made. In this era of intensified disparity between the north and south,

Filipino first-world migrants are the new *mestizos*.⁹ The figure of a cashed up *kababayan* who finds everything back home to be faulty and substandard is also enjoying the privileged subjectivity of the 'bagong bayani' (modern-day hero) discourse. They are the ones who send money that allow the rest of 'us'—the left behind—to keep our heads above water; both a despised caricature and a beloved relative. And this is something, I argue, that 'first-world' Filipinos have internalised as well. What I tried hard to do as a researcher is to overcome this 'critical' distance in a judgemental sense and be critically distant in a research sense, no matter how hard it is to both despise and desire the subject of one's ethnographic study.

'Feminist qualitative research', a method of scholarship that privileges the narratorial aspect of gathering data from the informants over quantitative and positivist methods informs my own conception of 'migrant qualitative research'. Stanley and Wise argued that conducting a feminist ethnomethodology *for* women requires 'feminist consciousness' which is equally possessed by women (1983, 116-22).¹⁰ For despite women's universal marginalised position, research results do not accurately portray this in most qualitative and empirical studies (Roberts 1981). Carol Ehrlich sharply differentiates 'research on women'—dominated by men and women who think like men—and 'feminist research'—that which benefits women and encourages action (in Stanley and Wise 1983, 24). Ann Oakley, in studying the

⁹ My use of the conceit 'new *mestizos*' to refer to *balikbayans* or Filipinos who emigrated, specifically those bound for the U.S., Canada and Australia (for the prestige of not being servants even if they were). *Mestizos* are the Spanish-Filipinos, Chinese-Filipinos and then later American-Filipinos, with an emphasis more on racial features more than class or social standing. 'North-bound' emigrants are accorded a kind of deference, admiration, envy, and high regard in general which in turn allow them to behave in privileged ways. See Chapter 6 for a fuller discussion.

¹⁰ They, too, argued critically that *not* all women possess feminist consciousness; there are men, lesbians and others who oppose sexism. As lesbian feminists, Stanley and Wise warn against the monopoly of 'feminists' in theorising 'women' where 'women' singularly imply heterosexual women. Moreover, the ownership of feminist theorists of 'women' as object of inquiry is in danger of 'separat[ing]-off' 'feminists' from 'people' (1983, 98-100).

sociology of housework, illustrated how methodologies in social science are in themselves gendering the discipline. 'Sociology is sexist because it is male-oriented' (Oakley 1974, 2). The emergence of feminist qualitative research where participants are contextualised from their subject positions—rather than 'as it is' in the positivist empirical world—advanced social science research with attention on narratives as history mediated by language. As a methodological tool, it values women's narratives as texts without reducing the impact of patriarchy as a result of narrativisation. Lila Abu-Lughod's 'feminist ethnography' is a critical reevaluation of anthropological studies that stand on essentialism; hers is a 'writing against culture' ([1993] 2008, xii). Her influence on 'doing ethnography' has also been applied by Sandya Shukla (2003) and Dhooleka Raj (2003) in their research on transnational migration of Indians in the United Kingdom and the United States. Their works are examples of how the principles of feminist ethnography are not incompatible with migrant ethnography.

There are studies that employ feminist qualitative method in order to bring out voices of migrant women. Some of these I cite here are Cleonicki Saroca's (2002) research on domestic violence against Filipino women and their portrayal in the media, Glenda Tibe-Bonifacio's (2003) work on citizenship and belonging of the Filipino woman, Jane Lee's (2005) study on the market experiences of Korean women, and Christina Ho's (2004) analysis of Chinese women's role in the home and at work. In their methodologies, they emphasised how trust and confidence from their participants are gained rather easily because they are women and of the same ethnicity with the exception of Saroca, an Australian but much informed on the Filipino as she is married to one. The epistemic advantage and methodological

correctness in doing ethnography of women-talking-to-women (and of the same ethnicity) is undeniable in feminist qualitative research.

In what I call 'migrant qualitative research', the possession of 'migrant consciousness' is a necessary state of reasoning that parallels with Stanley and Wise's (1983) call for a critical feminist consciousness. What I suggest is the ease by which 'strangers' to local culture understand the alienation of a 'melancholic migrant' (Ahmed 2010) and incorporate this into the research process. However, I do not suggest that an 'ethnic' subject is a more effective researcher than a non-'ethnic'?. It is epistemologically flawed to deduce that because white researchers do not know what it is like to be treated as 'ethnic' they cannot possess 'migrant consciousness'. In as much as there are men who are against sexism, there are 'ethnics' who are against racism.

I raise this to test the validity, limits and possibilities of 'migrant qualitative research'. First, the category of 'woman' which is the basis of feminist research consciousness, is not analytically equal to the category 'ethnic'; they conceptually are not analogous, thus, should be treated differently. 'Women' as a collective and 'ethnics' as a collective suffer different kinds of material experiences of oppression; they may have similarities but not synonymous although for ethnic women these categories converge. Second, the issue of social class intervenes in any monolithic attempt to lump all women together as if they all endure a uniform existence, and this is the same for ethnicised migrants. An elitist 'Filipino woman researcher' may treat 'mail-order brides' with silent contempt is always a possibility; Chapter 4's discussion on the classes of 'brides' shows this. Third, to suggest that only 'Filipinos'

can study 'Filipinos' would be tantamount to essentialism and obscurantism. If one would insist on the virtue of minimising subjective differences between the two categories, it can always be argued that consciousness-raising ethnographic studies are available towards this objective. However, if I were not allowed to make such a bold claim, I would instead argue that my being an 'ethnic' (non-white) as a researcher *doubles* my role as a researcher-designer and also as 'the researched' in the research process. The sum of my experiences in white Australia, more specifically, the sum of my experiences as a woman belonging to the 'mail-order bride' community gives me a sensibility (and sensitivity) to claim this *double consciousness*.

To reiterate, if I were not necessarily a more suitable (not more competent) researcher than a non-Filipino on this subject, my double emplacement nevertheless deepens my involvement, thus, my stakes and claims in the issue. Take, for instance, Olga Bursian's thesis that sampled Filipino women. Being the 'typical Australian', she admitted having little knowledge about the Philippines except its grinding poverty: '*absolute poverty is the Filipino life world's constant backdrop*' (2006, 143; my emphasis). During an interview, once she heard the name 'Subic' uttered by her informant (Melba), she made the mental mapping that she was probably a former prostitute from the said military base. This, which the unknowing participant was not willing to reveal, Bursian tried to confirm with other Filipino women she interviewed. Bursian thus concludes that Melba experienced '*greatest poverty and had to have recourse to the sexualised avenues available for women in her country to survive*' (2006, 278). While this 'Australian' researcher may possess fictitious 'aesthetic sympathy'—an apt term Virginia Woolf used to describe her own feelings towards

working class women ([1931] 1975, xxvi)¹¹—the researcher is not conscious of what she did in the name of social science. 'Fictitious sympathy' does not militate against trapping an informant as a sexualised citizen. Whenever Australians mention 'Philippines', 'sex', 'prostitutes' and 'mail-order bride' in one sentence, it is me they have in mind. (Whether or not I am a prostitute or a 'mail-order bride' is beside the point.) This pain is very real and this informs my work as a researcher-writer. I am a *double agent* in this project, the one searching but also partly 'the searched'. The ethnographic gaze falls upon me unwittingly; the humility, the sadness, the embarrassment I referred to earlier are mine to shoulder as well.¹² Bursian's (2006) faux pas, fortunately, is not shared by Saroca (2002), who is married to a Filipino and identifies herself with the community, nor by Tibe-Bonifacio (2004), a Filipino woman, both of whom have deep and sensitive 'migrant consciousness' reflected in their scholarship.

During fieldwork, I have experienced uncanny situations with Filipino-Australians who have taken offensive or defensive stances based on known common prejudices amongst Filipinos. Sometimes, the offense comes from the irritation that my research has bothered to take the opinions of other personalities. Indeed, 'migrant qualitative research' depends on many variables that do not only include my position but also the interrelationships amongst the participants within a small immigrant community and had previous dealings—good or bad—with each other.

¹¹ In a letter to the Women's Co-operative Guild in Britain (established in 1883), Woolf wrote how at the end of the day, working class women want 'baths and money' which women like her easily take for granted. She criticises how her own feelings was the 'sympathy of the eye and of the imagination...and such sympathy is always physically uncomfortable' ([1931] 1975, xxvi).

¹² In one occasion, after explaining to an Australian for about an hour the topic of my thesis, thus, establishing my 'legitimate' presence in the country, he asked: 'so why are you in Australia? Do you have an Australian husband or boyfriend?' For this man, I cannot be anything else but what the rest of his country thinks.

In other words, the twenty-nine interviewees who participated in the research have an on-going conversation because of their shared history. The nine-month fieldwork can be considered as an *interruption* of this conversation where participants were given the chance to relationally evaluate not only their own contribution to the community but also that of others. On the other hand, the presence of a stranger ('fake' migrant) amidst them is also an *intervention* more than just an interruption. As a researcher seen to be an agentic entity who will (probably) write a definitive history of the community given the legitimization bestowed by an academic institution, I somehow 'intervened' in their current state of affairs. Given the fact that I interviewed first-generation migrants who have shared the same *fields* and *habitus* (Bourdieu 1984)—the same temporal and spatial marginality of being 'ethnic' in Australia—this means they all participate in the same game and respond to the set of rules. While a few of them clearly distanced themselves from 'Blacktown Filipinos', the responses I received were meant to be clarificatory attempts to my discursive intervention. Without indulging into divulging details, I, as a researcher, am put in a position of inadvertent complicity with a participant against another. Although I am cognizant of Paul Riesman's perception of anthropologists—"we are using other people for our own purposes all the time" (in Abu-Lughod ([1993] 2008, 36)—I had been, to a much lesser degree than they are of 'use' to me, used as well.

When I left Sydney to continue fieldwork in Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Darwin, my understanding of the 'game of Blacktown Filipinos' took another dimension. 'Geo-ethnicity', a concept which will be explored more fully in Chapter 3, refers to the mapping, spacing, emplacement, and architectural arrangement of the 'ethnised' subject, in itself and in relation to the greater geography of a

racialised society. On the one level, there exists the relationship between 'Blacktown Filipinos'—those who have embodied their 'otherness' as immigrants and thus mapped their subjectivity into the suburbs they inhabit—and those outside the 'ghetto'. My 'migrant consciousness' this time taught me how to behave inside the 'ghetto' and outside the 'ghetto'. The push and pull between these two spaces is clear as my immersion taught me to value some of my postcodes but not others.¹³ The height of my full cognition of these nuances is not when I understood the rules but when I learned to strategise when, how, and to who should I use the nuances of geo-ethnicity in relation to 'ethnicity'. Those who dared to live outside the 'ghetto' (I did for a certain period) knew very well the power of this distancing effect over those who remain to stay and be interpellated as a 'Blacktown Filipino' (I was for a certain period, too).

On the second level, there are 'Sydney Filipinos' and 'others'. While it is easy to claim that this geographical relationship is 'intra-ethnic', thus a mere macrocosmic repetition of the dialectical opposition above, the Sydney-versus-others (not to mention the Sydney-versus-Melbourne rivalry) as a system of privileging shows that Filipinos in Australia are hardly a homogenous group, to say the very least. The emplacement of the Filipino 'ethnic' by white dominant structures is a multi-layered set of rules and responses to which the community would prefer to consent rather than contest. All in all, the notion of 'migrant qualitative research' is one that takes into consideration what the eyes cannot see: the complexity of the community members' relationships to each other, and their attitude towards an 'insider-outsider'

¹³ According to the stratification of suburbs by Filipinos and Australians alike, the strong identification of my being Filipino with the postcode starts with Blacktown and ends with St. Leonards in the spectrum of class and race. In between are Parramatta, Granville, Ashfield and Newtown, respectively. This suburban spectrum of my addresses is also a spectrum of 'whiteness'. It is interesting to note that the very name *Blacktown* symbolises the opposite end of 'whiteness'.

researcher like me. While this may appear to be only interferences in the conduct of a research project, it can also elicit interesting responses that proved to be illuminating in the end.

This discussion in developing a concept of 'migrant qualitative research' touches upon the question of truth and reflexivity in performing ethnography to one's community and not (at the same time). First, interviews do not guarantee the recovery of truth or truth-values from the participants. However, it is neither an obligation of an interviewee to divulge, for instance, to admit that she was a sex worker prior to migration in Australia, nor it is the responsibility of the researcher to find out details that do not necessarily enrich the study per se. This leads to the second point, an investigator must recognise her impact as a subjective force in the research. While the analytical reflexivity that goes with 'migrant consciousness' is not easily acquired by those outside the community (even those who declare sympathy), someone who declares in possession of 'migrant consciousness' like I do must exercise internal caution in mapping her subjects who, in turn, map the researcher. As sexualised citizens who suffer humiliation which I share with them in the hands of Australians, I also admit how as a non-migrant I may have fallen into the trap of sexualising them as well.

**Triangulated data collection:
Locating print culture in oral history**

Conducting an ethnographic study of Filipino migrants in Australia via their print culture necessitates a good measure of 'detective' work in finding what materials are recoverable and the circumstances that engendered their production.

There are three stages of data gathering: [1] the familiarisation with and accumulation of printed materials; [2] interviewing informants shortlisted from a long list of personalities; and [3] the close reading and analysis of texts. This three-tiered method of data collection, however, was predated by an informal immersion that started on the day I arrived in Sydney. The inside/outside subjectivities I vacillate to and from—for I am a migrant for the 'white outside' and a non-migrant for the 'brown inside'—are life-worlds I temporarily inhabited in the duration of my research.

Archival work: Tracing history materially

One positive outcome of researching Filipino-Australian print culture is the writing of the history of the community's ethnic newspapers, something that has not been attempted before. This was met by an enthusiastic response from editors and publishers who knew the importance of newspapers in community building. In fact, an editor whipped up his short version of this history in an article in his newspaper soon after our interview. His gesture provoked animosity for allegedly deliberately omitting the name of another editor. This is a clear instance in which this research has 'intervened' in the affairs of the community.

What was the very first Filipino community newspaper in Australia? Who dreamt and accomplished the goal of giving form to the collective story of the community? Does the spirit of publishing a newspaper that gathered the brightest and bravest of Filipino expatriates in Barcelona in coming up with *La Solidaridad* (first

published in 1889) the same one that guided those in Australia?¹⁴ How do community newspapers reinforce their 'imagined community' amidst conditions that demand of migrants a different set of political loyalties and exercises? The research begins with newspapers because they are a collective effort that draws contributions from others to document an immigrant public sphere. In the history of solidarity movements, nation-building and revolutionary struggles, the newspaper is present and potent: often a symbol of freedom of speech or the fight for it. As is often claimed, a single issue of a community's newspaper is a document of the community's past, present and its future aspirations. Although often initiated by members of the intelligensia, the newspaper's growth tells of the eventual participation from a greater number of members and is often a source of the inner dynamics of a system. Benedict Anderson famously articulated the significance of newspapers as 'one-day best-sellers' which are consumed 'in silent privacy, in the lair of the skull' ([1983] 2006, 35). Newspapers are integral in the imagining of communal everyday life in diaspora. An ethnic newspaper in one's hands is more than a compression of time and space; it reminds one that all is not lost despite the wages of migration.

The National Library of Australia and the state libraries of New South Wales and Victoria have archived a few titles with severely incomplete collections (with the exception of the still-running *Bayanihan News*). While not enough to write a history, they were sufficient to start detective work on those which had ceased publication. From the extant ones I was able to make a partial historiographical table of all the tabloids published in the country and the years of circulation. I say 'partial' because

¹⁴ Filipino *ilustrados* in Barcelona a decade before the revolution for independence formed an organisation to politically advance the situation of the colony in Spain, an expatriate propaganda machine. The most illustrious names in Philippine history such as Jose Rizal, Galicano Apacible, Graciano Lopez-Jaena, Mariano Ponce, Marcelo H. del Pilar, Antonio Luna, Pedro Paterno, Isabelo de los Reyes, among others, contributed to the issues of the newspaper.

I believe that despite the care and meticulous combing of these titles, there could still be a few that may have escaped. Indeed, to declare that my list is complete is presumptuous in a field where material trace may be present but somehow elusive. Although the microfilm version is enough to jumpstart the detective work and then a thematic analysis of content, somehow it was important symbolically to find and collect the real *thing* as a study on material culture. The moment I was shown the very first issue of *Bagumbayan*, the first ever newsletter by the community, or the frayed maiden issue of *Balita*, the first tabloid, or what can be called amateur galley proofs of the first solidarity newsletter, *Philippine News*, there was a certain excitement that was absent when I opened *Philippine Voice* in the microfilm. It was the magic of material culture. The symbolic power ascribed to print is not an affect of it as an intellectual exercise but because of its very *objectivity*: the endurance of physical matter to gather dust, half-forgotten in the stillness of being a 'mere' thing. The power of materiality to write history anew but also its vulnerability to destruction was real when I was asked to clean up, categorise and collate a collection of newspapers by an editor from a deplorable state of disarray in exchange for his spare copies. A few of the titles I was privileged to lay my hands on are not in the libraries so that if these last few copies end up in the bin, the danger of them being non-existent (but nonetheless existed) is real. Thus, I was more convinced of the significance of this historiographical exercise.

Apart from newspapers, print culture encompasses the books, manuscripts, directories, 'yellow pages', documents, souvenir programs, anthologies, newsletters and bulletins published and distributed by Filipinos in Australia. Some of the published works studied here is found in libraries all over Australia; however, there are many

publications which proved to be extra elusive. It was not unusual to write the publisher or the author, often conflated into one, for a copy of their work; some were given as complimentary copy, some were sold. The tangible presence of a book is of interest to me as a researcher for its size, thickness, cover layout, cover art, quality of paper, errata, blurb, biographical note, which are all significant identification of production processes. Archival work proved to be an essential component of 'migrant qualitative research' because sources and materials are often not readily available in established institutions. Especially if the community is as young and minoritised, therefore uninfluential, as Filipinos in Australia, preservation of historical documents is not deemed particularly important. A Philippine Resource Centre in Melbourne was operational in the early 1980s (further discussed in Chapter 8) archiving Filipiniana materials. Apart from private collectors, I believe that there is no 'Filipino Resource Centre' as such taking care of this task today; the intrigue-laden 'multi-purpose centre' proposed for Western Sydney has not opened.

Oral histories: Recovering memories and suturing gaps

The disadvantage of not having properly archived materials is, however, compensated by oral history through the availability of an active population of first-generation migrants. The usefulness of oral history in 'migrant qualitative research' is even more pronounced if official histories are not available; or if there were, oral history provides a comparative text with which written histories can be evaluated. Despite suffering marginalisation in the nineteenth century, the resurgence of orality as a method of research in the 1970s points to the 'fundamental relationship between history and the community' (Thompson 1998, 26). For the purposes of

historical reconstruction, oral history has given voice, participation and representation in history to the working class, the indigenous, and other cultural and political minorities—those 'hidden from history'—specifically women (Rowbotham 1973). Those who are traditionally peripheral to the practice of documentation are recovered from oblivion, so to speak, through oral history, but more so, they are able to 'assert [their] interpretation of that past' (Perks and Thomson 1998, ix). Despite criticism of oral history as methodologically flawed—memories are suspect to credibility—the proliferation of oral history societies and academic journals devoted to oral history have not ceased in promoting its serviceability. For Alessandro Portelli, the so-called flaw is a misrecognition for 'oral sources are credible but with a *different credibility*' (1998, 68; emphasis original). This difference is precisely what makes oral history unique and useful: not because it draws out hard facts but because it departs from it. Moreover, what he calls the 'partiality' of oral sources—its 'unfinishedness' and its 'taking sides'—is what renders it as creative, interactive and revisable platform in the historiographical process (Portelli 1998, 73).

It is in this light that orality is crucial in the writing of a history of Filipino ethnic newspapers in particular, but also of the minority group's print culture in general. However, oral history that perpetuates the 'community myth', often offered by the 'middle' stratum (neither the too poor for they often are not articulate nor the too rich for they may have written their own histories), should also be reflexively considered (Thompson 1998, 26). In this study, the use of oral histories in the production and consumption of print culture of a tiny slice of Australian minority fits congruously in reconstructing the material origins of this community life. The power of the middle stratum in monopolising the perpetuation of myths or the creation of new

ones is exemplified by this example. In the 2006 census, 53,283 (39 per cent) of migrants of Filipino ancestry speak Tagalog while 39,048 (29 per cent) speak Filipino; the counting was exclusive. Before that, Australian census counted Filipino and Tagalog speakers as one. What brought about this change, I surmise, is a strong lobbying from the 'middle stratum', the ones who have the authority of representation, more specifically, those who refuse to acknowledge that Manila-centric Tagalog—the regional language on which Filipino is based—is, *de facto*, the nation's lingua franca. The ethnolinguistic divisions in the Philippines are exported to Australia: some would rather differentiate Tagalog from Filipino instead of adding another language amongst the hundreds listed in the census.¹⁵

A pre-fieldwork review of literature led to little result on the history of ethnic newspapers by Filipinos which means that a reconstruction of their history through people's memory is necessary. Writing this history through interviews could either take the form of 'life histories' (one's whole life story) or 'oral histories' (centred on a topic or period of one's life). Life histories require repeated visits and conversations with a subject while oral histories are often gathered from one-meeting interviews (O'Reilly 2005, 128). While I intended to conduct oral history interviews focusing on the subject's writing and/or publishing life, migrants always already carry with them their whole life's story. A significant number of my participants ended up telling me personal and intimate details about their lives, both men and women, but mostly women. A few of them I continued to see long after the 'formal' interview had

¹⁵ Other languages listed in the 2006 census are Bikol, Cebuano, Ilokano, Ilonggo and Pampangan. These languages are dissimilar from one another syntactically but Tagalog and Filipino are not. While Filipino as a provisional language—a promissory chimera enriched by lexical borrowings from other languages—is unfinished, I, a native speaker would not be able to know what to tick between the two. Technically, 'Filipino' is the *lingua franca* while 'Tagalog' is the language spoken in and around Manila; both have the same syntactic rules.

transpired. Despite this, I preferred to use 'oral histories' because a huge portion of - the narratives remains undisclosed in the thesis. These oral histories, nonetheless, have proven to be reconstructive in the formation of a 'mail-order bride' discourse as discussed in Chapter 4's women's writings.

In most ethnographic studies that employ in-depth interviews, snowballing as a way of tapping potential interviewees is common. However, this study is rather unique because while snowballing occurred within certain cliques, there were attempts by others to stop me from reaching out to prospective sources. This creative strategising hints at the power of speaking and representing of the 'middle' stratum with very material manifestations. Battling it out for the right to represent and the privilege to speak makes more sense if editors and writers are framed but also frame themselves not only as gatekeepers of the community but also as entrepreneurial agents in the marketplace of ethnicity. But this power to influence is minute in relation to Australian multicultural machinery. Despite these very privileged yet relational positions of power, my interviews, instead of making the 'subaltern' speak, reveal struggle for discursive power, forging of alliances, alignment of interests, among others, which are nonetheless very worthwhile on their own. On the other hand, they have not been entirely negative; these interviews also revealed solidarity, networking and common interests.

Weaving a written narrative from the oral accounts and interpretations of twenty-nine Filipino-Australians who either published, edited or wrote for a newspaper of their own and their rivals' experiences in the 'industry' of migrant material culture is not easy. Mostly relying on their memories of events that

happened some thirty to thirty-five years ago, my interviews with the informants were characterised by uncertainty, at times self-doubt, suggesting I should counter-check through other sources, and at other times followed up by an email for clarifications. This challenge of constructing history through orality is further complicated by personality differences if not openly hostile attitudes towards a colleague. Thus, validation of details via another informant's version may be unreliable as layers of misunderstandings have jaded the recollection of a past they shared. This problem makes it impossible to make an accurate claim as to the dates of publication especially when the editors or publishers themselves do not have master copies of their newspapers. However, all is not in vain. Take, for example, the manner by which I established the very first non-tabloid publication by Filipino-Australians, *Bagumbayan*.

Rifling through *Filipin-oz Directory* (2008)—the 'yellow pages' for Filipinos—published by Benjie de Ubago, once editor and publisher of a Parramatta-based newspaper, *Fil-Oz Newspaper*, I read that the first print material that the Filipino community had ever produced in whatever format in Sydney is *Kalayaan* [Freedom] under the leadership of a former pilot, Tony Dedal. A previous interview with Sennie Masian, publisher and once press secretary on multiculturalism under NSW Premier Nick Greiner, revealed that she, together with Dedal, put out *Kawayan* [Bamboo] in 1975. Confronted with the purported existence of two titles phonologically alike, I had to search for Dedal whose daughter Pat informed me that he is not available for interview (Pat Dedal, e-mail message, March 18, 2010). She, nevertheless, confirmed that Dedal founded *Kawayan* not *Kalayaan*. I then informed De Ubago of the mistake in her directory's local history; she vowed to correct it. However, a print

material entitled *Kawayan* is not in the catalogue of the National Library of Australia or in the State Library of New South Wales; this led me to pursue the case and see for myself a copy of *Kawayan*. Jaime Pimentel, once a television director in the Philippines then a journalist for Fairfax, argued that it cannot be claimed that *Kawayan* was representative of a truly significant print material produced by the community. According to him, it was:

an in-house publication for the Federation of Filipino Clubs, and I put together (writeups, editing, typesetting, layout and pre-production) the four-page tabloid-size publication on white bond paper for the Federation's annual Independence Day Ball at the Sebel Town House Hotel in Kings Cross. It served as the occasion's souvenir program, featuring candidates of the Miss Philippines crown (my daughter Susan was a candidate). Content was all about the Federation's activities. And I had it printed in a small flat-bed printing press in Newtown (Jaime Pimentel, e-mail message, March 16, 2010).

Furthermore, Pimentel did not know that there is a certain *Kawayan* publication aside from this one; a claim opposite to Pat's that her father published *Kawayan* after *Philippine Balita* in 1980. Whether or not *Kawayan* was a considerable effort to start off a migrant print material culture in Sydney is something I could not prove for I could not establish its production. The detective work involved here displays the effectivity and also the limitations of oral history in historicising print culture, but also the uses of print in correcting oral history.

On a final note, audio recorders were not used in these interviews. I believe, like some ethnographers, that 'tape recorders are not essential for fieldwork' (Tolich and Davidson 1999, 119). Based on the researcher's experience, the presence of a machine that records for posterity what one has to say often made the person cautious, often significantly withholding their opinions. This perception on tape-

recording while doing one's fieldwork is shared by Barrett and Cason who mentioned that there is no consensus about the use of tape recorder among scholars (1997, 100-01). Dependence on the device recording what had transpired also means less reflective thinking and quick responses during the conversation (O'Reilly 2005, 154). Although at times threatened by thoughts of missing out on details, the interview questions were most of the time answered in Filipino interspersed with English sentences, which gave me confidence that I did not lose focus conducting the interview while taking down notes. Furthermore, I recommend that if the researcher speaks the same language as her subjects, it may be easier to take one's notes in that language. Key words in Filipino were enough to remember a deluge of interview transcript. However, although note-taking sometimes slowed me down, I was amazed with how much information I could remember whenever I study the notes after the interviews. Because memory can be fallible and one does not wish to misquote a participant, I refrain from using direct quotes unless I was sure of the exact utterances. Lastly, pseudonyms are not used because they all agreed to be named in the text; this is the case for those whose works are published.

Textual analyses: Finding the common threads of dislocation

As far as I have been able to ascertain, the very first 'book' published by a member of the Filipino community was Fe Gilbey's *Filipiniana: A Collection of Rhymes, Games, Beliefs and Superstition, Poems, Proverbs, Folk Tales, Folk Songs and Recipes* in 1984 from South Australia. The most recent is *Understanding Jose Rizal* by Renato Perdon (2011) (See Appendix E for a listing of Filipino-Australian writings.) In between these years have been many titles of fictional and nonfictional books

published by Filipino-Australians. Most of them are self-published efforts of non-professional writers; a few are establishment-published; many are collective efforts from organisations under the banner of multiculturalism; a few are titles that have nothing to do with immigration. I excluded the poetry of Ivy Alvarez, Philippine-born migrant in Tasmania, her work does not deeply express immigrant themes.¹⁶ Arlene Chai, known for her Random House-published novels and Ranulfo Concon who has published several titles with University of Queensland Press, have been left out in this study: first, for their status as establishment-published has given their works due attention in other fora.¹⁷ Not only did they have more chance to be read by mainstream Australia, they have been reviewed in dailies and had been given as classroom readings. Second, I wanted to focus more on unpublished, unread, non-professional writers ensconced in their own communities and their local concerns with the exception of Merlinda Bobis and Purita Echevarria de Gonzalez whose certain works tackle crucial themes in this ethnography.

Like organisms naturally inclined to group themselves, these works gravitate toward certain issues with significant meaning for Filipino-Australians: the 'mail-order bride', the elderly, social class divisions, racism, community building, to mention a few. In rendering textual analyses in each of the chapters, I search for the cultural and/or political representations at work and then tie them up with the information I gathered on the materiality—production or consumption aspect—of the published works. For instance, two anthologies by elderly Filipinos are studied in one chapter

¹⁶ Some of Alvarez's works are *Mortal* (2006); *what's wrong* (2004); *catalogue: life as tableware* (2004); *Food for humans* (2002).

¹⁷ Chai wrote *Black Hearts* (2000), *On the Goddess Rock* (1998), *Eating Fire and Drinking water* (1996) and *The Last Time I Saw Mother* (1995), all from Random House Australia. Concon published *Joker* (2006), *Danika vs the Monster Slayer* (2004), *Danika in the Underworld* (2003), *Nirvana's Children* (2001).

about 'hidden' migration and unpaid domestic labour; this is reinforced by other materials that pertain to the elderly on representation of the aged in traditional Filipino values.

Nicole Constable's *Romance on a Global Stage: Pen Pals, Virtual Ethnography, and 'Mail-Order' Marriages* (2003), a now-authoritative work on the topic, explicitly downgrades textual analyses of catalogues and introduction sites in the study of 'mail-order brides' as they tend to render overworked readings of the orientalist 'Asian' woman. She, instead, probes into 'virtual ethnography' where informants she later met in person were met in online forums. Constable heavily criticised frameworks not reflective of feminist politics such as Mila Glodava and Richard Onizuka's study (1994) which relies on sensationalist textual analyses (2003, 69-76).¹⁸ While I agree with Constable that catalogues and websites as primary materials on cross-cultural marriages may be limited, I believe that textual analyses of works by women from the community may be as insightful, if not more, than exchanges done in chat rooms.

Conclusion

Placing a discussion of research methodologies vis-à-vis the sexualised citizenship of Filipino migrants in Australia brings out the challenge of conducting an ethnography that is both ethical and sensitive. More importantly, a researcher who is conscious of the sexist and racialist, not to mention class-based, prejudices that have

¹⁸ Ironically, Pheng Cheah critiqued Constable's earlier work, *Maid to Order in Hong Kong: Stories of Filipina Workers* (1997) as 'sentimental and at times sensationalist...at the expense of conceptual thought' (2006, 181). There was an obvious attempt by Constable to make her work on 'brides' less as a showcase of victimisation.

immobilised and silenced the Filipino community is all the more challenged to factor this in the research process. While I do not suggest that there is a '*mail-order bride*' methodology that singularly guarantees the 'success' of such ethical project, I do imply that the adjustments, specificities, the little details a researcher designs into her work are integrally connected to the very history of migration which her subjects are constructed by and, in turn, help to construct. On the other hand, a methodological design that is fixed on the '*mail-order bride*'—if such is ever possible in the social sciences—is in danger of boxing the subject in a hole wherein which it becomes impossible to come out. A '*mail-order bride*' research may not only be conceptually limiting, it could also be the exact opposite of liberation to which such attempts are directed.

To validate the particularities of the '*migrant qualitative research*' I endorse here, the next chapter situates why there is a need for this based on the demands colonialist representations make of sexualised citizens. The material cultural work that migrants do, and the belief in contributing to their own visibility by doing so, is equally pertinent to combat subtle forms of colonialism.

Chapter 2

Representation, coloniality and materiality: Making sense of migrant print culture

It is especially on the bodies and lives of women and girls from the Third World/South—the Two-Thirds World—that global capitalism writes its script, and it is by paying attention to and theorizing the experiences of these communities of women and girls that we demystify capitalism as a system of debilitating sexism and racism and envision anticapitalist resistance.

Chandra Mohanty (2003, 235)

Geraldo Rivera, the US talk show host, equating foreign brides to 'a household appliance with sex organs' created a vivid image of how these women are represented (in *So* 2008, 107). As recent as 2009, actor Alec Baldwin joked how he would eventually get himself a 'Filipina mail-order bride' as he gets older but without a wife (for which he later apologised to the Philippine government) (Balana 2009). Even headlines like 'Filipina brides heroines of Australian outback', a defense of the women by Richard Jackson, do not alleviate the singularity by which Filipino women are attached to the label 'mail-order bride' ('Filipina Brides Heroines of Australian Outback—Professor', 1989). The onslaught of Orientalist depictions of the hyperfeminised Filipino woman in the Australian media from the 1970s to the 1990s has pushed the entire community to a corner where shame and women have become inextricable from each other. This is why Filipino-Australian print culture is invested with a great responsibility as a counterpoise to the prevailing discourse. I would argue that while a portion of Filipino-Australian print culture works on community building or immigrant issues that seem separate from the 'mail-order

bride', the force with which the issue pounded the community has given gendered representation an equivocal centrality. The images of the Filipino woman in film, television and print media have in themselves engendered a sizeable scholarship critiquing the abuses of sensationalism (Marshall 1997; Saroca 2002; Cunneen and Stubbs 1997) and policy-making responses to counteract the injurious effects (Mowatt and Wall 1992; Ramilo and Droescher 1992). This is the reason why a discussion of representation, its theories, uses and relevance, is indispensable in this study.

With the representation of the Filipino migrant in mind, I will situate this image of sphinx-like creatures: brown faces in servile, petite bodies but as tough as a home freezer—as defining the trajectory of their print production. How are these representations and the exact moments they occupy in diasporic history carved in print culture? The other framework, material-culture studies, fittingly applies to the immigrant print culture in exposing the struggle towards self-representation as a rectificatory project but more so of the historical trajectory that it has taken. For while there are many sites by which immigrant material-culture studies could be approached—such as community festivities, food production, distribution and consumption and money remittance practices, to mention only a few of the centerpieces of diasporic life—I argue in this chapter that the printed, too, is an equally compelling site of materiality. Through the presentation of what constitutes Filipino print culture and the actual labour invested in it, this study aims to analyse how diasporic history emerged out of this very materiality and, thus, engendered its own writing.

What do you see when you look at me?

'Representation' as a term is quite common in the English-speaking world: one encounters it in everyday life. It may be to discuss the cultural 'representations' of an ethnic grouping, or to express dissatisfaction with the local district's 'representative' in parliament, or simply to ask a friend to 'represent' oneself in some social affair. What does it mean to *re-present*? How does one make present that which is not physically there? What moral obligations are there when one solicits representation? In the mass media and politics, representation *just* happens: one gets represented by another; one in turn represents others in an endless cyclical routine. Despite the 'naturalness' of doing/making/performing representation, what is evident is that getting involved in it forces one to participate in enframing and being *enframed*, a term preferred by Heidegger—a 'destining of revealing', thus, an 'ordering' ([1954] 1977, 25-27). These structures of frame constantly shift, 'ordering', thereby generating perpetual conflicts against and flows with each other.

The Oxford English Dictionary lists eight major nuances for this one word, these are: '[1] presence, bearing, air; [2] an image, likeness, or reproduction in some manner of a thing; [3] the exhibition of character and action upon the stage; the (or a) performance of a play; [4] a formal and serious statement of facts, reasons, or arguments, made with a view to effecting some change, preventing some action, etc.; hence, a remonstrance, protest, expostulation; [5] the action of presenting to the mind or imagination; an image thus presented; a clearly-conceived idea or concept; [6] the fact of standing for, or in place of, some other thing or person, esp. with a right or authority to act on their account; substitution of one thing or person for

another; [8] the fact of representing or being represented in a legislative or deliberative assembly, spec. in Parliament; the position, principle, or system implied by this' (OED 2010a).

All these meanings of the word *representation* (Latin: *repraesentatio*), whose first appearance in 1325 is in French, can be narrowed down, though not without problems, into two basic definitions (OED 2010a). First, representation can mean 'to make present again, in two interrelated ways: spatial and temporal' and second is to stand in for: a form of substitution where 'a present term "b" stands in for an absent term "a"' (Prendergast 2000, 4-5). Although distinguishable, these two meanings are not exclusive of each other for substitution could bring forth an apparition—a summoning of a spectre—that makes a re-presence possible. Representation, as in making present again, is well known in the arts where, for instance, a recognisable figure in a painting could represent beauty or truth or a national symbol. On the other hand, representation, as in standing in for something or someone, is almost always related to political life where representative democracy is all about a select few who stand for the multitude. In many instances and forms, such as those experienced by multicultural societies, representation of a group means symbolically presenting an idea or a political stance. These two definitions of 'representation' are so intertwined that divorcing would be too reductive and simplistic. So entrenched is 'representation' in Western philosophy that it self-explains its all-too-common uses; on the other hand, this comfort has resulted in a kind of epistemological discomfort giving the word semantic notoriety.

I discuss this because at the heart of Australian imagining of the Filipino is the 'Filipina', and crucial to this imagining is first, gendered representation, and second, the understanding that the backbone of the community's desire to be represented in Australia is to counter this imagining: the Filipino woman beside the towering white man and their children backgrounded by an affluent, picket-fence suburb where everything seems right except her presence. (Or, the more disturbing impoverished interracial couple in the Australian outback.) Indeed, earlier skilled migration of Filipino musicians, nurses, *mestizo* families, and others were elided because of the image of the insidious 'bride' to bait the white male. Saroca's (2002) thesis rightly places sensationalism on the part of the (racist) media heightens the sexism and chauvinism that define the relationship between a white man and an 'ethnic' woman. It does not help either to curb the barrage of bad news when Sunday magazine reading features the plight of a Filipino wife who was left half-dead by her partner in a toilet for days after an abortion, and right next to it is a story of a smiling new wife flown in to help in the construction of the house of an Australian man (in Barrowclough 1995, 48-49). (A more detailed discussion of the ways in which the Filipino woman is represented in Australian dailies is discussed in Chapter 4.)

'What does it mean to be represented?' is a question surrounded by a myriad of debates starting from the Platonic pre-representational realm to the Kantian subject who is 'nothing other than a capacity for representation' (Colebrook 2000, 53). This rigid intimacy between the subject/object relationship has undergone much scrutiny, for instance, in Nelson Goodman's take on 'worldmaking' where the known world according to the perceiving subject is perpetually being re-worked, remade, re-organised and re-presented: 'worldmaking as we know it always starts from worlds

already on hand' (1978, 6). This is much more attractive than Kant's analysis for Goodman sees representations as renewable if not transformable in an endless display of replacement that creates *known worlds* instead of just one. However, the claim that everything is a representation—a theoretical 'prison house' whose imagery connotes a kind of inescapable damnation—has lost traction exemplified by Fredric Jameson's analysis of linguistic models (1972). To suggest that people's lives out there are meaningful only within the entanglements of representation undermines the physical and material reality of oppression of many and the dominance of the few. The reductionist logic that underpins representation as the end-all of our social world is rather comfortable to those who rule in a white, middle-class and masculinist ideological universe.¹⁹ In effect, this is to say that an Australian male's fantasy of the submissive third-world woman is not simply a creation of words and images but that she exists out of the real poverty that is driven by forces that shaped her world.

Any study of representation is a study of power. Representation conjures thoughts and images of *speaking about* and *speaking for* that implicate actions and actors that are empowered to represent. Behind this intricate relationship is inevitably the accessibility of knowledge to those who do the representing. To be able to speak about and speak for someone, knowledge of that something and someone must be operational. To know nothing about one thing deters one from saying anything at all. While it is logical to argue that at the heart of the representation question is power relations, and that knowledge is constitutive of power relations (in

¹⁹ In Saroca's (2002) study on domestic violence and murders committed against Filipino women, it was clear that while the battle on media representation had been raging in Australian print and broadcast media, women were getting bashed and killed. On the other hand, those who mused and debated about 'mail-order brides' and their plight remain ensconced in their comfortable social positions, often rewarded for their activism.

the same way that power relations are constitutive of knowledge), it is even more profound to recognise that in representation is the very significant issue of knowing and the limits of our capacity to know—or what we are allowed to know. The power of Australian media to mould what is knowable about the Filipino woman is all the more staggering if its public is unfamiliar with the Philippines and the colonial history that has shaped its current state and status in the global stage. Indeed, written in a newspaper article, in Australia 'the Philippines is known in Australia for its mail-order brides' (Skehan 1995). If that is so, when an Australian man transposes the 'mail-order bride' subjectivity onto a Filipino woman he meets, is this the performative power of representation?

The critique of representation of the 'third-world woman'—as slave, saviour of the empty Western man, substitute to the liberated first-world woman—is engendered by the continuum of postcolonial theorising of the empire and the power of coloniality (Said 1978, 1993; Fanon [1963] 1968, [1967] 1986; Césaire [1955] 2000; Memmi 1967; Mignolo 1999) and of feminism's exposition of women as a subjugated class (De Beauvoir [1949] 2010; Friedan 1963; Delphy [1977] 1980; Delphy and Leonard 1992). What follows then is the postcolonial debate with/against feminism on the primacy of either discourse in decolonising the 'third-world woman'. Some of the more engaging ideas on women challenging racist, nationalist, sexist and classist rhetoric are by Minh-ha (1989), Spivak (1985, 1989), Mohanty (1994), and Suleri (1992), Ahmed (1998), among others. These debates on how postcolonial movements for independence appropriate women as secondary revolutionaries and how Western feminism saves these women from their men and their own ignorance invest heavily on how 'third-world women' are imagined and represented in both

discourses. Nationalists treat women as mothers nourishing the future citizens of the land, Marxists see women as fighters yet secondary to male cadres, and first-world feminists surround them with iconicity of the oppressed. This raises the question of the enframing of the inside and the outside; the boundaries of interiority and exteriority; hence, politicising the making or wording of 'us' and 'them', the Self and the Other, the man and the woman, the colonised body and the colonising system of knowledge, the Filipino and the Australian. The representations of the coloniser as both despised but desired, fantasised but debased are symptomatic of the ambivalences in colonial relations. Setting a subjectivity against another in a binary relationship is something not merely discovered, but made possible.

The question of the 'third-world woman' is at the heart, yet ironically peripheral, of the decolonisation of empires and the subsequent postcolonial independent nation-states as she suffers the 'double colonisation' by native and foreign patriarchies (Gandhi 1998, 82-84). In the postcolonial and feminist tug-of-war appropriating the 'third-world woman', she is either a 'native' or a 'woman', either for nationalism or for feminism. She is invested with so much meaning that she is almost 'too good to be true', argues Sara Suleri (1992, 273). The appropriation of the 'mail-order bride' in Australia oscillates between a (nationalist) ethnic ownership to be defended by the 'community' and colonial possession by the white Australian male. Like the symbol of nationalist motherhood of the 'third-world woman', the 'mail-order bride' has been positioned by community leaders as the figure of the oppressed *kababayan* (but *never* as a sister or a daughter) to rally for community issues. This function is further emphasised by Australia's self-referential mirroring as colonising master. For without the 'third-world woman'—the Filipino 'mail-order

bride' specifically—white Australia's coloniality today is incomplete. The foreign wife—dark, dirty, different—contributes to the construction of Australia's modernity. The very presence of the Filipino woman circumscribes Australia *in* modernity specifically that of the white male from the outback as well as the outback itself, to a certain degree, of Australia as the 'outback' of the North Atlantic countries. This 'outback' is almost already a white outback because to transpose the alien bride in a 'black outback'—the indigenous other—would diminish the usability of the ethnic woman as antithetical to modernity. The same logic applies as to why the 'mail-order bride' problem is a 'white' problem, shouldered by white Australia alone, managed by white Australia singularly. Indigenous opinion on the 'mail-order bride' is silent—because they are not positioned to comment at all—because the question of 'modernity' is 'outside' of the black Australian experience; it is for those who are positioned to appropriate the representational labour of others.

As it has been well established by postcolonial scholarship, the power relations between the coloniser and its other are translatable into the wealth siphoned off to the metropolitan population and proved by the immiseration of the colonised population and the disintegration of its 'local' culture. However, the ravages of colonialism are made possible both by forceful violence of the colonising power and by the consent and collaboration of the 'natives', mostly of postcolonial comprador class. The world picture of the colonised and their place in it as the represented is not entirely a distorted one or incorrect. The power of colonial language and representation can be too authoritative, hence persuasive, so that those who are represented believe, reinforce and even perpetuate what they have learned as *true*. The labeling of Filipino women as wives for sale has become so

entrenched that a project initiated by Ambassador Delia Domingo-Albert to honour Filipino achievers in Australia exhibits this admission of an authoritative representation. Discussed in Chapter 4 and partly in Chapter 5, the community's responses through public performances in the name of feminism and multiculturalism and masculinist literary productions show that certain forms of resistance and disavowal constitute a silent complicity in furthering representations as not necessarily true but not false either.

Disentangling the conflation of the represented subject and the representation turns out to be a difficult project even for those who attempt to deconstruct the ideology that underpins racialist and sexist discourses. In *Economic Citizens*, Christine So (2008) exposes the complicit role of Asian-American literature in the perpetuation of the money-grubbing 'Asian' stereotype in the United States. In doing so, she plumbs the wealth of texts written by Chinese and Japanese-Americans to discuss the accumulation of migrant money (2008, 7-9). However, her discussion of the mail-order bride drops the Chinese and the Japanese entirely and focuses on the Thai and the Filipino woman.²⁰ The Thai subjectivity was given primacy for she was given the 'subaltern's' recuperative voice through Wanwadee Larsen's memoir (So 2008, 116-24); on the other hand, all the statistics, the catalogue examples, the murders, the history of migration, the 'cold' and 'hard' non-

²⁰ In a not so dissimilar way of portraying Filipino women as destitute 'mail-order brides', Constable (2003) described Filipino women married to U.S. men as from a 'lower socioeconomic class than the Chinese women' based on chat-room ethnography (2003, 43). So and Constable's juxtaposition of Filipino women vis-à-vis Thai and Chinese—all 'mail-order brides'—point to, unknowingly, the hierarchisation of these women and the persistence of certain stereotypes they wish to avoid.

representational facts of the 'mail-order bride' were relegated to the muted Filipino woman subject.²¹

Roland Tolentino historicises the specificities of 'American' capitalism and how these intersect with transborder sexual labour (2001, 2-10). Apart from and because of the wealth available to white Americans, the efficient postal system and the eradication of pilferage, the speed of Western transportation and communication, the burgeoning influence of advertising, and a spurring on of a thoroughly consumerist society, the importation of women from the third-world is imaginable (2001, 11-15). The gazing (the availability of choice), the shopping (the capacity to buy) and the receiving (the pleasures of being surprised) are stages in the exchange of goods that fuel the fetishism on the foreign bride. As the violable other—the desirable grotesquerie—the Filipino woman approximates object-like status whose presence is expected to humanise the lonely white male. The power in ordering, thus imagining, the representations of the take-away geisha (without the cultural refinement of the Japanese) hark back to Said's (1978) formulation of orientalising the east but within material contexts.

To construe representations as imagined, fabricated or half-lies may not be accurate because the Filipino woman in Australia is an embodiment of international market forces and domestic responses to these. However, the handiness of translating commodification of women via formulaic representations of the exotic other gives concrete reality to gendered violence of unequal international

²¹ There is a 'mail-order bride' memoir, *For a House Made of Stone: Gina's Story* (2007), about Filipina Gina French whose story brought her from an impoverished mountain village to the bars in Manila to the United Kingdom.

economic relations; to the hands that bash a woman's face. The representations of the Filipino woman, in catalogues in the 1980s and in the internet today, are commodities themselves that embody the fetishism of consuming westernised 'third-world women' yet personify Catholic ethos. The Filipino woman is historically determined to become the desired body because Spanish colonialism cloistered her well while Americanisation liberated her; in other words, the fantasy of a 'proper whore'. Popular rhetoric such as '300 years in the convent and 50 years of Hollywood' exemplify this subjective construction that both Filipinos and outsiders believe. One such fetishisation of the fantasy is from Carmen Guerrero Nakpil, who, in a widely influential essay 'The Filipino Woman' written in 1951, wrote, 'For the Filipina is a woman with a past—a long, unburied, polychromatic, delicious past which is forever returning to color her days. There have been three men in her life: her Asiatic ancestor, the Spanish friar, and the Americano, and like Chekov's Darling, she echoes all the men has known in her person' (1999, 7). The unmissable sexual tone of this passage is a powerful imagery of valorised 'whoreness' that Filipino women suffer today that elite women like Nakpil do not suffer from.

Celia Camara's (1996) oft-cited work as an example of this fetishisation of Filipino women—like many community reports of intervention that came before and after it, such as by The Filipino-Australian Club of Perth, Inc. (1987)—returns to the 'ravaged woman' trope of Nakpil. For one, Camara believes that the violence against 'mail-order brides' could be explained through a biblical approach: if only Australian men understood that the cultural differences between them are founded on her strong Catholic roots. Her study, sponsored to mitigate violations, defends the Filipino woman identified by her traits: modesty, finesse, *carriñosa* (affectionate)

chastity, happy disposition, resourcefulness, resiliency, good education, optimism, openness, sincerity, generosity, etcetera (2001, 20-21). The list is long and the biblical backing gathered to romanticise these traits along Christian ontology is thorough, which is an interestingly asymmetrical response to the succinct 'Australian' reply Camara quoted: 'you can just go to the Philippines and have sex with the women there' (Camara 1996, 16). In other words, Filipino self-representations in Australia are derived from the rhetoric of piety that does not resonate with 'non-pious' Australia; the insistence on the 'convent narrative'—while colonially derived—loses traction in contemporary colonialism.

Representations, in other words, have material realities and historical bases that are created and consumed, bought and sold, packaged and trafficked, either for ideological profit or monetary profit, or both. As a lucrative investment, representations and self-representations of the Filipina-as-an idea accrue profitable images and cultural interpretations to socially engineer behaviour and predict responses for a period of time. The posturing of the (white) Australian society against the invading 'mail-order bride' is to a great extent the result of this invested fetishism historically specific to Australia. The invading army of brides contaminating its social space is not unrelated to the right-wing view that Australia is being swamped by 'Asians'. Thus, representations have direct influence on national immigration policies for Australia not to be 'swamped'. The clamp down on serial sponsorship—to protect women from mentally, physically and financially incapacitated males—is also a measure to stop more Filipino women from coming, thus, a reduction in migrant intake. Often, racist immigration policies on spousal petition that function more like consumer protection and regulation acts point to the practical uses of intervention

(Simons 1999, 136-38; Narayan 1995, 116-17). In the states of Victoria in 1998 and Queensland in 2001, stricter policies on introduction agencies have been passed, expressed in these terms: "'due to continuing *unfair trading* practices in parts of the industry, which have led to considerable *consumer detriment*'" (Schloenhardt 2009, 7; my emphasis). Expectedly, the community framed such policies not as an immigration quota per se or as a continuation of women-for-sale discourse, but as a way to shift the culpability from sexualised citizens to male sponsors, often expressed as affirmative action with positive results.²² The couching of gendered migration in governmental interventions within the terms of trade, investment and consumption of women *may* control statistical damage but it does not challenge the platform wherein the politics of inequality is played out.

Because representations are not only 'commodified' but also reified—they are transformed by social and cultural relations into exchange value—then the social control of those who can wield representations to their advantage is real and material (Lukács 1971, 84-87). The consumption of the image of the trash-talking, pingpong ball-popping Filipino woman infamously portrayed in the film *The Adventures of Priscilla: Queen of the Desert* (1994) is an example of this. She is an embodiment of coloniality, orientalism, international division of labour, hyperfeminised migration, Australian media's racism, amongst others. More significantly, *Priscilla*, as one of Australia's iconic films that underwrites the national narrative of triumph against a hostile environment and of taming its black other and colonialist past, makes use of the Filipino woman to bolster a national fantasy

²² The Australian Law Reform Commission (1994) suggested to the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs that information on sponsors and their past and present application for sponsorship be collected to be used as a basis in granting spousal visas. The database was opened in four locations: Manila, Bangkok, Suva and Damascus (Barrowclough 1995, 53). In the U.S., only citizens—not permanent residents—can bring in fiancé(e)s (Constable 2003, 218-19).

(Tolentino 2001, 22-23; Marshall 1997, 14-17).

The commodification of representations, however, opens up the possibility of accommodation; who gets transformed into a more acceptable form for consumption.²³ Activism against media representations by some sections of the Filipino community have resulted in media practice; an accommodation acceptable enough but never radical. Take, for instance, the way in which dissenting voices led to the portrayal of another 'mail-order bride' in the film *Animal Kingdom* (2010), another very 'Australian' film; however, this time she is identifiable as neither Filipina nor trash-talking prostitute. The stereotyping is almost similar—Asian, petite, married to a lower-class white Australian—but not the same. The rejection of the garish outsider has been hidden. The commodified representation has been accommodated; yet, something is clear: the Filipino woman as 'mail-order bride' is part of the Australian national narrative. This understanding is significant because representations—especially the accommodated kind—can 'provide[s] intellectual and linguistic access to the rationale of the social and economic order of the society as a whole' (Hodge and Kress 1993, 70). If representations of the Filipino woman in Australia have become 'accommodating' enough, why must the boat be rocked? This question is pertinent in assessing race-related representations today in industries that reproduce and sell culture and consciousness, in particular, to those elite sections of the Filipino community whose 'burden' is to carry it through; one way is through print culture.

²³ Interestingly, the word 'accommodation' comes from the Latin *commodus* which means 'convenient'; the amusing fact is: 'commode' also means a chamber-pot: a vessel of convenience, so to speak. In French, 'commode' could also mean a 'chest of drawers'; later on the word was used to describe a chair under which is a pot (OED 2010c).

Cultural and political representation in the era of multiculturalism

Raymond Williams articulated that the cultural is 'ordinary' produced by the social relations of people with each other and with their material surrounding (1958, 74-77). By extension, one can define the political as the 'ordinary' produced by the governing and the governed within their given historical milieu. This extrapolation implicates a regime of ordering everyday life based on a normalisation of the cultural and the political. I raise this because a normalised 'ethnic' citizenry—their 'ordinary' presence in the national space—could be the rationale for their presence in the political. 'Political representation' is commonly understood as the participation of the masses in the exercise of democratic principles in a political space wherein a representative stands for all the constituents; on the other hand, 'cultural representation' is the compendium of images, symbols, impressions and descriptions available to stereotype a group of people based on perceived commonality, difference or originary characteristics that manifest in linguistic, cultural and other social practices. Because 'cultural' representation is not possible outside 'political' representation, and vice versa, the question as to how representation engenders the multicultural subject is pertinent in the study of Filipino-Australians.

The practice of representation in the political sphere is thus, unsurprisingly, judged as a passage to modernity; of electoral exercise as a mark of functioning democratic nation-states today. The opening up of political participation to 'ethnics' like Filipino-Australians is only fitting for Australian democracy, for electoral exercises that yield no 'ethnic' would be seen as problematic. Thomas Hobbes whose *Leviathan* ([1651] 1996) is a treatise on state power, its abundance and limits,

recognised that political representation and the representationality of language of the law are very much connected. Hobbes named that practice whereby fictive representatives are owned by the represented only through authorisation: 'authorised fictions' (1996, 111-15).²⁴ This delegation of authority—re-presencing of power—is the exchange for the citizens' entry into the *social contract* where social and political rights and liberties are relinquished to the sovereign power in order to be part of the larger body: leviathan-like state. The multitude, in turn, can expect protection and *representation* in a democratically ruled government. *Protego ergo oblige* – 'protection is the basis of obligation to the sovereign' (Hardt and Negri 2004, 238). While the state and the people's authorised fictive representatives organise, rule over and protect the represented, it is the multitude's obligation to express support and participate in the social and political life whether they are sufficiently represented or not. I raise Hobbes because multicultural representation is an 'authorised fiction' by white Australia on the pretext that representatives speak for their 'people'. Delegation of power to an 'ethnic' figure is a consolidation of the operations of institutional racism and political containment. One 'ethnic' leader, one 'ethnic' group is not bad at all. Hage likens such governmentality to managing a zoo 'aim[ed] at *regulating the modality of inclusion* of the Third World-looking migrants in national space' (1998, 133, emphasis original).

The opening up of Australia's borders to non-white immigration in the late 1960s entails political representation of 'ethnic' minorities. Although citizenship can be acquired, this does not authorise the entitlement to belong to the political sphere

²⁴ I quote from Hobbes: 'Of Persons Artificiall [as opposed to *Natural Person*], some have their words and actions Owned by those whom they represent. And then the Person is the *Actor*; and he that owneth his words and actions, is the *AUTHOR*: In which case the Actor acteth by Authority' (1996, 112).

and public life in Australia. Indeed, a passport is not a testament of belonging or acceptance, much less of participation in the nation's political destiny. However, as 'ethnic affairs' and 'community relations'—two terms that have been officially used in the names of government institutions—need to be 'managed' in the face of the growing numbers of (non-white) migrants, the question of their political representation gains magnitude. Blacktown, with the densest concentration of Filipino-Australians, carries the honour of having the first Filipino city councillor in the country in the person of Jess Diaz, as reported in his website (Diaz 2010). However, considering that Filipinos are one of the fastest growing communities after New Zealand, British, Chinese and Indian migrants, a one-councillor representation is rather slim. This is precisely why Rousseau was very much against 'democratic' representation: the very failure of the exercise of democracy. In *The Social Contract*, Rousseau argued that representational 'participation' is no participation at all. To be represented by a politician is not an exercise of political rights but rather a negation of it. A political environment can only be truly democratic if the constituents themselves participate in the decision-making affairs of the state ([1762] 2002, 165-66; 185-86). Consent is not constitutive of legitimacy. Any kind of representation, for Rousseau, is a practice of alienation of the electorate rather than inclusion. However, in a nation of 23 million led by a monolithic state, how does one ensure participatory governance? In Australia where the ruling political and economic elites are descendants of European settlers, how does an 'ethnic' representative stand a chance at a democratic exercise?

The marginal representation of immigrant and Aboriginal peoples in the governmental apparatus—except in mid-rank positions in 'race relations' agencies—

is a cleft in the legitimacy of 'democratic' representation. To suggest that this grave imbalance has cultural, therefore ethnic, grounding is an understatement. The stereotypical 'cultural' representations of the immigrant as alien, inscrutable, unassimilable, incompatible with Australian values, speaking un-Australian English, and of the Indigenous as lazy, ignorant, uncultivated, problematic, dark, incapable of intellectuality, are the unsaid reasons for their lack of presence in the political machine. These two terms—cultural representation and political representation—almost always drag each other into debates that question the validity of democratic representation and the prejudices of cultural representations. 'Whose people?' has taken a more complex interpretation in multiculturalism. One wonders how the Filipino councillor represents the sexualised citizens of 'his' community. While one can predict the emasculation that accompanies being a 'Filipino politician', the idea of the socio-political as a 'sexual contract' where sexual difference makes patriarchy operational (Pateman 1988, 11-14). That the politicisation of the 'mail-order bride' sprang from outside the formal political sphere is hardly surprising; law and governance—sexist as they are have no space for a feminist and ethnic 'authorised' representative. Michael Omi and Howard Winant point out that because of 'racial dictatorship' operating in the political system, 'ethnics', like Filipinos facing specific racialist issues, are 'forced inward upon themselves' where 'tremendous cultural resources were nurtured among such communities...to develop elements of an autonomy and opposition under such conditions' (1994, 80-81).

Multiculturalism, curiously, is a practice of political 'correctness' but not of moral righteousness; 'we were racists but not anymore' or 'I am not a racist but...' is the 'new racism' that operates in Australia (Hage 2002; Vasta and Castles 1996). It is

an inherently flawed structural system to successfully abate (or hide) racism in a predominantly white society. The liberalism of a culturally pluralist society tells 'ethnics' that they could be as 'Australian' as their next-door neighbour even if they eat *adobo* (a known Filipino dish); that they can be middle-class by working at two jobs at a time. However, even if one's perseverance enjoys economic gains, the 'mail-order bride' is never an 'ordinary' ethnic. The liberalism of multiculturalism does not overcome sexualisation; it operates on its gendered logic of excluding the ones who do not play by the rules of equal play. The avoidance, however, of the 'woman question' did not mitigate the community's scramble for its early chance to jump at its piece of the multicultural bone. Political representation draws its logic from the notion of cultural differences nourished, perpetuated and even exalted in cultural productions of migrants. Representatives of the community are, not surprisingly, often clothed literally in their ethnic/national costumes during multicultural events.

The boom of Filipino-Australian newspapers in the 1980s is an engagement with the invitation towards political participation. Many issues, articles, events, among others, function as an 'offering' to whatever it is that Australia is celebrating, as if Australia cares about their contribution. This kind of almost fetishistic display of ethnicity is equally a game that print productions are willing to play. For while the community is generally invisible in the Australian socio-political public sphere, it makes up for this loss by leaving traces of its marginality in narratives wherein Filipinos, for once, take centre stage. This brings to mind the Helen Demidenko hoax that not only scandalised the Australian literary circle but also highlighted the quest for authenticity in multiculturalism that drove a young writer of British descent to pretend

to be Australian-Ukrainian.²⁵ Feeding on the idea of multiculturalism amidst a white social world had greater implications for an ethnic group vilified because of its 'mail-order brides'.

Materiality in migrant print culture

Material culture in print negotiates the physical gesture of migration—the very materiality that translocation from one country to another entails—and the ways people are represented and their acceptance or rejection of those representations. The production of print materials and the consumption of culture it engenders illuminate three facets of the Filipino community that inform the writing of its ethnography: [1] the growth of the community and the subsequent formation of an ethnic 'ghetto'; [2] the composition and differences between social groups; and [3] the issues that resonate for the group and thus contribute to the writing of its history. A look at the material distribution and the variety of migrant print culture reveals that there is *not* one Filipino print material culture as there is *no* singular Filipino-Australianness. In this section, I outline important issues that underwrite materiality and its contribution in understanding our world.

'Material culture' is a term often found in the fields of anthropology and archeology to refer to *things*; what these things mean to the people of a specific

²⁵ Helen Demidenko's *The Hand that Signed the Paper* was published in 1994 and subsequently won literary awards including the Miles Franklin award celebrating 'Australian life'. The lauded novel follows the story of an Australian-Ukrainian girl's tragic past as she discovered her family's involvement in the Holocaust. Soon after, the work was accused of anti-Semitic undertones. It was later discovered that Demidenko who in real life is Helen Darville with no connection whatsoever to Ukraine as she previously claimed. This scandal has produced critical analyses of Australian search for "authentic" multicultural voice; an almost obsessive belief that the nation is truly open in its embrace of its immigrants. For more in-depth discussion, see Gunew (1996) and Manne (1996).

culture and why and how they came about (Tilley *et al* 2006). Ian Woodward offers a straightforward description of 'material culture':

[The term] emphasizes how apparently inanimate things within the environment act on people, and are acted upon by people, for the purposes of carrying out social functions, regulating social relations and giving symbolic meaning to human activity (2007, 3).

Material-culture studies makes sense of the presences often overlooked: houses, tools, technology, food, jars, spears, grave sites, ladles, shoes, cars, books, umbrellas, Coca-Cola, mobile phones and so on; the list is infinite. The field makes sense of what things people use and how they use them to explain their attributes, identity, familial relations, consumption, production: their sociality in general. The relationship between the 'subject' who creates and the 'object' created has a deep dialectical connection because 'we both produce and are the products of these historical processes' (Miller 2005, 9). For Hegel, there can be no fundamental separation between humanity and materiality (in Miller 2005, 8). This notion of materiality is not only embedded in history but also imbued with the use and creation of power. Indeed, materiality and power are combined in the introduction of colonialism and capitalism in indigenous societies. In order to make the 'natives' more visible—indeed more 'material'—in the eyes of colonial governments, they are ushered into a new period: of conduct, of habits, of consuming, of doing things. The colonised needed to grasp the new set of materiality that replaced, often violently, their life as they knew it. From naming, indexing, demographic inclusion, education, language-learning, dressing, housing, eating, amongst many other techniques, colonialism and capitalism are slowly given greater ground in the lives of the indigenous.

As I see it, migration is a kind of counter-colonisation—an attempt to self-effacingly insert oneself—that necessitates a cultivation of new materialities. Looking at how immigrants strive to become more visible in their new environment, what kind of (print) material culture have they produced? Or, it is possible to see it the other way around: in attempting to make meaning of their migration through (print) material culture, have Filipinos made themselves more legible, more 'material', more 'ethnic', thus, paradoxically more invisible?

Things, objects, technologies and materials—tangible, visible, tactile, and portable—are nevertheless a product of mental exercise (Woodward 2007, 11). Certainly, to make *things* from *no-thing(s)* is a culmination of cognitive power rendered by the hands of a maker. This means that the performance of *objectification* is in itself an act of agency. By implication, this means that objects and things need not be lifeless and inanimate; they have agency (Meskell 2005, 51). Far from what Daniel Miller (2005, 5) calls 'the humility of things', a common misconception, objects are imbued with great social power to change *things*, so to speak. I want to focus on these last two points in relation to material culture *in print*: material objects are neither lifeless nor inanimate; they wield social power in immigrant settings. In my study, however, the *things* to be analysed—although very tangible, visible, tactile and portable—may appear to be less 'qualified' than what anthropologists or archeologists define as 'material culture'. A review of literature reveals studies on the material culture of indigenous peoples, colonised territories, ancient periods and sites, museum collections, and so on (Chen 1968; Woodburn 1970; Fowler and Matley 1979). Compared to earthenware and gravesites, books and newspapers seem to be either too 'intellectual'; less object-like for their object-

ivity—their *thingness*—is very much entwined with their non-material uses. It seems quite difficult to see books and newspapers as mere objects in the way people see a toilet bowl or cricket bat as objects; a book or a newspaper remains to be read for its function beyond its immediate materiality. Without them being read for what they have to say, a book may cease to be a book, or a newspaper, not a harbinger of news at all.

As a facet of migrant life, print culture may be a most 'authoritative' playing field of representations. The use of the term 'authoritative' here is a self-deconstructing one for I do not believe that other forms of expression are of less importance. However, other forms such as *fiesta*, activism, and money-sending practices are traceable too in print. The permanence of printed materials over digital forms is crucial because representations are themselves highly unstable, shifting, power-negotiated, and imagined. Christopher Tilley, a leading material culture theorist, in reading the corpus of Foucault vis-à-vis material culture asserts that the continuum of what qualifies as an object of material-culture studies should be expanded (1990, 332-33). He suggests that the creation of *meaning*, the act of interpreting material culture is a form of materiality: '[e]very material object is constituted as an object of discourse. What this means is that objects only become objects *in discourse*' (Tilley 1990, 333; emphasis original). This nuanced reading of materiality and meaning-making is key: it undermines the perception of books and newspapers as quasi-matter. Based on Tilley's reading of materiality using Foucault, the production of material culture as a field is based on discourse and cannot be outside it despite things possessing existences. Although material-culture studies has claimed back *thingness*, the linguistic representation of things is undeniable. 'Relative

'materiality' is an apt term that refers to this non-equivalence wherein some objects are more material than others; some more signifiatory (Miller 2005, 16). My take is that print culture is neither violence to the territory that material culture holds dear nor a rather weak claim on the materiality of read-things as the final act of consumption. Meanings ascribed to the very presences of books and newspapers as the Filipino community's reaction to Australian socio-political hegemony is a testament of materiality. But print culture is necessarily an 'intellectual' culture. Books and newspapers inhabit that middle space where materiality and intellectuality intersect. However, unlike the silence and commonness that characterise, say, a hamper, books and newspapers need more active attention and processing from their consumer. It is not enough to look at, carry, touch or buy a book; one has to read it!

Discussion of the 'intellectuality' of print material culture—without asserting that non-reading materials are not a result of much reflection—hints at one direction of the argument: printed 'things' are much imbued with 'cultural' signification. The material importance of print, on the other hand, is often elided because 'materiality' itself is constitutive of printing and print implies tangible presence. The stack of ethnic newspapers piled outside an ethnic store is material enough whether copies end up in the bin or in the garage of a suburban home. Crucial to this is the paradoxical relationship between being a mere *thing* and the significance of being *cultural*. It is as if the imagined *animo* that gives soul to 'high' culture is antithetical to being matter. In material culture where *everything* is cultural—as everything is an artefact of one's 'cultivation'—books and newspapers seem to attract a categorisation that leans towards 'culture' imbued with signifiatory processes and representations. The

intellectual capital invested upon writing and publishing points not only to 'culture' as to till, to cultivate, to take care of—from *cultus*, past participle of *colere* in Latin—but also to the finesse and finality of the effects of print culture (OED 2010b).

Benedict Anderson ascribed much importance to the novel and newspapers in the formation of the nation ([1983] 2006). He coined the term 'print-capitalism' in order to describe that phenomenon that engendered national consciousness. Print culture and capitalism both created the highways of communication that linked peoples with different ethno-linguistic backgrounds that share an often-imposed national lingua franca. More so, 'print-capitalism' which according to Anderson allowed 'a new fixity to language' also created an 'image of antiquity so central to the subjective idea of the nation' (2006, 44). Central to this 'communion' is the novel as a genre whose readers characterise the 'solidity of a single community' (27) and newspapers as 'extraordinary mass ceremony' (35). Anderson explores the narratorial device in José Rizal's *Noli Me Tangere*, the opening chapter of which discusses Capitan Tiago's *bahay na bato* (stone house) and the banquet he would host through its interior time of the novel and the exterior time of late 19th century Manila (2006, 26-28).²⁶ He points out how Rizal assumed a community of readers who participate in the narrativisation of the events in the novel; a unique engendering of collective imagination, new to Filipino literature at the time. Newspapers, similarly, presupposes a community of readers that indulge in mass communication without being fully conscious of their communion. The material possibilities afforded by print-

²⁶ José Rizal is the Philippine's national hero who inspired the 1896 revolution for independence against Spain. Known for being a renaissance man of many talents and great intelligence, the doctor also tried his hand in writing in the novel genre that produced *Noli Me Tangere*, first published in 1887 and *El Filibusterismo* in 1891, both published in Europe.

capitalism is central to the sameness of experience; the engagement with one *thing* is as pivotal as the 'content' of the thing.

Although citizens of Filipino ancestry in Australia number just fewer than two hundred thousand, most would never meet each other or would know of each other's concerns. Yet, despite the distances between Sydney and Perth, or Adelaide and Darwin, the Filipino-Australian *nation* is imaginable. The very materiality of print culture is an imagining of this *nation* in diaspora where members vicariously meet each other and may even know each other's concerns. The cogency of Anderson's formulations influenced many works on Filipino migration studies, such as those by Ignacio (2005), Bonus (2000) and Espiritu (1989; 1995) in the United States. Diasporic communities all over the world are seen as a mutation—a kind of spinoff of which the impetus is traceable to the idea of sameness with each other and their difference from all the rest—of nationalism as a transcendent ideology. Migrant groups are traditionally depicted as transplanted scions of an originary people alien to the new territory, a form of distant ethnocentrism. Grounded by an imagined sameness, it is in things 'cultural' where diasporic identity always already manifests; a Filipino-Australian tabloid is still a concrete presence, more than just a symbol. The finesse with which books and newspapers display a 'national' culture, and the finality of their efficacious materiality to bind a group of people, makes print material culture vacillate between two worlds: that of being 'Filipino' and 'not quite Filipino'. The cultural fluctuations that migration engenders subsequently give way to what Aihwa Ong calls 'translocal publics', 'the new kinds of borderless ethnic identifications enabled by technologies and forums' (2006, 62-63). Filipinos from all over the globe could now engage in a formation of cultural practices without the limits of physical

geography. While this kind of materiality is not within my scope, I recognise the move towards the creation of new arenas, to which Filipinos in Sydney engage in but without dropping the 'real' newspapers.

Recovering the material from the cultural

Material culture is a vanguard of posterity; a soldier that keeps an eye on a people's history before it gets nicked by time. Things and knickknacks keep death and forgetting at bay. Not only does material culture recreate time gone by, it also reconstructs space. As Jean Baudrillard ([1968] 1996) puts it, a collection of objects is a displacement of real time. Ethnic newspapers, in a similar way, have compiled a version of the community's history over the past decades, but more so, they constructed a 'Philippines' frozen in time, as first-generation migrants knew it. They are anti-amnesiac capsules that come in monthly dosage, for free. The efficacy of print culture against collective amnesia is potent since it functions as a collection—an archive—of information, photographs, names, bulletins, telephone numbers, weddings, baptisms, graduations, advertisements, deaths, and so on. Not only do migrants protect themselves against forgetting, but others are also able to visit and revisit the trajectory of their collective immigrant destiny. My experience in retrieving data from the print archives gathered from various sources made it possible to re-enter and re-inscribe myself into that history many times over. The historiographical potential of print culture as an archive of knowledge (therefore of power) traces not only a group's migration history but also the development of Filipino-Australianness as a subculture.

'Filipinos in Australia' as a discrete entity are more or less some four decades young, yet the *things* they have produced could very well be as telling as a prehistoric tool of an early cohort of human beings. The migrant community would have to produce 'material culture' necessitated by their conditions. Indeed, Filipinos in Australia have other *things* that can be counted as material culture such as food, visual art, José Rizal's memorial in Campbelltown, remittance centres, Filipino/Asian stores, among a few others.²⁷ Newspapers and books produced by Filipinos in Australia—unlike food traceable directly to the old country—are *things* produced out of the very conjunction of national/ethnic origin and migrant environment. Books and newspapers are published for the gap they fill in borne out by the conditions of diaspora. They are the footprints left by the pilgrims headed in one direction, their unique material culture. Materiality which is often linked to amnesia and memory studies—in the way that *material* culture militates against forgetting—is very much parallel to what migrant literature and newspapers are designed to accomplish: to impede forgetting of the old country, or at the very least, slow it down. Long after their money transfers have been spent and *balikbayan* boxes (literally 'homecoming' boxes) unpacked at the receiving end, migrants will always have their books and newspapers as evidence of their diasporic status. Only this time, books and newspapers are no longer mere *things*; they have become *artefacts*.

²⁷ The Rosemeadow Park in Campbelltown City in New South Wales was named after the Filipino national hero Dr. Jose Rizal way back in 1987. In 2009, proposals to upgrade and renovate the park were made including a life-sized statue of the hero. Also in 2007, a street in the same town was named 'Rizal Place'. It is estimated that 1,500 Filipinos live in the area and its surrounds. ('Rizal Park in Campbelltown to be Upgraded' 2008).

Consequently, a term that has gained currency in material-culture studies is *actants*.²⁸ This term dissolves the separation between the actors who produced the object and the object produced; the term emphasises the milieu and discourses that made the creation possible by contextualising the actors within them. Books and ethnic newspapers are, in a big sense, actants, too, because they are non-human entities that can act *on their own*. The 'social lives' (Appadurai [1986] 2007) and 'cultural biography' (Kopytoff [1986] 2007) of books and newspapers written by Filipino immigrants are a triangulation of Australian multicultural politics, their creators' place in it and the materials themselves as they make their way to the consciousness of their readers. Interestingly, the 'social lives' of these materials are to a great extent defined by mobility: the mobility of their producers and writers, the very history of movement within Australia and the Philippines and between them, and the ease with which these objects are pushed and pulled across national borders as cultural commodities.

The importance of the materiality of print has had a revival in the field of 'history of the book', or simply, print-culture studies. Finkelstein and McCleery argue that this area of study aims to re-centralise the 'significance of the book as a physical object' and its role as a material object first and foremost (2002, 1). While they, too, have admitted that the book's prominence has waned, the death of the book is not very likely to happen any time soon. Despite the major shift in print culture—from mass consumption of books and newspapers to mass publishing enabled by the availability of writing software and the internet—which has also led to the decrease

²⁸ *Actant*, the etymology of which is French, means 'any various narrative roles or functions which may be fulfilled by one or more characters or entities in a text' (OED 2010d). The use of this term in material-culture studies is related in its sense of conflating or designating functions to one object or entity.

in prominence of print-culture studies, the book still commands authority. The use of the other term 'history of the book', while it hints at the accumulated time in the past by which print reigned supreme, also signals its centrality to culture in general. David Olson attributes such predominant role to reading and writing because for him the ways we think about the world, the representations of the world and of ours are 'by-products of the invention of a world on paper' (1994, 282). Furthermore, the work of Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin of the Annales school, *The Coming of the Book* (1976), a foundational text in the scholarship of the materiality of print, has paved the way in understanding that a printed document is made up of paper, type fonts, illustrations, binding, and that it is a commodity that travels a particular geography.

The economic 'costs' of performing ethnicity

Books and newspapers are commodities inscribed not only in their own 'social lives' but also possess economic values. Print culture is 'tainted' by 'ethnic money'. Newspapers, newsletters and anthologies are not only materials born out of migration, they are also materials with exchange value, produced and circulated as commodities. While some formats are kept afloat by economic players who invest in ethnicity, there are publications that capitalise on 'Filipinoness' but do not survive, such as *Fil-oz*, the *Pinoy* 'yellow pages'. However, there are loci of ethnicity where the money generated is much more than from print culture: beauty contests, raffle draws, remittance centres, food production and distribution, 'Asian' stores, sports fests, religious networks, *balikbayan* boxes freight, international call cards, and the list goes on. All of these are perceived with more materiality than 'intellectual' work for their ability to move in and out of the market through monetary exchange. In a

Filipino store in Parramatta, west of Sydney, a book is displayed behind the counter, away from the 'consumables' like duck eggs and fish sauce. The commonness of 'consumables' may be read as lesser symbolic signification, thus, less authoritative; in the ways that duck eggs do not authorise. Yet, like them, print commodities are suffused with the chimerical Filipino identity and weighed by the materiality of being 'ethnic'.

The economic processes of production, distribution and consumption in selling ethnicity (and multiculturalism) are tied to the emerging capitalist class in ethnic groupings. A chain of Thai restaurants, 'Asian' stores in malls, *fiesta* production companies, 'ethnic' law and accounting firms, among others, have created a *coterie* of entrepreneurs selling the community's 'difference' as consumable. Even multinationals like Heinz Hamper believe in courting ethnic consumption: Heinz Hamper won an award in New South Wales for its campaign to sell corned beef to Filipino and Maltese communities, which apparently eat more canned beef than all other groups (Community Relations Commission NSW 2008).²⁹

However, ethnic newspaper production defies the common rules of commodification. The 'commodity state' of newspapers is suspect to the common concept of investment and profit. All ethnic newspapers studied in the project have the pretence that they are for sale based on the \$1.00 or 1.50 exchange value as advertised below the masthead. However, none of them is actually being bought;

²⁹ *Carne norte*, literally 'meat from the north', has a very specific colonial history that harks back to 'American' occupation of the Philippines when consumption patterns were slowly modified by the introduction of new materials. *Carne norte* was also comfort food during World War II, rationed for the US troops stranded in the Pacific nation. The post-war years saw the mainstreaming of corned beef to the diet of the Filipino working class.

they only need to be picked up. The contents of the ethnic newspapers, nevertheless, are commodities for advertisers investing in their significance to the reading community. Needless to say, the very ethnicity of the contents is the commodity: 'Filipinoness' is the commodity and the people behind it are what Philip Kasinitz (1992, 163) call 'ethnicity entrepreneurs'. The cycle of production in Filipino ethnic newspapers is unique in its changing 'commodity state' before, during and after production and consumption. In the same vein, books require more capital and have greater exchange value in theory. But some authors would settle to drop the commodity value in exchange for their books to be recognised for their use value.

I discuss this for it highlights the fact that while the exchange value of material things today is foremost, it is not everything, at least not in migrant communities. Moreover, the ability to be able to publish and call oneself a 'Filipino-Australian writer' is a privilege that commands far greater symbolic value in a relatively small community. The symbolic value of objects is far more prominent in things printed because print has always been conferred as the powerful medium that educates, empowers, unites and signifies, for a long period of time. In Chapter 4, I show how public performances are not enough to accomplish the community's project to uplift the image of the Filipino woman in Australia; anthologies are considered *de rigueur* for their transformative power. I argue that migrant print culture as material object is imbued with the qualities that render literacy and logocentric practices as receptacle of signification that magnify the traces of the material. Despite the dwindling exchange value of books and newspapers, their thing-ness is a prosthesis

that attaches itself to the life of the migrant community: homesickness is supplanted by the 'real' thing, not just the symbolic.

Social standing, class relations, status quo are all—although in different shades and degrees—in place in the production and consumption of migrant literature. Pierre Bourdieu's (1984) sociological work on the operations of 'distinction' in art recognition amongst the French differentiated by class and education informs my own research. The importance that he confers on cultural and symbolic capital of his subjects to make themselves distinct has critical resemblance to immigrant print production's uses of 'distinction'. The almost-parasitical feeding off between the 'distinctive' and the producers of ethnic newspapers is a compelling relationship that influences not only print culture but the ethnic community's material culture in general as this collusion leads in herding the ethnic flock and authoring its history. While material culture in diaspora is an approximation of the 'Filipino' way of life without troubling the 'real' Australians, their very lives are configured by the immediate and the tangible: of what *matters* most. That gravitational pull of print culture to 'distinctive' people is tied to issues of money is, to say the least, obvious. The economic value of having access to publication is manifested in the kind of narratives that centre on money. The newness of money to a migrant, the experience of power brought about by money and money acquired to remit back 'home' are all linked to the processual ways by which money buys distinction. An almost fetishistic celebration of money is palpable in the ways ethnic newspapers juxtapose the poverty of 'home' and the affluence of (Filipino) Australians: the golf tournaments, travels to Europe, a new business, philanthropy, to mention a few. The

overwhelming discourse of 'making it' in the new country rests on the backbone of money that also procures its possessor social distinction.

But what are the 'costs' of being 'ethnic' in multicultural Australia? The stereotype of the non-white migrant in many first-world destinations as economic burdens dependent on state welfare and the racism this engenders—also the racism of which this is the result—is also true in Australia. On the other hand, when a migrant family acquires wealth, more than what the immigrant-as-working-class stereotype allows, this becomes articulated as excess, an aberration, a further validation of migrants' status as a breed of people defined by money they have or aspire to have, another stereotype. In my fieldwork, I have picked up the stereotypes where an extraordinarily decorated house in the southwest of Sydney means it belongs to a drug dealer, or if it is a garishly decorated mansion with Corinthian columns, a Greek owns it. Amongst 'Asian' migrants, money refers to Chinese, Japanese, and partly, Koreans. But when a young middle class Filipino, Sef Gonzalez, murdered three members of his family, it was a tragic end for a migrant family with excessive ambition. For parents to aspire for a heart surgeon for the son and the daughter to marry rich are far beyond their ceiling, yet not unexpected given their want to succeed, is characteristic of (non-white) migrants. Lee Glendinning, journalist and former neighbour wrote about the new immigrants' home: an 'ostentatious structure which soared above the other houses on the modest street' (2004a; 2004b). While Fredric Jameson argues that stereotypes are unavoidable, hence a fundamental outcome of representation—because perceptions 'must always involve collective abstractions' (in Chow 2002, 56)—the power by which white Australia exercises on

those it stereotypes does not hold the same measure of 'worlding' as when 'Asians' stereotype white Australia.

As economic migrants whose way out of the 'ghetto' towards acceptability by the white, middle-class suburban Australian is also through accumulation (read: ostentation), Filipino-Australian lives are circumscribed according to what 'ethnic money' can buy and where it came from. Ethnic money, needless to say, is marked money for despite its circulation in the wider economic activities of the country it is also an index of identity where transactions are labeled 'ethnic'. This presumes 'white money' as default. Ethnicity and economy have been much discussed in the case of the stereotype of Jewish prominence in businesses in Europe in the previous centuries and the Chinese in the U.S., Canada, Australia and Southeast Asia today. Systematic exclusion of 'ethnics' in professional spheres has resulted in entrepreneurial enclaves articulated as the acumen of the capitalistic migrant. Despite the incompatibility of money and ethnicity—for wealth is racialised as well—it is only through money that racial others can 'buy' stigma off for embodying difference.

Conclusion

The presence of Filipino women in Australia brings to fore the question of the 'third-world woman' as immigrant who suffers a *double colonisation* from a racist and sexist regime of the white male but also of the 'native' male immigrant. 'Mail-order brides', moreover, and perhaps more poignantly, are objects of white and 'Filipino' feminisms, which double this double colonisation. The politics and economy

of representation that place the Filipino woman as an unwanted alien intersect with the anxiety by which and with which they complicate (and challenge) multiculturalism in Australia. As a political machinery invested in the 'authorised fictions' of liberal democracy, and inscribed in the colonality of race relations in it, Australia's multiculturalism renders the 'mail-order bride' as target of sexualisation and as the scapegoat by ethnic brokers whose self-imposed roles are nonetheless constitutive of multiculturalism, and that which makes it deeply effective. The defensive stance by which the community is positioned manifests implicitly in the material world of the migrant as they recede more and more into enclaves that is articulated by the dominant as a mark of their insoluble 'difference'. However, because permanent migration is an endless negotiation between the 'host' and the 'new arrivals', the concreteness of a lived life amidst the materiality of the familiar must always be arranged.

An area which Filipino migrants pursue its brokering role is print culture in the form of the ordinary, undervalued newspaper. In the discursive spaces it offers, Australia's underclass could say things it would never articulate in the white-dominated public sphere. The next chapter looks at the internal dynamics, the growth and transformations of Filipino-Australian publications as a guide to the expansion of the community but also the cultural geography of its print culture.

Chapter 3

'Blacktown is not a Filipino ghetto!': A cultural geography of Filipinos and their newspapers³⁰

Out West: Australian Dirt is a collection of stories describing the outer suburbs of Australia's expanding cities. Not quite the 'bush'—'the traditional reservoir of distinctive Australian qualities,' says John Dale (1996, ix), editor—but also not the inner-city suburbs to which images of 'Melbourne' or 'Sydney' point to. This literature of 'dirt realism' or 'battler fiction' writes about dirty white Australians and their struggle to live the everyday of the geographical and economic underclass. 'From Dubbo with Love', on the other hand, is a column featured in *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper*. Dubbo is the centre of the Orana region, approximately 400 kilometres northwest of Sydney. It is mainly an agricultural area and has lamb for its major international export. The column serves as the voice of Dubbo to be heard by Filipino migrants in cosmopolitan areas.

I wish to pay attention to the spatial relations between Australians (including migrants) and the land demonstrable through these two cultural productions. The rhetoric and placing of outer suburbs—most notably symbolised by western Sydney—and Dubbo hint at their marginality not only in the geo-politics of Australia but also in the broader print culture of white and 'ethnic' Australians. More importantly, the continuity of social and material relations is underlined by the cultural geography that locates human beings in their natural (domesticated) surroundings and literary works in the realm of culture.

³⁰ This quote is from a Filipino-Australian academic who has returned to the Philippines after retirement. He lived in a gentrified inner city suburb; he had not visited Blacktown in many years at the time of the conversation. While he is correct that it is not a 'ghetto', it is definitely 'Filipino'.

This chapter demonstrates the interrelationships between the peopling of Sydney's suburbs, the growth of the Filipino community and print culture's role in facilitating this expansion. First, I will foreground the discussion by giving a historical dialectic between Australian multiculturalism and ethnic newspapers. The issues that confronted migrant groups that tell of the specificities of their migration indirectly contextualised the coming of the Filipino-Australian newspaper. Second, the chapter introduces Blacktown to discuss the spread of newspapers; it relates to the concept of 'geo-ethnicity' that induces an uneven level of production and consumption of print culture. One section elaborates on the intimate relationship between Blacktown and the community's print because spatial formations are grounded in culture and cultural formations move within the rules of place (Stratford 1999, 2). The specificity by which ethnicity, and I must say, class, shapes cultural practices and thus the geography where these practices are carried out, is significant in establishing the rootedness of the producers of newspapers in imagining a 'Blacktown for Filipinos', and 'Filipinos for Blacktown'. As Tim Creswell puts it so articulately, 'class, gender, and race have so often been treated as if they happened on the head of a pin. Well they don't—they happen in space and place' (2004, 27). The two sections that follow focus on Filipino-Australian newspapers: their history, the personalities, the uses, the politics and economics of ethnic media. A huge portion of data that gathers for the first time the minute details of this history unfortunately remains excluded in this compressed discussion.

Print culture in multicultural Australia

While the term 'multicultural' was not in use until the 1940s and the practice of 'multiculturalism' is dated in the 1960s at the earliest (Mizruchi 2009, 3), 'ethnic' (white) print culture was veritably established by the second half of the nineteenth century. The role that newspaper culture has played in the formation of the federation is, to say the least, significant (Isaacs and Kirkpatrick 2003). In as much as migration is definitive and constitutive of Australia as a nation, newspaper production of the early non-Anglo-Celtic migrants was influential for their eventual participation in the nation-building project (Jakubowicz 1995; Tosco 2005). As early as 1848 in Adelaide, South Australia, the first newspaper in any foreign language was published. Gilson and Zubryzcki (1967) historicised the contribution of German-language *Die Deutsche Post fuer die Australischen Kolonien* in the history of ethnic newspapers in colonial Australia. As for the Italian migrant group, socialist Francesco Sceusa put up *L'Italo-Australiano* in 1885 which produced six issues and one supplementary edition. Described as "'organ of Italians spread throughout the Oceania's lands,'" Sceusa believed that "'we can fulfil this duty [to make unknown Australia known] only with the use of the press'" ([12 January 1885] in Tosco 2005, 25).

Tosco's (2005) study of early Italian-language newspapers highlights common characteristics of ethnic newspapers then and now. In the study, ethnic newspapers are a significant 'connective tissue' that fabricates an immigrant network of foreign language-speaking individuals in an alien, hostile land. This function to connect is what Tosco (2005, 8) sees as the reason why in ethnic newspapers are found what is termed 'personals'. Apart from newsworthy events and crimes, community

newspapers announce marriages, birthdays, anniversaries, club activities, deaths, banquets, and so on in a fashion quite not the same as in the big dailies. Furthermore, ethnic newspapers provide a voice to the 'deaf-mutes' who are in shock by the dislocation and disempowering effect of migration. Community newspapers lessen the impact of dislocation and alienation; a diasporic mattress of shock-absorption. It is a directory of names, an album of familiar photos, a corkboard of announcements, multiple invitations at the same time, and so on, so that the lost can recover him/herself. It is a material piece, hard evidence in one's hands that we-ness actually exists in a strange land.

The characteristics often enumerated to describe ethnic press in Australia such as Tosco's 'connective tissue' and 'deaf-mutes' are also manifested in studies that deal with newspapers of other minority groups. In an anthology on Australia's ethnic press, sixteen histories of ethnic presses and presences in Australia were featured (Ata and Ryan 1989). From the abundant Greek and Vietnamese publications to the more complicated political newspapers of Macedonians and Arabs in Australia, the anthology featured useful content analyses of important newspapers. It is worth noting that the Filipino ethnic press was excluded from this study; a fact that I can only attribute to the relative smallness of the fledgling practice (but not any smaller than some others).³¹ This exclusion would later be duplicated in Philippine-born Rogelia Pe-Pua's and Michael Morrissey's (1995, 1996) government-sponsored study on 'Australian non-English language newspapers'. The

³¹ At the time of the anthology's publication, only two Filipino tabloids were in circulation: *Philippine Community News* and *Sandigan*, both in Sydney. But prior to this date, two tabloids had been published, *Philippine Balita* in Sydney and *Philippine Mabuhay* Melbourne.

Filipino ethnic newspapers' role remains to be explored for managers of multiculturalism seem to gloss over its importance.

When Ata and Ryan claimed that 'a migrant community is a thing in itself', it was to highlight how displacement despite continued efforts to bring back home cannot make a return possible; yet displacement also creates the avenue to imagine (re)settlement (1989, 3). The purgatory-like state of a migrant means that issues of loyalty and physical presence tend to make the migrant's priority vacillate from one end to another in her daily struggle to make meaning out of her displacement. The 'thing-in-itselfness' of a migrant community is best exemplified by its ethnic press' intellectual persuasions and editorial practices. While the ethnic newspaper needs to acknowledge the displacement—without an admission of which could negate the very existence of the paper—it has to work towards dispelling the fear and relieving the pain that follow displacement. Since we cannot go home now and are unsure if we really want to, we might as well tell them who we really are. For while ethnic literature is self-referential and relies on its 'members' for readership, given its dialogic relations to a 'host' society, it presumes an *a priori* of white spectatorship: *look at us!* Such that ethnic newspapers representing the depth and width of one's 'culture' is mythical and often serve institutions that perpetuate orientalisng representations of themselves.

What complicates the function of the ethnic press is its capacity to mediate—its very power to represent—not all but certainly the selected few aspects of the history and culture that have given birth to it. Take, for instance, the political sanction that German and Italian ethnic press endured in the first half of the century.

By virtue of their European heritage (read: whiteness), German and Italian presses went relatively unscathed in the days of racialist Australia. However, the nations' involvement in World War II, and the Nazis' and Fascists' political excesses and militarism did affect the constitution of German and Italian presses in Australia. The high mortality rate attributed to ethnic press as almost a second nature is not the same as the kind of 'mortality' experienced by German-language newspapers shut down by the Australian government during the two world wars (Gilson and Zubryski 1967; Reimann 1989, 160-63). The Germans, rendered as 'hidden migrants' (Jupp 1995, 63), suffered a decline in their use of language in the aftermath of internment and being 'enemy aliens', only to resurface decades later (Fischer 2009, 132-33). The vilification experienced by Germans in Australia was to a large extent undergone by the Japanese ethnic press in Hawaii, to which Japanese resistance against repression led to campaigns for civil rights (Brislin 1995). Similarly, *The Filipino Forum*, a fortnightly newspaper that circulated in Seattle, Washington from 1928 to 1969 became the discursive centre of the struggle for Philippine independence from 'American' occupation (Mabanag 2010).³²

The Italians, on the other hand, came up with a more opportunistic solution to the political sanction. Some Italian titles in Australia became a voice of fascism in the Pacific although not the intensive 'brainwashing' found in the motherland (Tosco 2005, 31). The editorial teams of prominent newspapers felt that overseas Italians had the responsibility to become lobbying grounds for political openings in the old country. Resistance against fascism in many fronts in Europe was not echoed in

³² Edited by Victorio Velasco, this almost four-decade ethnic newspaper focused on only on the politics of breaking away from US ties but also to publicise the racist treatment of Filipinos, the emerging labour unionism of migrants, and the growing community of Filipinos in the northwest of the country.

Australia. Tosco claims that the Australian government rallied behind the fascist-supporting ethnic newspapers because of their anti-communist politics. This support was later to be withdrawn when Italy rallied behind Germany, which made the lives of Italian migrants difficult, to say the least.

These are two examples of how ethnic newspapers respond to the vicissitudes of their communities and their communities' status in the vaster world political context. They exemplify the xenophobia towards foreign-language press in Australia. It is something that had a precursor in the fact that only in 1956 did Australia let go of a regulation that needed "the consent of the Prime Minister to the publication of a newspaper or periodical in a foreign language" (Jakubowicz and Seneviratne 1996, 8). Contrarily, today as evidenced by the hundreds of ethnic community newspapers published (123 titles based on the official listing in New South Wales), the government has legislated against this xenophobia (Community Relations Commission 2011). However, this relaxation may paradoxically have had led to a general lack of interest in ethnic press over the years. Jakubowicz and Seneviratne (1996) assert that the significant absence of information on foreign-language newspapers is an effect of the focus on big-business print media. On top of that neglect is the government's stance on ethnic radio and television as exemplified by 'multicultural' public broadcast network SBS's programs.³³ Since the government is almost hands off when it comes to ethnic newspapers, studies and data on them are equally paltry. Thus, giving the impression that while multiculturalism via SBS television

³³ The Special Broadcasting Service (SBS), established in 1977, was to become the ethnic initiative designed to complement the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC). The project was created to help ethnic communities with low English skills and access to information regarding health, jobs, social security, and so on, in other words, their eventual integration to white Australia. While the threat to be amalgamated with ABS did not push through, SBS had to take advertising since 1993 (Jakubowicz 1995, 179-80).

is about celebrating 'difference' by selling global chicness of art films and football, multiculturalism in newspapers is about the indissoluble 'differences'—language for one—of less 'accessible' cultures.

Two debates of relevance in relation to Australia's ethnic newspapers are: [1] assimilation ('becoming the same as') versus integration ('different but with universal commonality'), and [2] the continuing serviceability versus projected extinction of ethnic press. Although Australia's initial call to migrants is toward assimilation—the impossible process of turning a migrant into an 'Australian'—this received theoretical responses from critics and practical responses from immigrant communities. The German press continued to call for the recognition of its heritage while the Polish press alienated its readers by encouraging subsumption under Anglo-Australian cultural hegemony (Kaluski 1989, 177). 1995 was the International Year for Tolerance where the Australian government celebrated 'cultural diversity' amongst its citizenry through its public and official sponsorships. Tolerance for ethnic press means continued use of foreign languages without the pressure of bilingualism. Tolerance in race relations, however, implies the power relations between the tolerating party and those tolerated. While being tolerated for one's right to exist is more palpable in everyday life, tolerance in newspaper production spells a lack of urgency: communities write and publish for the consumption of their own members which need not even cross paths with the Australian majority. Unlike shared public spaces in the city or a queue in a government office, ethnic newspapers simply exist unthreateningly. Written in characters unrecognisable to Anglophones or syllabicated where any meaning is elusive, ethnic press does not seek to offend. A newspaper in a foreign language left on the train does not invite engagement

(repressed irritation) as much as people speaking their alien tongue or clothed in their 'traditional' costumes.

This lukewarm presence of ethnic press dovetails with another debate: serviceability versus extinction. A forceful policy of assimilation theoretically should push immigrants towards better command of English while tolerance encourages one to speak the native language. The first conjecture significantly takes the years since migration into consideration; the second does not. As more migrants get 'absorbed'—or at least less visible as they learn to do things 'Australian', an impossibility so far—ethnic newspapers' significance wanes. The 'connective tissue' should have then become a hardened artery of bi-cultural understanding. As migrants disperse and accumulate cultural capital, the more likely it is that ethnic newspapers will fail or lose their grip, as explained by Mark Braham's (1989) study of the Jewish press in Australia. Since Jewish migrants have become well integrated with better English, good education and greater economic access, there is now less need to move 'inwardly' or demanding communal activity (1989, 34-37). In the last years of the 1980s, there were only two Jewish weeklies; one based in Melbourne and one in Sydney. It is in this light that the obsolescence of the ethnic press has been predicted many times over. Jaime Pimentel, editor of *Philippine Balita*, the first Filipino-Australian tabloid, believes the same principle of self-extinction of the ethnic newspaper (Jaime Pimentel, interview, March 6, 2010). The challenge is for editors now to make a transitional move to engage younger, Australian-born members of the community to reinvent the uses and reformulate the significance of ethnic newspapers. Otherwise, since ethnic newspapers have done the job they were

tasked to do in the beginning of the permanent diaspora, the only logical way for them is towards obsolescence.

The paradox of the slow obsolescence of ethnic newspapers in the face of intensive multiculturalism where everybody *should* speak and read English can, however, be seriously questioned. Take, for example, the case of the Vietnamese community in Australia. As at 2006, there are approximately 159,850 Vietnam-born living in Australia, 78 per cent of them speak Vietnamese; only three per cent speak English at home ('Community Information Summary: Viet Nam-born' 2006). This figure explains why all sections in all newspapers of the Vietnamese community are in their own language and not in English. This observation is further supported by Tuan Ngoc Nguyen (2010) who observed that these newspapers service the ethnic economy for the huge amount of money circulating within the community. There is no attempt by those who produce the newspapers, those who advertise and those who consume to shift to English in the name of expansion. *Chieu Duong* which is the major daily newspaper for Vietnamese-Australians—given its 100,000 circulation—is most likely the preferred if not the only daily reading material for these migrants. One might say that the growth and the forging of economic ties happen within the linguistic boundaries of Vietnamese-speaking Australians, including the reduction of social problems through information dissemination in Vietnamese (Van Phan 1989, 197).

Given this example, the projection that ethnic press will soon face self-elimination appears weak. Forty years after their migration to Australia, communities and their newspapers have not ceased to perceive their links as vital if not in fact the very source of their strength economically and politically. Furthermore, Greek

communities in Australia still produce the *Greek Herald*, born in 1926, which prints daily at 24,000 circulation and is distributed all over Australia. The Chinese community as of today enjoys five Chinese-language newspapers circulated daily with seven other titles appearing weekly or fortnightly that add to these major dailies (Community Relations Commission 2011). The communities of Chinese-Australians have always had a strong relationship with their newspapers. Unlike Filipino ethnic newspapers that come out monthly, the Chinese can manage to circulate dailies that are transnationally maintained and widely circulated in Australia. It is very common to see Chinese migrants of all ages reading their Chinese daily in the trains around Sydney; something that I have yet to see amongst Filipino migrants. However, despite having just a dozen issues per year, Filipino ethnic press has produced two more titles, at least in metropolitan Sydney, in the duration of my three-year stay. This is far from a self-elimination despite the commonly held perception that Filipinos are more 'integrated', language-wise, than other groups.³⁴

Newspaper print culture in multicultural Australia is thus a resilient area of cultural pluralism that resisted prediction of its own demise. It is also a paradox that while perceived as unread by Filipinos, these newspapers, nonetheless, are materially present. Not even the dominance of the internet where online versions are published supersede print. The resilience of ethnic press is possibly due to its insistence to be printed; that material, 'real' presence that other forms do not possess. More importantly, the ethnic press is partly a narrative of post-war Australia's economic expansion that trickled to immigrant capacity to improve their lives. While, on one

³⁴ I. H. Burnley compares between Philippine-born migrants who register an index of dissimilarity (ID) of 47.3 and an index of segregation (IS) of 51.4 and Laos-born migrants whose ID is 79.2 and an IS of 83.4. The figures mean that Filipino speakers whose areas of concentration are in 'low and medium' status suburbs are more dispersed than Laotian-Australians (1998, 58).

hand, foreign-language press does imply residential concentration, retail specialisation and ethnic enclave economy—terms associated with ghettoisation and disadvantage—on the other hand, it hints at the bustling nexus of economic activities with material benefits. For a newspaper given away for free in 'Asian' shops is a manifest object of the many hands that gave and received on behalf of the community, and white Australia is silently looking on these little pockets of economic and material exchanges that leave the imprint of their creators.

Western Sydney, Blacktown, Filipinos: A 'geo-ethnic' profiling

Officially, there are no slums and ghettos in Sydney with a moderately integrated population (Poulsen, Johnston and Forrest 2001, 2071). The high concentration of African-Americans in Chicago or of Indian-born in Leicester and Pakistan-born in Bradford that has become the centre of ghetto-formation debates among geographers today does not include Sydney or Melbourne (Peach 2010; Poulsen *et al* 2001; Johnston *et al* 2001; Burnley 1998). Although Melbourne received the most number of overseas migrants before 1971, and then Sydney after that year, high levels of residential concentration in these cities are often followed by upward mobility dispersion. Although Cabramatta in Sydney has become the template of a ghetto-like economic enclave—for exemplifying 'cosmo-multiculturalism' or the consumption of the exotic (Hage 1998, 204) but more for the stigma of heroin trading in the area in the 1990s—it does not qualify under the 'ghetto rule' requiring 60 per cent concentration (Poulsen *et al* 2001). Similarly, at 5.9 per cent of the entire population in the local government area of Blacktown, Filipinos cannot be considered to be ghettoising the place (Blacktown City Council 2010). That said,

and although the overwhelming majority of residents are Australian-born, among those who have migrated from overseas, Filipinos outnumber those from the United Kingdom, New Zealand, India and Fiji (Blacktown City Council 2010). The concentration of Filipinos in Blacktown is indicative of the population's size in New South Wales, where forty-seven per cent out of 120,540 Philippine-born (excluding their Australian-born children) live as of 2006 census. (See figures 1 and 2 in Chapter 1 for details.)

So, why did Filipinos 'colonise' Blacktown or what is it with Filipinos that 'spatialised' Blacktown over the years? The area sits at the mid-section between inner and outer Sydney; neither as insufferably far as Penrith nor as acceptably near as Parramatta to the city. Western Sydney has been suffering unpleasant representation from the media, film, and literature in Australia ever since it became the frontier of expansion during the post-war years. It is imagined as a place where one is 'unlucky to live': working class, boring, flat, treeless, homogenous, cheap housing, second-hand cars, ethnicised but also peopled by racists, truly multicultural but lacks intellectual air and so forth (Mee 2002, 339; 2000). While western Sydney is stereotyped negatively as an unchanging vast tract of suburbia where 'battler Australians' and 'new Australians' (refugees, immigrants, undocumented) co-exist, it has, in fact, registered a 73 per cent increase in residential construction between 1996 and 2001 (Mee 2002, 339). This is coupled with a 47 per cent growth in population in the same five-year period. In short, when growth (overpopulation) and development (overcrowding) in Sydney is talked about, it may only be about western Sydney, not the affluent North, or the cultured inner city, or the snobbery of eastern suburbs, or white South Sydney. This registered 'growth' is not only a

symptom of western Sydney as 'dumping ground' of 'ethnics' but the resistance of the North, South and inner city Sydney to maintain either whiteness or cosmopolitanism.

The cringe associated with the 'westies'—a derogatory term for those who head west at the end of the day—is semantically engraved in the very name of Blacktown. After white colonial expansion around 1820s in the area traditionally owned by the Darug tribe, this part of western Sydney was empty of Aboriginals whose hunting grounds were destroyed (Moore 1979, 4-5). Governor Macquarie's vision of a 'return' of the traditional owners was operationalised in the farm settlement and a school in the Rooty Hill reserve.³⁵ By 1833, the native inhabitants disappeared once more but the tag 'Black Town' lingered; the intensification of colonialism was sealed not only via its railways and institutions but also through the power that such a name—the place where dark people live—conjures in the imagination (Moore 1979). The impression that western Sydney is 'treeless' compared to the leafy and breezy North Shore may be historically and ecologically linked to the earlier industries that 'founded' the west: timber and hard wood extraction for (colonial) domestic use. Years after the flight of the 'resettled' traditional owners, the 'return' of the urbanised 'indigenous'—a socio-economically coerced return—would once again happen in the years of the area's rapid expansion from 1954 to 1976 (Mee 2000).

In the 1960s, the Housing Commission engineered mass relocation from the inner cities through the public housing program which facilitated the move of 'black'

³⁵ The suburb of Rooty Hill is now home to 2,301 Filipinos, the biggest next to Australian-born by a small margin of 557.

Australians to Green Valley and Mt Druitt.³⁶ This is then followed by the internal migration of overseas-born migrants from inner cities whose dream of owning properties coincided with the industrial structuring and destabilisation of the manufacturing work force (Burnley 1998). Blacktown today, as is the rest of western Sydney, is characterised by a high concentration of clerks, tradespeople, machine operators and labourers in the work force, but also of unemployment. It is the direction where Filipino migrants were and are headed to: the place that could accommodate them, a community where they could make a life after migration. The following is a selected summary of data in the local government area of Blacktown from the Australian Bureau of Statistics' census in 2006:

Total Population	271,709
Indigenous population (unstated not included)	7,054 (2.6%)
Philippine-born population	16,129 (5.9%)
Australian-born with both parents Filipinos	19,328
Australian-born with Filipino mother	580
Australian-born with Filipino father	173
English-only speakers	168,818
English and other languages	88,043 (32.4%)
Gross individual income of \$2000+ weekly, aged 35-44	Gross individual income of 0 weekly, aged 35-55
Male 913	Male 565
Female 177	Female 1,540
Lone parent	Dwelling
Male 2,193	Separate house 72,112
Female 12,032	
Rent prices for most residents	House tenure
\$180-224 6,728	Fully owned 20,880
\$225-274 6,068	Being purchased 35,532
	Rented 26,279
Unemployment rate 6.8%	Labour force participation 61.8%
Education	Industry of employment
Certificate level 33,893	Manufacturing 12,316
Bachelor 21,187	Construction 7,459
	Transport, postal, warehousing 6,850
	Wholesale trade 5,061
	Retail trade 5,656
Cars per family 2	Preferred transport to work: car

Table 3 Selected community profile, Blacktown, NSW 2006

³⁶ The Housing Commission built 6,000 new properties in Green Valley and 8,000 in Mt Druitt in the 1960s. By the 1970s, it has released its 100,000th property. Townhouses and flats were built instead of cottages to prevent urban sprawl. In the 1980s, tightening of ownership was introduced as the priority went to those in need more than just simply to any blue-collar family ('History of Public Housing in NSW Overview' 2010).

The presence of Philippine-born migrants in Australia is historicised for the push and pull factors of their emigration in 'waves': as pearl divers in Darwin, as Colombo scholars in Melbourne, as musicians in Adelaide, and, of course, as 'mail-order brides'. No literature so far has explored the aspect that maps the ethnic geography of their settlement. Mark Caruana's (1994) 'Filipinos in Western Sydney', a guide written for the Department of School Education, emphasises the heavy concentration of the community in the area, listing even the number of ethnically Filipino students in the early 1990s, but it did not ask the question why specifically Blacktown. There are works, however, that put together a history of Filipino settlement through oral history as per family migration such as Hennessy (2004) in Adelaide, Filipino Australian Association in Northern Territory (2003) in Darwin, and Soliven (1998) in Perth. But these are smaller communities, which, unlike Sydney or Melbourne, are more manageable to handle. My study, moreover, is not focused on the 'pioneers' of the community but rather on the larger social and economic push and pull of housing availability, ethnic segregation and government policies. In the discussion above on the 'taming' of the west and internal migration of working class Australians in pursuit of private home ownership—an imprint of post-war economic boom left in the national psyche—it appears that Filipinos in Sydney at that time did not want to be left behind.³⁷ This is supported by Jaime Pimentel's recollection of the early years of the relatively small Filipino community in Sydney. According to him, the 'Filipino ghetto' in the old days was Mascot, not Blacktown. He recalled that properties were up for grabs at a bargain cost of \$400 in places like Rooty Hill and Mt Druitt (Jaime

³⁷ Maher and Whitelaw's (1995, 8-10) study on Australia's internal migration from 1986 to 1991 shows how 'suburbanisation', the move outward from the inner city, is a result of the desire to own a home; something that is very familiar with Australians who in the 1970s have enjoyed a 70 per cent rate of ownership.

Pimentel, interview, March 6, 2010). Filipinos got hold of this opportunity to own homes but then sold the properties at a profit to buy in better areas.

This flight back out of western Sydney continues to be experienced today as the formation of 'voluntary enclaves', a lesser form of 'ghettoisation', both of which are spatial and structural effects of socio-economic and racial changes in a multiethnic society (Maher and Whitelaw 1995, 162). However, a steady flow of migration from the Philippines means that while earlier migrants have moved from the enclave to more upmarket suburbs, there will be new ones to take their place, making Blacktown an arrival 'city' for Filipinos. Douglas Massey asserts that continued in-flow of people in large numbers—without the interrupting years that allow the first-generation to amass social and economic capital—could only spell the same disadvantaged position for newer migrants, if not in considerably worse conditions (2008, 344-47). He gives the example of Mexican migrants in the United States who benefit less from dispensations from a shrinking state welfare. Despite the steady arrival of Philippine-born migrants in Australia, the older ones manage to disperse residentially after several years of economic and cultural capital accumulation. Their ability to speak 'better English' than other migrants from non-English speaking background—a self-perception commonly accepted in the community—and Filipino women's marriage to Australian men are cited as the reasons for their low rate of concentration (Burnley 1998, 57); a reading of their sexualised citizenship, I believe, more than a sociological fact.³⁸ The latter, once more, points to the social

³⁸ The overworked, easy recourse to read any phenomenon concerning Filipino-Australians as a result of their interracial marriages is also exemplified in the survey *Living Diversity: Australia's Multicultural Future*. On the question whether Filipino migrants (represented by 406 respondents) would rather not keep their 'cultural identity' was linked by the researchers to the pressure on women married to white Australians. Although careful in its use of the phrasing 'may be related',

organisational patterns that the sexualised migration has directed for the Filipino community. While most 'Asian' groups are in the cities, 'brides' are found in the remotest areas of the outback. Also, the community congregates in low to medium status areas of concentration; in less affluent suburbs where East Asians reside but in better areas than the Indo-Chinese Asians. Below is a set of chosen data to illustrate both migration in-flow and dispersion of Filipino-Australians (Philippine-born and Australian-born) in selected areas in Sydney. Blacktown ranks first, while Campbelltown and Liverpool follow in the highest concentration:

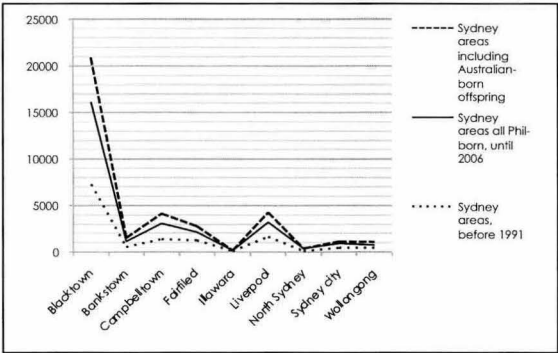


Figure 4 Population concentration of Filipinos in selected areas in Sydney, 2006

The gravitational pull of Australia's southwest to newly arrived migrants is understandable within the frame of a geographical mapping of ethnic economies; for urban spaces shape ethnic economy as much as ethnicity moulds the geography of a city (Kaplan and Li 2006, 8-9). Some of the reasons identified why

the study nevertheless is quick to assume that they perception is the result of mixed marriages that Filipino women get themselves into. In a survey where 65 per cent of Filipinos would rather keep their cultural identity, lower than, say, the newly arrived Somalis, this is possibly because of their 'mail-order brides' (Ang, Brand, Noble and Wilding 2002).

new migrants settle in ethnically identified corners of the city are the familiar presence of people with shared cultural behaviours; the same language necessary to communicate especially if learning English has been slow or difficult; availability of food and services; practice of religious belief or proximity of a place of worship; financial support or lenders; and the availability of lawyers, doctors and accountants who serve the community (Maher and Whitelaw 1995, 62). All of these—true in any global city with an ethnically diverse population—are also verifiable in the foothold of Filipinos in Blacktown.

During fieldwork for this research, it is the only area where I heard Filipino and other major languages in the Philippines are audibly spoken and consistently in many corners of a mall; it is the only suburb where the main street is lined by Filipino stores. In Blacktown, Filipinos do appear, talk, walk, behave and laugh like 'Filipinos': once they hop on the train that takes them to work in the city, they 'deracinate' themselves. This shedding off and putting on is a practice that happens every day; it must be a great relief at the end of a long day to call Blacktown 'home'. A notion of 'homeplace' for bell hooks (1990) is shelter from the racism in the outside world. Following Benito Vergara's formulation of class, Filipino-Americans and Daly City, Blacktown is 'a Quezon City where the buses run on time' (2009, 191). As a racialised 'ethnic' in Australia, I felt comfort couched by the familiarity that Blacktown offers what Filipino-Australians enjoy in their own little world. This bodily ease and peace of mind are what makes 'non-ghetto Filipinos' leave their upmarket suburbs and go to Blacktown to replenish their empty cupboards; a habit kept secret from their white neighbours.

A cultural geography of Filipino-Australian newspapers

The heavy residential concentration of Filipinos in Blacktown shaped the production, distribution and consumption of the community's newspapers. This meant those who pioneered publishing had 'Blacktown Filipinos' in mind, which, I argue, was the start of the construction of 'Blacktown Filipino' subjectivity.³⁹ Geographically significant as an emerging ethnic enclave in the 1970s, Blacktown—even then visibly urban, becoming a 'city' in 1979—was available for the taking to be imagined as a semantic designation but also as a spatial belonging for Filipinos. A newspaper—a moveable object, a reading material, a wealth of symbols—is decisive in binding Filipino ethnicity to a space by its real material presence. The happiness that Pimentel was talking about, the sense of pride and oneness are all the more palpable for the materiality of a newspaper. The centrality of geography (Blacktown-peopling) and culture (newspaper production) in the construction of each other point to the ways by which newspapers' reach pushes the boundaries of some while collapses others.

Evocative of the new nation (Australia) but also a reference to Rizal's execution place, *Bagumbayan*, is 'a good name for the newspaper.' (Larry Rivera, interview, April 6, 2010.) This is how Larry Rivera describes the title he chose for what can be considered the first-ever publication of Filipinos in Australia with a sizeable

³⁹ This assertion may be met with resistance for two reasons: first, a few of the personalities behind the print business do not really live in the west like Jaime Pimentel, Tony Dedal and Renato Perdon; second, the printers are not located in the west either. Nevertheless, I argue that, the symbolic 'home' of these publications is from western and southwestern Sydney.

circulation, the *Bagumbayan*.⁴⁰ Released in June 1976, *Bagumbayan*'s first issue's cover was a huge Philippine flag with a header: 'Is Philippine Independence a myth?' With just 500-600 copies available only through subscription, Rivera said he practically did almost everything for *Bagumbayan*: typesetting, photoengraving, layout, writing, editing, proofreading, managing, among others. Helped editorially by professional writers such as Oscar Landicho (*The Manila Times* and *Daily Telegraph*), Ricky Llanos (*The Manila Times*) and Joe Umali (*Philippines Herald*) and later himself in the staff, Pimentel said that Rivera did a 'professional job' (Jaime Pimentel, interview, March 6, 2010). Rivera commented that he was 'a bit idealistic' doing the whole project of publishing for the Filipino community (Larry Rivera, interview, April 6, 2010.) From financing *Bagumbayan* all by himself while working as assistant editor for the *Catholic Weekly*, he also managed to keep it afloat by taking charge of the distribution by post at \$10 per year subscription. Despite not recovering his original capital of \$1,000, Rivera persisted to continue printing the magazine-style newsletter every month until December 1977. Without elaborating why he decided to stop publishing, he 'never thought of putting up another after *Bagumbayan*' (Larry Rivera, interview, April 6, 2010.)

There was a three-year gap between the closing down of *Bagumbayan* and the birth of *Philippine Balita*, the 'first independent Filipino Australian tabloid newspaper' (PB Nov 1981, 1). My research did not yield any other title between these two, not in New South Wales or any other state. Published monthly since 1981, *Balita* [News] is legitimately the very first Filipino ethnic newspaper in Australia. The first

⁴⁰ *Bagumbayan* is literally translated as 'Newtown'; in the case of new Filipino migrants in Australia, 'bagumbayan' is also 'new nation'. It was the name of what is now the Luneta Park where national hero Jose Rizal was shot. It was then a new town, being *extramuros* of the original Spanish enclave.

issue appeared in August 1981, a copy of which is archived in the State Library of New South Wales. In an interview, Pimentel narrated how a small group of Filipinos gathered and asked themselves, 'do we need a newspaper?' They all thought they did but doubted whether it could be done: '*hindi natin kaya yan*' ['we could not possibly do it, could we?'] (Jaime Pimentel, interview, March 6, 2010). However, after the initial push of \$500-contribution from approximately six persons, the first issue of 3,000 copies was sold to the community at 80 cents a copy.⁴¹ The staff and writers of *Balita* felt 'pride [because of] enthusiasm from everybody. *Parang hero kami* [We were like heroes],' recalled Pimentel after receiving congratulatory reception from the community, and in particular, from the Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser (Jaime Pimentel, interview, March 6, 2010). Managing editor Dedal, recalls Pimentel, thought that 'it [was] going to look like a high school magazine' but it did not. Soon enough the subscription increased to more than 400 to the extent that the staff seriously considered going weekly but as Pimentel reflected, the newspaper could 'survive editorially but not financially (Jaime Pimentel, interview, March 6, 2010). Being distributed professionally through post and newsagents (compared to today's practice of just dropping them at stores and shops) was a sign that *Balita* was making enough money to continue running. Nevertheless, since many advertisers did not pay their dues—which meant that ad agents did not get their 30 per cent cut—the finances of the newspaper suffered. This, despite the fact that the newspaper did not have to pay its writers and columnists since, according to Pimentel, 'people wanted to be a part of it. They wanted to say things they can't say in *SMH*.' (The Sydney Morning Herald is Sydney's major broadsheet daily.)

⁴¹ The price 80 cents is written right below the masthead of the newspaper. Pimentel's recollection is \$1 per copy.

In the early 1980s, as Filipino women continued to arrive as 'brides', a Blacktown community was burgeoning and a newspaper was born, one can see how it was possible to imagine a 'nation' of Filipino-Australians. At the time when cultural pluralism was being introduced, the construction of the 'Blacktown Filipino' subject was at an intersection of sexualised migration, spatio-demographic expansion and the birth of print culture. The spatial order that arranged the expansion of the community continued in the 1990s when 'mail-order brides' continued to arrive, more newspapers were born, and 'Blacktown Filipino' hegemony has been established. Nowhere is this dominance seen more than in newspaper production.

During the 1980s, three Sydney-based newspapers, *The Philippine Community Newspaper*, *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* and *Bayanihan News* gathered 'news' from regional areas in Australia in the form of reportage from migrants located elsewhere. With Blacktown as 'kilometre zero', Filipinos from other states and the 'outback' were given a few pages to update Sydney Filipinos on their locale-based events, such as the aforementioned column 'From Dubbo with Love'. The attempt at inclusion of those outside Blacktown is significant, for the act itself 'nationalises' these newspapers. Considering the sheer size of the island continent Australia—topographically different compared to archipelagic Philippines linked by short boat rides—ethnic press production entailed a dissimilar apparatus of spatial imagination: migrants who come from geographically insular islands must adjust to the vastness and the dryness in the heart of Australia. Such consolidation of 'national' membership was critical in the survival of Filipino women who found themselves reined in by the immensity of Australia's land. The letters written and

photos shared by young brides in the pages of the newspapers expressed their gratitude for the belonging they found in these publications.

This 'national' migrant imagining, however, constructs an effect trivialising decentralised/regional Australia. The token spaces given to columns like 'The Bayside Breeze' or 'What's up in Adelaide?', both from *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* (TPCHN), reinforce the hegemony of Sydney. These newspapers have adopted characteristically Australian oppositional imaginaries of city/outback, civilization/wilderness, town/countryside, marina/dry centre, to conjure some geo-physical images. By centralising Blacktown/Sydney vis-à-vis spaces that emphasise their distance from 'kilometre zero', in effect hierarchises Filipino-Australians. It is a quite ironic fact considering how 'white' Sydneysiders perceive the backwardness (or 'westwardness') of Blacktown and of Filipino-Australians. This 'laddering' of immigrants meant that among sexualised citizens, a 'mail-order bride' in Sydney internally colonises a 'mail-order bride' in the outback. I argue that this hierarchising has effects—more palpable, more felt—than the 'pecking order' between being a woman of an Anglo-Australian and a woman of a 'wog' Australian, the meanings of which are often lost among Filipinos who see whiteness as monolithic.

Whose representation matters?

In the 1990s, Filipino-Australians were embroiled in two big issues: that of multiculturalism and that of the 'mail-order bride', both of which emphasise racial and sexual otherness. The Filipino community was battling against the negative image of its women as commodified, and yet it strove towards respectability through

greater political participation. How did Filipino-Australians strategise to rise about their sexualisation, the deaths and violence unique to their community and ride the wave of opportunities brought by multiculturalism?

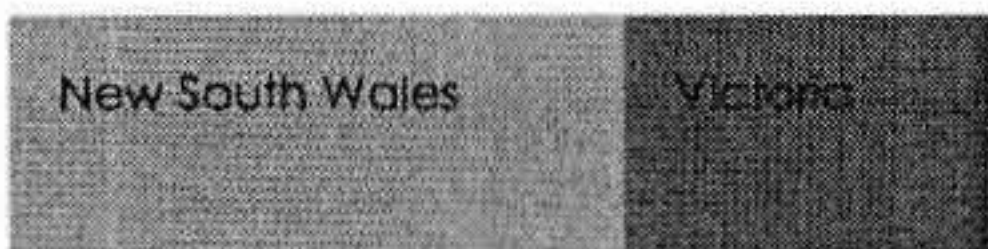
At various times in the 1990s, there were eight titles based in Sydney that competed for market and patronage. Looking at Figure 5, it was the decade that saw the flourishing of Filipino newspaper print culture. The stirring up of print activities was not simply a consequence of the sizeable increase of Filipino numbers but also because it expressed a sense of urgency in making minorities visible, if only to *themselves*. This discussion reveals that the struggle for political representation in Australia's multicultural 'family' is a matter of whose representation represents. A symptom of their peripheral status and exclusion from the broader (and 'real') politics in Australia, factionalism and power-wrestling marked this phase in the community's history. The 1990s saw the dominance of TPCHN, a collaboration between Sennie Masian and Evelyn Zaragoza, but also the newspaper's demise and the well-known separation between them. Then, there was the return of pioneer Pimentel through his *Sandigan* ('Something to lean on'). *Pilipino Herald*, by Vilma Tuaño and Zaragoza, gave the community an all-Filipino language newspaper but then suffered an internal struggle in the staff room—'communication breakdown' in the words of Zaragoza—the details of which I will not elaborate on here (Evelyn Zaragoza, interview, March 8, 2010). Then, *Bayanihan News* by the Perdon brothers was born soon after. Zaragoza continued her foray by establishing the now longest-running tabloid in Sydney, TPCHN. Meanwhile, in Melbourne, George Gregorio and friends released *The Philippine Times* in 1990, the oldest Filipino-Australian tabloid 'nationwide' today.

**Filipino-Australian tabloids
(excluding magazine-type publications)**

Title	Bayanihan News	Filipin-Oz	Filipino Observer	Kalatas	Phil Community News	News Pinoy	Pilipino Herald	Pinoy News	Phil-Aus Balita	Phil Balita	The Phil Community Herald Newspaper	The Phil Times	The Phil Voice	Sandigan
Year														
1981														
1982														
1983														
1984														
1985														
1986														
1987														
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Figure 5 Filipino-Australian tabloids and years of circulation, 1981- present

Legend:



The interdependence—some would say, supervised complicity—between political representation in state multiculturalism and the ethnic press is best exemplified by *The Philippine Voice* (TPV), first published in August 1990 with a circulation of 1,000.⁴² The newspaper that believed itself to operate on the principles of 'independence, fairness, maturity, courage, idealism, [and] friendliness' (TPV 1990, 1) started as '*katuwaan lang* [nothing serious] because we wanted an alternative newspaper that is more credible,' says its former business manager (Emma de Vera, interview, March 28, 2010). The newspaper 'aspire[d] to articulate and communicate the hopes and aspirations of the Filipino-Australian community by presenting its opinion on relevant issues' (TPV 1990, 1). This newspaper also hinted at a fantasy of a middle-class 'Blacktown Filipino' in its attempt to differentiate itself from other newspapers. The claim of being the 'voice' of this minority group took a special significance upon close reading.

Jess Diaz, solicitor, politician, ethnic leader, wrote for a regular column in *The Philippine Voice*. In the issues available to me in year 1990—the last issue I know of was its February 1993 release—Diaz's articles were a continuing polemic against a specific group in the community. Diaz made challenging remarks to the leaders behind the then-proposed Filipino Community Council who 'call themselves spokespeople of the community without full community consultation' (Diaz 1990, 4). The solicitor further accused the group of 'pomposity, verbosity and presumptuousness' in 'claiming to be the sole voice of the Filipino community' (1990, 4; emphasis original). In the following issue, the newspapers' headline was 'First

⁴² The figure on *The Philippine Voice*'s circulation and subsequent information, unless otherwise stated, came from Emma de Vera, one-time business manager. Publisher Evelyn Opilas declined to be part of this research while Jess Diaz, now councillor for the municipality of Blacktown and columnist of the paper, did not reply to requests to be interviewed.

Filipino national body formed'; it was a crucial moment in consolidating political representation. It reported on the gathering to formally elect a peak body to 'represent Filipinos in Australia by initiating policy changes and promoting their welfare and interests on a *national level*' (TPV December 1990; my emphasis). Rick Bonus calls such similar scenario of politicking amongst Bay Area Filipino-Americans as '*palengke politics*' (literally 'market politics' with an elitist connotation) which is 'doing politics' as a result of having no representation in mainstream politics and no access to it' but it also invested with 'support and mutuality' based on homeland affiliations (2000, 94).

Why did Filipinos think there was a need for a 'national' body to govern a diverse population in a big country? The race for the top-level peak body about which Diaz and others were so preoccupied—while clearly shaped by the standardised form of ethnic organising from 'above', meaning grants, funding, legitimacy—was a forward-looking step towards the rationalisation of multiculturalism against the upcoming challenges to it from what Hage calls 'neo-fascist ethno-nationalism' of Australia (1998, 26). The 1990s saw the rise of former fish-and-chips entrepreneur turned MP Pauline Hanson and her One Nation party as the voice of 'disenfranchised' Anglo-Australians. Hanson was against the unmitigated migration of 'Asians' into Australia, the full enforcement of multiculturalism that siphoned millions of taxpayers' money to accommodate newly settled immigrants, and the silencing of white Australians regarding the peopling of Australia (One Nation 1998). What right-wing politics was reacting against was precisely what the government was perceived to be extending to the likes of Diaz. The formation of an Australia-wide Filipino political body was a symptom *not* of the opening up of spaces but

precisely the absence of it. The peak body—strategically 'given' to Melbourne Filipinos to avoid further antagonism—was a testament of the readiness, in fact, a desiring, on the part of Filipinos to take part in Australia's political sphere. In an article revealingly titled 'Willing Instruments', Diaz wrote:

[F]or Filipinos, election Australia-style is a non-event and few take any interest in the campaign. It is perhaps the reason that Filipinos' political strength is non-existent in Australia. In spite of a reasonable potential political force, the Filipino migrant vote is taken for granted (1991, 4).

Not only was his community an 'instrument', it was also 'willing'; a very feminised imagery of an already sexualised citizens. And as a leader of the community, he, in turn, feminised his subject position to be literally *under* Australian rule. Ethnic patronage, in general, and the role of ethnic press in this patronage, in particular, is a serviceability of political representation that is not sought. While ethnic press aids in the construction of a public sphere of invisible citizens, its translation as bargaining power may suffer overestimation especially if a community blames its exclusion as a result of its own lack of interest.

To profit or to serve: Money, distribution and production

As there is money in ethnicity, there is profit in the production and consumption of representations. Ethnic entrepreneurship in Sydney—as it is in most culturally diverse cities—is tied to the accessibility of goods and services to its clients. 'Consuming the ethnic' is what Hage (1998) alludes to in his term 'cosmo-multiculturalism'. Some of the known 'ethnic precincts' in Sydney are Chinatown in Ultimo, Little Italy in Leichhardt and Asiatown in Cabramatta, but Jock Collins (2006) missed the new and invisible enclave of Filipinos in Blacktown. While the slightest signs

of 'Filipinoness' are very visible to my 'Filipino' eyes, it is not the case for the greater population in Sydney. This is tied to the volume and popularity of economic activities and territories associated with other 'Asian' groups. While the reading of the 'Filipino' primarily as sexualised rather than 'cultural'—a reading I will subvert later—my interviewees opined that the unpopularity of the 'Filipino' in the 'cosmo-multiculturalism' market is due to their high employability. That their capacity to enter the formal work force—often attributed to their English-language facility and semi-skilled composition—means Filipinos would rather earn wages than open a store, compared, say, to Indo-Chinese 'Asians' (Jaime Pimentel, interview, March 6, 2010). I raise this point because it hints at the deflection of the Filipino not to see their exclusion or unpopularity among 'ethnic' groups as a lack but of their own choosing. Neither does it reflect the wider anthropologising of 'Filipino' as 'damaged culture' compared, say, to 'unconquered Thailand' or 'spiritual Balinese', thus, unappealing to consumers of the 'real' other, nor does the view see the employability of other 'Asians' in Australia.

The shyness in the admission of 'doing business', thus, 'making profit' and the pride in claiming employability of the Filipino was, I suggest, the logic behind the reticence to see ethnic press as a business. Editors and publishers, almost unanimously, believe they run the newspapers in the name of service. When asked how much they earn if they earn at all, I was given the same tentative answers: 'ayos lang' ['not bad']; 'it's not possible to earn money'; 'kumikita rin' ['there are earnings']; and 'break even'. However, casual remarks I understood as 'off the record' point to allegations that such-and-such publisher makes a lot of money. What is striking here is the dirtiness ascribed to money; to profit from writing about

one's community, or in general, to sell one's ethnicity is unacceptable. This strict unwritten code manifests in more concrete concerns: who does journalism? Which paper has the most number of pages? Who earns less? Who is a sell-out? Who has the biggest circulation?

The question of money, however, is not about who sells because *nobody sells*. Nobody buys Filipino ethnic newspapers; they are simply picked up. Nonetheless, the question of profitability becomes a question of geography. For instance, Sydney-based publications today clearly outnumber those in Victoria, by a four to one ratio. *The Philippine Times* has the monopoly of circulation in the entire state where Filipinos are residentially concentrated in the west and northwest of Melbourne, in suburbs like Sunshine, Footscray, Broadmeadows and Brunswick (Lee 1999). The newspaper published by Gregorio—a ten-family effort to socialise to alleviate the adjustments of being new immigrants—is now an institution among Filipinos in Victoria with an eight to ten thousand circulation every month (George Gregorio, interview, January 27, 2010). Alice Nicolas, editor in chief, thinks that the success is not about singularly dominating the state but also because *Philippine Times* is a cut above the rest; theirs is a well-presented newspaper [*'maganda ang presentation'*] (Alice Nicolas, interview, January 25, 2010).

The four existing Sydney publications at the time of writing, two of which were established while the other two are recently born, compete for advertisers from local businesses. Despite this, three out of four have declared that they manage to stay

afloat.⁴³ The reach of their circulation, however, is a more tricky aspect. I asked editors and publishers if they have national distribution; Zaragoza, Gregorio and Perdon say that their titles have limited reach in regional areas. Perdon and Zaragoza send copies by post to regular contributors and supporters, which I suppose constitutes 'national' distribution. The two more recent titles only claim NSW-wide circulation. Titus Filio, editor of one of the newcomers, *newsPinoy*, thought it presumptuous to claim a 'national' distribution in a geographically expansive Australia especially to a relatively small community whose members 'do not like to read' (Titus Filio, interview, August 18, 2009).

My interviews revealed a fixation to segregate the 'professional' from the amateur, the journalist from the wanna-be, the skilled from the entrepreneur. Early publications such as *Bagumbayan*, *Philippine-Balita*, *Philippine-Australian Balita* and *Filipin-Oz* were portrayed by publishers and editors as examples of normative journalistic practice.⁴⁴ The 'amateur turn' came about when practitioners with no previous work in 'journalism'—however loosely defined—started their own titles. Zaragoza's *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* is often singled out as the example of such amateurism that pays well. (Chapter 6's discussion on the *masa* characterisation of Zaragoza's work details the source and consequences of this perception hinting at very elitist divisions within the community.) But *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* is not earning much money, counters Zaragoza. Her motivation for staying in the business is not money but the power of publication as community service—'*para makatulong sa community*' [to be able to help the

⁴³ *Kalatas* [Message] which started publication at the time of writing this thesis is unfortunately not part of my study.

⁴⁴ Interviews with Jaime Pimentel, Larry Rivera and Benjie de Ubago revealed their respective opinions on the more inferior quality of newspapers these days.

community] (Evelyn Zaragoza, interview, February 11, 2010). However, Aida Morden, the former editor, thinks that the newspaper was 'puro ads'; if it were properly edited (in reference to advertisements over which she has no control), the forty-eight page issue could be trimmed down to twenty-four (Aida Morden, interview, February 23, 2010). To this, Zaragoza defends herself: many advertisers fail to pay their dues. The ads are kept in place to avoid further layout work for the next issue.

While it may be believable that advertising does not readily translate into revenues, the growth of ethnic businesses as reflected in the papers' circulation size (which in effect is pushed by the volume of advertisement) also means that Filipino community, particularly in Blacktown, is flourishing. The graph below shows the circulation size of some Filipino ethnic press based on the figures given by their representatives.

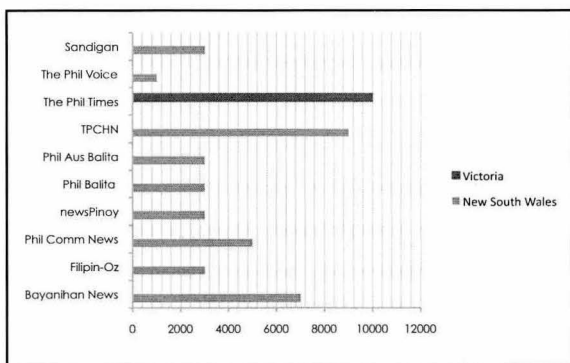


Figure 6 Circulation of Filipino-Australian ethnic newspapers

Despite the claim that ethnic publishing is 'not lucrative', the presence of four titles catering to mostly western Sydney Filipinos (excluding the A4-sized *The Philippine Sentinel* by Dino Crescini that started as a suburbia newsletter) is indicative that there is some money going around to shoulder printing costs among other production expenses. Who ultimately benefits from this set up are the members of the community who can read and write for newspapers and at the same time enjoy the psychic comfort of belonging and the symbolic capital that print brings. And the readers who get them for free! Gregorio remembers that when *The Philippine Times* was sold for a dollar, it was 'mahirap [difficult], very poorly received' by the community (George Gregorio, interview, January 27, 2010). The lukewarm reception improved when *The Philippine Times* was distributed for free. The printing expenses incurred plus the profit margin of the publishers mean that a considerable amount of advertising revenues support the very existence of these reading materials, which, in turn, are sourced from a captive clientele of ethnic consumption. The thousands of print materials released monthly that find their way into people's homes are supported by the very relations of production hinged upon spatial, ethnic, economic and social relations.

'The character of a place is defined by its newspaper,' said Jerry Brown (in Lauterer 2006, xiv). Exactly the opposite of capital-driven, big-city, large-subscription newspapers, community newspapers are characterised by the service and participation of residents and stakeholders. An ethnic newspaper, in particular, has people to consider but also spatial limits especially if the area of distribution is as immense as Australia, yet with a concentration as heavy as in Blacktown. I argue that the size of Filipino ethnic newspaper's circulation depends on the diligence and

creativity by which publishers take on the task of distribution. The spatial make-up of a 'ghettoised' Blacktown and surrounding suburbs, and the vastness of Australia, necessitate two sets of strategies to make print culture a more material presence to immigrants.

The *hulog* [dropping] method of publishers in geographically tight western Sydney is the most common and cost-efficient way of distributing newspapers. Nowhere is the combination of ethnicity and locality seen better than in one occasion when I accompanied Zaragoza to distribute her newspaper after our interview. This incident shows how ethnic economy and residential concentration in western Sydney helps the conveyance of printed materials. Knowing that there are 'Filipino' businesses in the Parramatta mall where the interview would be conducted, Zaragoza brought a few dozens of her latest issue. We made a short visit to the hair salon of Bhajune, a hairdresser well known in the community. The parlour was quite busy on a Thursday morning. Zaragoza briefly conversed with Bhajune after which I was introduced as the student who studies 'them'. The publisher asked Bhajune if she could leave her newspaper in the salon to which he acceded effortlessly. She then told me that wherever she goes, she brings with her a stack of the newspaper; an effective and cheap way of distributing her 'merchandise'.⁴⁵ A few months before formally meeting Zaragoza, I remember seeing her personally handing people newspapers during the Sydney Fiesta Cultura.

⁴⁵ A curious observation I made during this short errand with the publisher was an interaction between her and a male assistant of Bhajune. After placing the newspapers on the receptionist's table, Zaragoza engaged in some small talk with other *Pinoys* there. She noticed how the assistant took the newspapers and put them in the backroom. She quickly made an aside to Bhajune and recovered her 'merchandise' to place it back in the reception area. The point of this observation is to take note that the effective circulation of ethnic newspapers does not singularly depend on where publishers and editors drop their newspapers but also depends largely on the actors that handle the print material after being 'dropped'. In this example, an *informed* Filipino immigrant public can facilitate the movement of the community's reading materials.

Dino Crescini, on the other hand, uses his pensioner ticket to drop his newsletter from suburb to suburb in metropolitan Sydney (Dino Crescini, interview, February 16, 2010). *Bayanihan News* and *newsPinoy* are distributed as their publishers drive around areas heavily populated by Filipinos. In short, the ethnic mapping of western Sydney meant a more than adequate supply of newspaper issues monthly. One food shop owner told me that many copies often end up in the bin. The surplus could have made its way to regional Australia or other states. Instead, *Bayanihan News* only sends ten copies per issue to a contact in each state; even this meagre number sometimes gets cancelled when the budget is under strain (Renato Perdon, interview, September 7, 2009). This palpable lack of material presence should have pushed smaller states to put up their own papers, but it did not. Queensland where 16 per cent of Filipino-Australians live as of 2006, has never produced a tabloid. However, despite such considerable size, many of its migrants are Filipino women who settled with their husbands in mining towns; the population is thus rather dispersed compared to a denser western Sydney. (In fact, 74 per cent of Filipinos in Queensland are women while only 61 per cent in New South Wales.)⁴⁶ This means that profitability is an issue due to the smaller ethnic economic landscape.⁴⁷ This, nonetheless, is more than a matter of money; the provincial landscape of Queensland, its wide geographical territory and the distances between communities mean that small-scale efforts such as organisational newsletters are more suited to

⁴⁶ In a study of Filipino women in Central Queensland in 1991, there were 1,190 females to 185 males, where women were 'more likely arriving as a migrant for marriage to an Australian man' (Roces 1996, 146).

⁴⁷ Agnes Whiten, a community leader there, has another theory: Queensland lacks 'people with talent and leadership...that's why we are not publishing enough' (Agnes Whiten, interview, July 22, 2010). This kind of thinking does not reflect the specificities of Queensland or the productivity of print culture there. In the 2009 Queensland Multicultural Resource Directory, there are 11 active newsletters catering to smaller groups. Only the Chinese and the Italians have more newsletters than *Pinoy* Queenslanders, a good proof that they do write and publish. Whiten herself has written a history of Philippine-Australian Society of Queensland, Inc.

the unique features of the state and its migrant 'peopling'. (The suitability of other forms of print culture depending on the state and the demographic profile of Filipinos is also discussed in Chapter 8). Similarly, Filipinos in Perth, Adelaide, Darwin and Hobart have not produced newspapers.

In the age of digital infrastructure, communication impediments due to great distances have been diminished. As mentioned above, gone were the days when Pimentel would wait for a Philippine-published newspaper to prepare his *Philippine Balita* in the early 1980s. Today, recent news from 'home' finds its way to Sydney's newspapers via free online content. Only *The Philippine Times* had a previous agreement with *The Philippine Star*, a broadsheet based in Manila, to use the latter's content; I presume the rest is lifted and paraphrased from online sources. The internet has also made it possible for online versions of the monthly issues yet, so far only *The Philippine Times* and *Kalatas* have properly navigable websites.⁴⁸ With the absence of material newspapers in geographically distant places from western Sydney, this form could alleviate the gap in community reading but it also implies that there is a lesser need to put up new titles resulting in a further dependence on the established ethnic institutions in Sydney and Melbourne.

Finally, the internet introduced subcontracting of labour and transnational collaboration in Filipino-Australian newspaper culture. Although the community's print culture has remained less developed compared to transnational collaborations of the Chinese diaspora, it has somehow exhibited a forward-looking, appropriative

⁴⁸ the.filipinoaustralian.com by Romeo Cayabyab and www.australianfilipina.com by Michelle Baltazar are two stable online magazines that provide members of the community free content. *Bayanihan News* has an online version but it is technically unnavigable.

trajectory by taking advantage of the first world/third world divide between Australia and the Philippines. *The Philippine Times* from Melbourne has hired a certain Angeli in the Philippines who does the rest of the writing which Nicolas, editor, responsible for local (Australia-wide) content could not do (Alice Nicolas, interview, January 27, 2010). Nicolas added that the reason for this use of transnational labour is simply for its economic practicality. '*Mas mura kasi ang bayad sa 'tin.'*' ['Because we pay cheaper rates back home']. While she did not elaborate on the pay rates that Angeli gets for her work, one can imagine the labour standards between the two countries: roughly A\$10 per day minimum wage in Manila in 2011.⁴⁹ No other publisher has applied this system which keeps *The Philippine Times* thriving, except for Renato Perdon's books printed in Cavite, Philippines then freighted to Sydney. These cases illustrate lesser-known face of diaspora whereby connection to home is exploited on economic terms; for while migrants are commonly romanticised for their mobility, philanthropy and radical potential of their hybrid identity, they, too, perpetuate the international labour divide wherein they assume first-world subjectivity.

However, while not exactly subcontracting cheap labour, *newsPinoy* in Sydney is a truly transnational effort, reflective of the migratory background of its creators. Unlike the very localised production history and system of all the others that came before it, *newsPinoy* involves four people: one in Canada, one in Bahrain and two others in Australia (Titus Filio, interview, August 18, 2009). For while one from Australia is re-writing news gathered from a Philippine-news website, another lays out the pages of *newsPinoy*. The proof is then sent electronically back to Titus Filio in Sydney which is eventually forwarded a printer in Marrickville. *newsPinoy*, patterned

⁴⁹ This is based on the Department of Labour and Employment's rates as of July 2011 at P426/day, non-agriculture, in the National Capital Region.

after *mx*, the weekday free tabloid commuters read during peak hours, hopes to attract second-generation Filipino-Australians to read about 'home' here and 'home' there (Titus Filio, interview, August 18, 2009).

Conclusion

This chapter has located the emplacement of the Filipino ethnic newspaper culture within the larger context of multiculturalism in Australia, and within it, the tiny position which the Filipino-Australian tradition of publishing occupies. Framing this within the cultural geography of western Sydney's socio-economic history, in particular, of Blacktown's, we can see how a denser residential concentration and a thriving ethnic economic landscape has made this Filipino 'ghetto' the home of the printing culture of Filipino-Australians. In the 1990s, at a time when an assertive statist multiculturalism necessitated greater participation from 'minorities', Filipino-Australians showed how the struggle for representation from within is played out in print, not just for 'owning' certain spaces but also in desiring a better place as 'Australians'. While gatekeepers of the community establish influence as producers of 'culture', online publications, on the other hand, can give second-generation Filipino-Australians the chance to shake up the hierarchy and challenge what is already given while creating a new set of young cultural vanguards who filter what is 'Filipino-Australian' and what is not. New forms may democratise the limits posed by old practices of ethnic print culture; they, however, may just create new limitations.

While I have demonstrated how places, spaces, distances are all relationally constructed, I also see how material production, distribution and consumption of

print dictate a hierarchy of readings. Readership loyalty among those who possess the same ethnicity may include those within the same geography but not all the time. For instance, a white Australian's readership loyalty goes to the *Sydney Morning Herald* or the tabloid *The Daily Telegraph* as 'first read' and to *Blacktown Advocate* (or any other local publication) as 'second read'. Whereas, for the Filipino migrant immersed in non-white culture, there is a 'third read' that invites to be picked up in the store and taken home. In the reality of migrant life where the parameters of movement are tied to markedly cultural signifiers and constrained by economic disadvantages, the 'third read' (ethnic newspapers) could indeed be the 'second read', or most probably, even a 'first read'. However, for a Filipino residing in Darwin, or say, even the more popular destination, Brisbane, this hierarchy may be challenged.

Because an ordering of readership loyalty is available only to those who are reached by the ethnic press' limited circulation, there are those who may rely on other forms of print culture. For reasons specific to migration history and demographic and geographic profile, the ACT and Queensland, which never enjoyed the privileges of having newspapers, nevertheless have women's anthologies. The next chapter tackles the Filipino-Australian Women's Achievements Awards and the successes—and failures—of its book project.

Chapter 4

Traumatic lives, contested solidarity: Reading the 'mail-order bride' in the FAWAA anthologies

A newly arrived Filipina immigrant had been feeling homesick that she had developed the habit of writing and posting a letter to her family in the Philippines weekly. For months on end, she had religiously penned her thoughts on stationery, sealed it in an envelope, put a stamp on it and dropped it in a box. She never received a response... She felt so disappointed.

Her friend was touched. She suggested that they go to the post office and ask...[T]hey came to a street corner where a couple of huge collection bins stood. The woman stopped. 'Diyan,' ('There!') she said pointing, 'Diyan ako nagbubuson!' (That's where I drop my letters!)

Glaring back under the opening of the huge green tin container, in stark bold block letters, were the words: DROP YOUR LITTER HERE.

(Hennessy 2004, 151-52; emphasis original)

Lifted from a collage of Filipino experiences in Norma Hennessy's book on Australian migration, the cynicism of the passage may not be readily comprehensible to everybody: neither to Australians who commonly pronounce 'letter' as 'lettah' nor individuals who forgive misspellings. But for Filipinos, this joke is a rather nasty return to discriminatory rhetoric that non-Visayans inflict upon Visayans. This 'joke' ethnicises Visayan women as 'mail-order brides', as bar girls, as uneducated, and with a permanent linguistic defect, which engenders jokes like this one.⁵⁰ The popularity of such imagery (I have read this same 'joke' elsewhere and

⁵⁰ 'Visayas' refers to the group of clustered islands in the middle of the archipelago and where people speak a lingua franca called 'Visaya'. This language is characterised by the inversion of the 'e' and 'i' phonetic sounds; a cause of embarrassment for northerners and Manilaños. The association of Visayan women as maids come from the mass exodus of Visayans to Manila in the post-war years, also often attached to the mushrooming of illegal settlements all over the city. The perception that Visayan 'mail-order brides' are bar girls or shades thereof is also possibly attached

heard it delivered orally at a gathering), and the pervasiveness of ethnocentrism amongst Filipinos (an interviewee collapses a women's organisation of mostly Visayan origin as a bunch of 'mail-order brides'), are deeply rooted in the historical, political and colonially arranged ethno-linguistic antagonisms in the Philippines.⁵¹ But this fracturing takes a deeper significance in the context of the hypersexualised Filipino migration to Australia. When another Filipino woman from a northern province—who herself is a 'bride'—singularly points to Visayan women in interracial marriages as prostitutes, the creation of this ethnicised, anti-women, anti-poor discourse within the Filipino community is, in fact, a legitimisation of their own sexualisation.

The imagining of a lower rung allotted to Visayan women in the hierarchy of 'mail-order brides' by others is not simply a defensive deflection of the 'native' to pass on collective shame to another 'native'. It is, however, an effect of the racist and sexist subjectification of women by white Australia which underlines the colonial relations between them. The new coloniality of this migration returns to the old coloniality that mapped the antagonisms amongst 'different' Filipinos yet subsumed under the blanket governmentality of the nation-state. In other words, the feminisation of an 'ethnic' group in first-world Australia finds a unique expression in the very subjugating discourse that Filipinos apply towards each other while they remain trapped in their own iconicity as a nation for sale. There are two salient reasons that this chapter elaborates: [1] the politics of representation and self-

to the poverty that underlined the post-war internal migration but also the intra-Philippine construction of them as 'lazy'.

⁵¹ Although this anonymous interviewee agreed to be named in the research and did not specifically specify to put this comment 'off the record', I deemed it proper to withhold her name in this instance. The interviewee was a woman who came from the northern provinces and clarified that her migration was a professional one.

representation of Filipino-Australians; [2] the strains and contested unity of the subjectivity 'Filipino women' manifesting in the uses and abuses of the 'mail-order bride'.

There will be three sections in this chapter. First, a section on the stereotypes and images of the 'Filipina' in two major broadsheet dailies: *The Sydney Morning Herald* (NSW) and *The Australian* (national). Since there have been many studies that tackled the Filipino woman in Australia as a threat to the socio-economic balance but more particularly to the whiteness of its ethnic majority some of which I discussed briefly in Chapter 1, this discussion is but a short survey of what the 'average' Australian has read about the 'Filipina' from 1990 to 2009. My review of content did not specifically seek to highlight the deaths, domestic violence and physical assaults on the Filipino woman; this has been done by tabloids and magazines many times before. The intention was to show continuity of the representation that started in the late 1970s and continues until today.

The next section of the chapter is an analysis of Filipino-Australian writings in relation to the problem that hovers over the community. What angle of gender and ethnic advocacy has inspired the members of the collective to write about it? The state multiculturalism that intersects with the struggle for gender equality engendered a multi-site project amongst Filipino-Australian women to speak out, perform and 'materialise' their dissent against the racism of the 'white' majority: the Filipino-Australian Women's Achievement Awards' (from hereon 'FAWAA'). This consolidation of voices into one, however, reveals cracks of differences, a

valorisation of the middle class, and exploitation of the sexualised other which the FAWAA's race for distinction made possible.

The final section is a look at the FAWAA anthologies produced within the framework of the project as life-writing narratives—*testimonio* of the 'mail-order bride' as silenced class—that potentially could be emancipatory tales of survival: of the ethnic, of the migrant, of women. Do these narratives rectify the problem of (mis)representation, do they suspend the image without correction, or do they merely reinforce the prejudice?

The 'Filipino', the 'Filipina', the 'Philippines': A look at Australian dailies

We all deal with representations of us; we all participate in the making of our representations and of ourselves as representations. As my research data revealed, the 'Filipina', more than the 'Filipino', is in a league of her own: she carries heavier baggage than that of the male Filipino migrant in Australia. Here, she is neither the 'Asian' woman whom the Western world imagines her to be nor is she the Catholic girl she imagines herself to be. Her combined sexualised and racialised representations are all-too-pregnant social pathologies which Australian society reminds her every single chance it gets. The 'Filipina' in Australia has a very singular definition that mainstream Australian media—whether print, television or film—have carved out for her. To say that this definition is pejorative is an understatement.

The two broadsheets chosen to be analysed are picked for two key reasons: *The Australian* for its sheer size of circulation as a national newspaper and *The Sydney*

Morning Herald (SMH) for its demographic importance in the state of New South Wales where most Filipinos live. The articles surveyed cover two decades: 1990 to 2009. Although this portion of the study tried to be as comprehensive and exhaustive as possible by reading and taking into account anything that mentions either of the three terms of identity ('Filipino', 'Filipina', 'the Philippines'), labelling, categorising and organising of notes necessarily had to be omitted, as did certain details which may be potentially significant in another project. A few examples of such elimination are stories on cheap labour of warm bodies (Laurie 2006); Abu Sayyaf-led kidnappings in Mindanao (Dono 2009); Filipinos on visa 457 laid off in Perth ('The 457 Visas in a Downturn' 2009); Imelda Marcos' jewellery ('Marcos jewels 'to remain in govt hands' 2009); Optus's phone sex operations involving the Philippines (Carson 2009); and so on. Also, from 2001 to 2009, the following threads are recognisably the most frequent where the Philippines is mentioned: Abu Sayyaf in the Philippines, the Jemaah Islamiah in Indonesia, the bombing of an embassy in Jakarta, the bombing of Bali, the kidnapping of the Burnhams, the travel advisory on Sabah by Australian authorities, the Moro National Liberation Front, extremism in Iraq, Pakistan and Afghanistan, Bush's and Howard's 'war on terror', and so forth.

In two decades, the two newspapers were littered (lettered?) with the name of Rose Hancock Porteus; described as the 'most famous' (Hornery 2006) and the 'most infamous Filipina maid made good' in all of Australia (Hornery 2007). Porteus, who married the iron-ore magnate Lang Hancock, has been variously described as a 'maid', 'prostitute', 'gold-digger', 'tacky', 'addicted', 'sexbomb', 'hustler', 'ambitious',

'evil', among other evocative adjectives.⁵² 'She's the Cinderella of cleaners. The Eliza Doolittle of maids' (Ritchie 2002). The saga of her courtroom battles started when Hancock died and his only daughter, Gina Rhinehart—the richest Australian in 2011 and the first woman to be so—sued her stepmother for causing the untimely death of the old man. The standing of Hancock alone plus the hackneyed narrative of money, family betrayal, murder suspicion and marrying the dead man's friend were enough to stir the imagination of white-Perth, journalists and society page columnists. However, this story has a peculiar 'Australian' twist: the 'mail-order bride' is embodied in the sexed caricature in Porteous.

However, for Porteous to be the personification of the 'mail-order bride' is to flatten the striated gender and class relations amongst Filipino women in Australia. Porteous is a Lacson whose family was not only wealthy but well-networked by neo-colonial standards and also a political, rent-seeking power in the sugarcane land of Negros Occidental.⁵³ She is 'Visaya' but untouchable because of this standing which 'ordinary' Filipino women do not have. No 'ordinary' bride would discredit Porteous as 'Visaya'/whore/'mail-order bride' for the sheer difference in skin colour that differentiates her from, say, Vivian Alvarez Solon (discussed below), another Filipina who made headlines. As I see it, Porteous functioned in two contradictory ways: [1] she conflates all that is exchangeable about the Filipino woman that justifies racist and sexist attitudes; and [2] she shows that not all Filipino 'brides' are

⁵² Many articles repeatedly cite the alleged name-calling by Gina Rhinehart; some of the articles that give readers a peak at the saga are Hickman 2002a, 2002b; Laurie *et al* 2002; O'Brien 1999a, 1999b; 1999c; Tucak 2001a, 2001b, 2001c.

⁵³ While one's surname in the Philippines could often lead to doors and openings, the 'Lacson-connection' of Porteous has not been established or whether she grew up wealthy or not. That said, she was still not the dirt-poor woman associated with 'mail-order brides'. A biography by Robert Wainright, *Rose* (2002), by Allen & Unwin on Porteous revealed other aspects about the Perth woman not discussed in newspaper articles.

poor, uneducated 'natives'. The former is for white Australians' understanding and the latter is for the Filipino community to realise that 'brides' can be Spanish/Chinese *mestiza* and middle-class, not to mention 'Visaya'.



Figure 7 Constructions of the Filipino woman: Porteus, Alvarez Solon and Casalme
(Photo credit: [www.postnewspapers.com.au/Kate Gerty](http://www.postnewspapers.com.au/Kate_Gerty) (SMH)/thesun.co.uk)

Vivian Alvarez Solon is the *other* 'Filipina' who is written in Australian immigration's history of notable cases. She was the 'Australian' who got deported to her 'country': the Philippines, in 2001. Looking like a dishevelled 'alien', inarticulate upon police questioning, Alvarez Solon was taken into immigration custody and then deported efficiently. Her case caused furore from advocacy groups in Australia (more than from the Philippine government) at the government department which then-Prime Minister John Howard defended as not racist ('The Lies that Kept Vivian Alvarez Hidden for Years' 2005). She was made to be another example of how being the wrong kind of migrant in Australia ends in a nervous breakdown, drinking, illness and separation from one's children; all, one way or another, a drain in the welfare

state.⁵⁴ Amidst the display of quiet collective 'guilt' in deporting its 'own' citizen, none of the writings raised the circumstance of Alvarez Solon's migration to Australia; none pointed out she was a 'bride'. The apparent consideration and sensitivity given to the case is, however, not compatible with the alleged handwritten notes on the Filipino woman's pre-deportation papers where 'sex slave' was written on the margin; a 'Filipina low-life', 'a piece of trash' (Marr 2005a). The power behind the deportation of Alvarez Solon was the invisible hand that interpreted her citizenship as illegitimate and signed for her forced exit. Her 'deportation' was written long before she attracted the attention of white authorities; it might even have predated her arrival. Australian officials, although they regard the deportation as 'deeply regrettable', have never apologised to Alvarez Solon, not unexpectedly. In lieu of this, it was alleged that the Filipino woman received a 'payout' of \$4.5 million for the injuries caused by her sexualised citizenship (Anderson 2006).

The 'Filipina' as almost always a wife is another angle to her subjectivity not separate from the discourse around Porteous and Solon; they were—so to speak—wives of Australians before anything else, or nothing else besides. The 'wifely-ness' of the Filipino woman is extraordinary because of the pathological aura that surrounds it. Apart from Porteous and Alvarez Solon, there are numerous faceless Filipino women who inhabit a lesser-known world of the domestic that dovetails with the world of the criminal. When Des Campbell was prosecuted for throwing his wife over a cliff, the new wife became 'the new Filipina wife', 'a former singer in a Japanese bar' (Higgins and Madden 2007; Jacobsen 2007); when a Melbourne man was

⁵⁴ The night Vivian Alvarez Solon was found, according to police reports as reported in the media, she was 'dirty, drunk and screaming in pain' (Marr 2005a). I do not have the information whether she succumbed to alcoholism.

caned in Saudi Arabia because his wife was caught stealing she became 'the Filipina wife caught stealing' (Madden 2003; Jackson 2003); when Steven Fraser stabbed and killed his three children, their mother became 'their distraught Filipina mother' (Videnieks 2001); when accused serial murderer, a Perth mayor, married, she is a Filipina (Wainwright 2004); when prep boys in a reunion exchanged news about the elderly gardener, he was in the 'arms of a young Filipina' (Chipperfield 2005); when Air Philippines crashed and killed Martin Hall, Luisa Mallari-Hall and their two children, she was singularly reduced as 'his Filipina wife' (Alford 2000): no matter that Luisa was a Marxist-feminist university professor, she would have to join the rest of them in one conceptual category.⁵⁵ Indeed, the 'Filipina wife' is more than a designation; it is a term that interpellates all those who rightfully (or wrongfully) belong to the category. A woman becomes a nameless, faceless immovable caricature that conjures the 'mail-order bride' in *Priscilla* (1994). She has even become a joke of her own league so that even when an Australian marries a Chinese woman, his mates would crack jokes, about 'taking Filipina brides' (Leech 1997).

Now, there was a period when British politicians' sex scandals that fascinated Australia brought to its attention another Filipino woman—only this time as a maid. Judging by the number of times it has been reported in both broadsheets, the name Leoncia Casalme may have been familiar (though forgettable) during the tail-end of 2004. She was not the centre of the scandal but rather a mere detail, an object of

⁵⁵ Luisa Mallari-Hall taught at the University of the Philippines at the time I was finishing my undergraduate degree. Their young family decided to stay in the Philippines rather than in Australia. Reading about her in an Australian broadsheet in this context was dispiriting. I do not, however, subscribe to an elitist categorising of the middle class as separate from 'the rest of them wives'.

discussion, a passive mute whose voice the rest of the reading public did not hear. Casalme was the 'Filipina nanny' of Kimberley Quinn, former lover of David Blunkett, British Labour Party politician, who leaked that he used his office to fast-track the visa of Casalme in England to continue serving as a nanny. This caused Blunkett to resign from the cabinet of Tony Blair, thus ending his brilliant young career. It was a case when the subjectivity of the 'Filipina' is confined to that of a 'nanny'—a figure characterised by her non-participative involvement as child-carer, someone whose conditional presence in the first-world indirectly engendered the fall of an Englishman (Fray 2004a). Casalme, with searching eyes and pursed lips (in the photo above), was never quoted on anything during the entire 'nannygate scandal', a term which ironically centred on her (Fray 2004b); but more specifically, her presence in the affair reinforced the already-known stereotype that Filipino women are labour migrants who clean toilets and care for other people's children, other people's parents and other countries' sick.

Another case where nationality, gender and class figure to conjure a specific subject is the *japayuki* in Japan. News articles about human and sex trafficking often mention the 'Filipina' in both Australian newspapers. Finding themselves as 'entertainers' in the 'affective economy' of Japanese industrial cities' night life, these women engage in sex work, escort services, stripping, singing, hospitality, among others, to provide respite to the male, elite work force of corporate Japan, and also as wives to Japan's rural males (Faier 2009; Suzuki 2008). Filipino women are also known as domestic helpers in Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia who earn more than their Indonesian and Bangladeshi counterparts because they speak 'better English' (Moore 2004). The 'Filipina' as feminised labour migrant figures significantly in

the discourse of the political economy of migrant remittances. Tucked under the US\$18 billion of remittances economic discourse is the female warm body export of the nurse, the maid, the carer, the entertainer, among others. Australia, being first-world, is likewise participant in the globalised use of migrant labour as a country of destination through its temporary work visa. Feminised labour of the Filipino (but in particular the 'Filipina') is evident in the two newspapers where writers took note of her presence in the background: 'a smiling Filipina waitress brought us coffee and dates' in Dubai' (Salloum 2003); 'huge groups of Filipina maids dressed for a Sunday away from work' (Blundell 1999).

In both *The Australian* and *Sydney Morning Herald*, news of sex trafficking among children particularly in Angeles, Pampanga, some sixty kilometres north of Manila and known as the prostituted city for the 'RnR' of American soldiers, were fuelled by the culture of prostitution that followed after the eviction of the US bases in the Philippines. Occasionally, Australians are apprehended for child-sex tourism and prostitution-related cases and merits reporting in these dailies ('Philippines Brothel Raid: Aussies Arrested' 2011). Reports show this image of the Philippines where a huge number of women and children are participants in the sex industry often do not carefully separate the discourse of the prostituted from the 'prostitutors', leaving an image of a nation in a bad state of sexual decay. An example of this decay among Filipinos was evident in a 108-word article about the dropping of charges against a fifty-four year old Australian man who was accused of having sex with two minors in the Philippines just because the mother could not come over to give evidence. The inability to prosecute the sex offender who would return to Australia a free man is, simply put, the culpability of the mother.

The subjectivity of the Filipino woman in Australia as 'mail-order bride', servant, migrant labourer, prostituted and sex abuse victim is established in the reading public's consciousness. Despite a few rare showings of some positive news—such as an art exhibit by a Filipino or a Philippine company buying out an Australian—the 'Filipina' does not evoke positive images in Australia. It is in this context that in early 2000, Filipino communities in two states decided to counter the negative representation.

The birth of FAWAA: I, the 'mail-order bride'

Delia Domingo-Albert, Ambassador of the Philippines to Australia, understood what it meant to be a 'Filipina' in the 1990s. In delicately written diplomatic language, she addressed the readers of *Filipino Women Achiever in Queensland: A Compilation of Stories of Seven Achievement Award Recipients and the Other Nominees* (FAWAA 2001, ix) as to why staging an awards ceremony was imperative:

I realised that mainstream Australia needed to be made aware that our Filipino women migrants have high level of skills, work and educational capabilities and that their adaptability and innovative efforts enabled them to maintain happy and successful *cross-cultural partnerships* as responsible citizens of Australia (my emphasis).

Although the Filipino woman as an object of scrutiny in Australia has been around since the late 1970s, the issue continued to rage in a variety of forms and narratives: maid-turned-socialite, mail-order-bride as victim, as criminal suspect, as welfare dependent, as illegitimate 'Australians'. Marlene Agmata-Tucker narrated how it was in this context that her boss, Ambassador Albert, thought of initiating the project

of an award-selection body that would honour exceptional Filipinas. Based in Canberra on a diplomatic posting in 1994, Agmata-Tucker remembered how Ambassador Albert approached her to head the FAWAA in the ACT after a successful run in Queensland. The motivation of the lawyer-diplomat to embark on an ambitious project is professional because 'part of the embassy's work was to improve the image of the Filipina as mail-order bride' (Marlene Agmata-Tucker, interview, April 18, 2010). But it is also due to some personal experiences as a Filipino woman married to a white Australian, one of which involved no less than the former Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, Philip Ruddock. Agmata-Tucker wrote in the *Canberra Historical Journal* that during a courtesy call in 1996, Ruddock asked her "'Are you sure you're not a mail order bride?'" (2003, 18)⁵⁶

Not hampered by the enormous challenge of changing Australian perceptions of the Filipino woman, the Task Force started the lengthy process of seeking grants and financial support from Australian institutions, accepting nominations, putting together a judging committee, the deliberation of winners, promoting the event, staging a formal program and dinner at the Hyatt Hotel, and then the compiling, editing, publication, launch and distribution of the book *Crossing the Barriers: Filipino Women Stories: An Anthology of Migration* (Agmata-Tucker 2002). Indeed, reading an anthology of Filipino women's narratives printed and distributed in Australia and looking at the pictures of the well-attended awards night, encourages hope that Ambassador Albert's vision of a respected Filipino woman

⁵⁶ According to Agmata-Tucker during the interview, Ruddock was not satisfied with the 'jesting remark' but still persisted on pursuing the insult by asking her husband if she were a 'mail-order bride'. Although Ruddock's involvement here proved that he was not fond of foreign women, he was friendly with the likes of Dante Tan, a fugitive from the Philippines. In 2003, Ruddock's name was dragged into 'cash-for-visa' controversy as wealthy Tan was given Australian citizenship despite his high-profile market-fraud case. Tan was prosecuted for contributing to Ruddock's campaign funds (Banham et al 2003).

may just come into fruition. The success of the event and its potential to change attitudes was even expressed by two Anglo-Australian female politicians in Canberra. Without specifically hinting at the 'problem' that besieged the community, they did recognise the need to rectify an error that undermines the Filipino community. Kate Carnell, former Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Chief Minister, wrote how she was 'pleased that these awards have been implemented to help address this problem'; the *problem* referred to was that 'dedication by women in our community goes unacknowledged' (Agmata-Tucker 2002, v). More so, Kate Lundy, Senator for the ACT at the time, thought that Filipino-Australians in the ACT were characterised by 'determination', 'strength' and 'compassion'; virtues that show how 'migrant women are so crucial to the rich fabric of Australian society' (Agmata-Tucker 2002, vi). Lundy further emphasised that the anthology 'formally [recorded] their commitment'; a testament to the materiality of print material culture than any other medium as is often assumed.

On the other hand, the anthology from Queensland (FAWAA 2001), published a year earlier, was more confrontational in its engagement with the 'problem'. In the introduction, the members of the task force revealed how they tried hard for a 'multimedia promotion' in order to reach a larger Australian audience since it was the media that were responsible for stereotyping Filipino women as 'mail-order brides' thus '*creating divisions within the Filipino community and in many cases, isolating the Filipino women from the wider community*' (FAWAA 2001, 11; my emphasis). For the organisers, the Gala Awards Night on 11th November 2000 attended by approximately four hundred people was an indication of the success of the project. To be able to mount such a big public event—with 'formality', 'regality' and

'exuberance'—was a significant step for the community towards acceptance (FAWAA 2001, 11).

Uri Themal, Executive Director of Multicultural Affairs Queensland, wrote that Filipino women as a category are social outcasts. He pointed out that they 'suffered from generalisation, stereotyping and prejudice' for being 'mail-order brides who would do basically anything to leave poor conditions in their country in order to come to Australia and prosper by marrying an Australian' (FAWAA 2001, vii). Such 'offensive' and 'distorted' characterisation although 'there could be some truth in that,' continues Themal, is something so pervasive that even someone with his stature recommending a Filipino woman for a job would elicit responses such as 'I don't need a tea lady' (FAWAA 2001, vii). On the possibility of resolving the lingering social problem during his time as an ethnic affairs manager, Themal claimed that Queensland's FAWAA 'negate[s]' the stereotypes.

The publication of two FAWAA anthologies—from the initial staging of the ceremonies to the writing of the narratives to the marketing and distribution of the books—highlights the effort to address the problem of representation. It was in print that the task force behind FAWAA hoped to repair the damage. The notion that books are printed by the thousands and are distributed without geographical boundaries, and then left in public libraries for posterity's sake, all contribute to the permanence of print, thus, the emphasis on its materiality. A printed book is something that members of the community can see and touch, and, of course, read! This is the weight that print culture possesses that a one-night ceremony or dozens of photos on a website do not. The impact of print did not escape the editor

when she said that 'the Filipino community hardly gets into *The Canberra Times*. If they did, we [in the embassy] always had to write to correct stories about us' (Marlene Agmata-Tucker, interview, April 18, 2010). The ACT anthology as a follow up to the awards was later promoted in that same newspaper: a symbolic act of striking back, a reclamation of dignity, although without the guarantee of any change in attitude.⁵⁷ But the singular moment of this birthing requires celebration: the book was launched at the ACT's legislative assembly with Australian politicians and Philippine embassy officials gracing the event.

However, there also existed a very small (and generally unheard) sector of the community that dared express a dissenting voice, such as Dee Hunt, editor of KASAMA, an activist newsletter based in Queensland. She called into question the very logic of accepting 'stigma' and 'shame' as the responsibility of the community alone (Hunt 2002, 3-4). This is the type of critical feminist engagement uncommon within the community's practice of 'activism', or at least among those who presume the position of 'organic intellectuals' for being local leaders. Curiously, 'Blacktown Filipinos' did not embrace the FAWAA as much as the ACT and Queensland. The award was staged once in 2006 in Sydney but did not produce an anthology of women's writing. Without any mention of 'brides', violence or the media, FAWAA in Sydney focused on the capacity of the group to '[contribute] to the ongoing discourse on Australian nation-building' ('Former *Colegialas* Chosen in FAWAA Awards' 2006). The geo-demographic combination of Filipino-Australians in Sydney does not suitably fit FAWAA's advocacy: Sydney prides itself as an area of fewer interracial marriages, for one, and secondly, I believe that the plethora of award-

⁵⁷ The promotion landed in the 'About Town' section of *The Canberra Times*, February 19, 2002. It includes a photo of the editor, Agmata-Tucker, with the book beside a cake.

giving bodies in the state diminishes the attraction of 'local' FAWAA. It is also possible that personalities in the Filipino community would rather invest in awards handed out by white institutions like the Order of Australian Merit, the NSW Community Relations multicultural awards, and the recently introduced NSW Premier's Filipino Community Awards. Similarly, there had been a Tasmanian Filipino Women Achievement Awards in 2003 but I cannot verify if it was from the same FAWAA 'franchise'. Judging by the small size of the community in the island state of Tasmania, its isolation and general unpopularity as a migrant destination, it is possible that its appropriation of FAWAA is as unique as in other states.

What the two FAWAA anthologies have achieved, if put in the perspective of the history of women's writing and/or Filipino writing in Australia, is unique if not admirable. They have given a voice where there was only muted silence. At a time when life-writing, (auto)biographies, emancipatory and testimonial narratives of women have attained canonical acceptance in both the practice and theory of literature—from African American slave narratives to Rigoberta Menchú's (1984) life-story as a fighter in Guatemala—it was not as easy to locate writings of 'mail-order brides'. In Chapter 2, I mentioned that an Asian-American academic gave isolated attention to Filipino women in the United States as *the* 'embodiment of exchange' while analysing one text written by a Thai 'mail-order bride' (So 2008). Moreover, Manila-based Rolando Tolentino's proposed ethnographic study of 'mail-order brides' in Los Angeles did not materialise for he found it difficult to find informants. He attributed his failure to the women's fear of the 'backlash of "coming out"' (2001, 2); this is something that Constable acknowledged as 'difficult' but 'not impossible' to

do (2003, 92).⁵⁸ Finally, in Australia, where life-writing based on 'ethnicity' and 'women' as categories is rather common, the 'Filipina' is relatively outside an imagined fence as well. An anthology of 'Asia-Pacific women in Australia' (Bourke, Holzknicht and Bartlett 2002)—from China to Burma to the small island-nations—features a myriad of stories but not one by a Filipino woman, and definitely not by a 'mail-order bride'. Considering that the Filipino woman is the one minority singularly tied to the 'woman question', I found this irregular. This structural avoidance is also exemplified by Janet Penny and Siew-Ean Koo, referring to Filipino marriages as irregular: '[t]hat kind of marriage is not the subject of [our] study' (1996, 19; my emphasis). The refusal of Penny and Koo to engage with Filipino women in their sociological investigation is symptomatic of the cringe. Therefore, the FAWAA anthologies as women's contribution to migrant print culture are invaluable not so much for its critical edge but more for affecting a 'counter-cringe'.

The genre of the *testimonio*—bearing witness—transposed many women's lives into print, subsequently gaining discursive attention but also criticism of the very structure by which they give testimonial to lives lived in danger and obscurity (Maier and Dulfano 2004). Defined by Spivak as 'the genre of the subaltern giving witness to oppression', testimonial writing is often made by the unlettered who found themselves politicised in the context of social upheavals or in resistance movements (1998, 7). Because it is a literature of bearing witness, an audience, a reader or

⁵⁸ Constable cited the works of Raquel Ordonez (1997) and Cecilia Julag-Ay (1997)—who are possibly of Filipino ancestry—as examples of 'mail-order bride' ethnography to disprove Tolentino's claim (2003, 242). What Constable's confidence overlooked was the fact that she is a white American academic which I believe has its advantages that 'Filipinos' do not have in asking 'mail-order brides' to open up. In the same way, some white U.S. males refused to cooperate with her (2003, 43). In Australia-based scholarship, many of 'mail-order bride' ethnography were by white Australians. See Chapter 1. My own experiences validate the claim that the 'mail-order bride' subjectivity is too sensitive a subject for a co-national to interrogate.

someone who will listen is as important as the one rendering the testimony: the reader of FAWAA anthologies is as essential in the transaction as the subject. Once oral histories have found their way into writing, thus into print culture, this means that Filipino-Australians who have shared their personal lives in the FAWAA books now inhabit textual and private lives. It is inevitable that this move from one sphere to another that there will be a shifting of the gaze: from 'she, the "mail-order bride"' to 'I, the "mail-order bride"'. The substantial subjective reconstruction that life-writing necessitates, especially if one has to finally 'come out of the closet', confronts the Filipino woman who is compelled to cloak her presence through the accumulation of what may constitute 'whiteness' capital through money, language and other indicators of tolerance.

But writing autobiographically 'as-a-woman' empowers the subject to exorcise the trauma of migration, racial difference and gendered violence; a textual rendition of one's life is 'a memory yet to be understood, a potential yet to come into being' (Anderson 1997, 8). The FAWAA project created space to return to the past for thirty-two women from the ACT and thirty-seven from Queensland: the temporal and spatial beginning where a past is severed from a present. This severance is often articulated with clarity in these narratives: a nostalgic reconstruction of life before migration but also a romanticisation of what Australia has 'given' them. Trauma and pain—in the form of inscribing 'I, "the mail-order bride"' in the context in which their migration is couched—are manifested in some narratives but not in others. The elision and self-censorship are also detected by FAWAA ACT's editor.⁵⁹ The woman

⁵⁹ Agmata-Tucker said 'I was very happy with the honesty of a lot of women who participated. But there were talks that some were not completely honest in their stories, for example, not mentioning some facts here and there.' (Marlene Agmata-Tucker, interview, April 18, 2002).

subject, whether in divulging painful memory or hiding a 'shameful' past, possesses a level of self-consciousness where 'knowing' oneself and who one potentially is must occur. This is where the liberatory potential of FAWAA narratives comes from. This is the start for women publicly shamed for marrying Australian men to shift the gaze and to 'move their readers into new and perhaps freer spaces' (Mitchell 2002, 11). For those whose elision and self-censorship of crucial details of migration marked their narratives, it does not mean that (mis)recognition of the self did not materialise because the very intertextuality of all these Filipino-Australian women's narratives—from the half-dead woman on television, to Porteus and Alvarez Solon to the winning nominee to the non-winning—all construct the narrative of the migrant Filipino woman, bride or non-bride. (Mis)recognition, however, is not an error in judgement. Neither is it simply a case of misrepresentation of fact nor the response of a subaltern subject to any form of interrogation. Suzette Henke believes that (mis)recognition is vital to the agency and subjectivity of a woman (2000, xv).

Many have theorised on the centrality of finding a voice within female subjectivity in postcolonialism (Behar and Gordon 1995; Puri 1999). Spivak's (1988) articulation of the 'subaltern' and who *could* speak on her behalf is one of the most prominent approaches to this subject. This raises the question whether a 'mail-order bride' is a subaltern subject like the 'Indian' dowry bride. For while the FAWAA salvaged the 'mail-order bride' as a category of analysis from the underground of voicelessness and obscurity, those who speak for her can never represent her adequately. Thus, it is the usability of the 'mail-order bride' subject as an 'authentic insider'—to use Uma Narayan's term (1997, 142-44)—that legitimises the logic that

operationalises FAWAA. Without the 'real' women, what would be the 'value' of the writings of Westernised middle-class migrant women? The very process of constructing the 'mail-order bride' Filipino woman as the 'authentic' amongst us uses her as leverage towards the 'mail-order bride's' erasure: a forgetting of what she was once.

Cultural critics like Chow, on the other hand, problematises the postcolonised ethnic subject's inclination for self-referential representations which autobiographical writing is the fitting example; that to avoid the mishaps of orientalisng gaze embedded in being represented by others, one might as well talk about one's oppression (2002, 112-13). This incessant desire to 'confess', to return to the self in seeking what mediated representations cannot access, is the purported liberative potential of self-representation, of the 'subaltern' writing, of the 'mail-order bride' submitting to the operations of FAWAA. From an angle, ethnic writing is somewhat an attempt to a 'transindividual narcissism' wherein migrants forge a collective 'self-regard' that will exist as the writings unfold (2002, 142). Chow, however, believes that through 'coercive mimeticism'—'that the thing to imitate, resemble, and become is none other than the ethnic or sexual minority herself'—subjects like the 'mail-order bride' 'may actually be allowing such powers to work in the most intimate fashion...in a kind of surrender that is, in the end, fully complicit with the guilty verdict that has been declared on them socially long before they speak' (2002, 115). This theoretical warning—refine in its handling of positionality—is a rather prohibitive injunction for subjects like the 'mail-order bride' *not* so much as not to speak but more of *not* learning to speak at all. More so, because confessing may be courting risky theoretical loopholes, the FAWAA as a project of 'coming out' could be a

productive venue in exposing relations in specific migrant settings. In other words, while Chow's sophisticated argumentation predicts the failure of FAWAA, the FAWAA, nonetheless, may reveal covert exercises and also hint at promises which otherwise would have remained uncovered without this failed encounter.

Effective or erroneous, the whole project of recuperation of the Filipino woman's dignity in the context of Australia's problem with the 'mail-order bride' stands on the premise *and* promise of agency and intervention, of change and of hope. That is, the subjectivity of the 'Filipina' is something contingent upon the actions she is willing to take and the spaces she is inclined to create for herself despite decades of racialised and sexualised treatment. The narratives of success—and not just any kind—are the ones valorised in order to pose as counter-position against the degrading perception of the Filipino woman. This is what Hage calls the 'valorisation of the middleclass' to proclaim that there are doctors, PhDs, lawyers, *decent people amongst us* (2002, 113). However, although it is convenient to delegate the category 'subaltern' to the 'mail-order bride' and to box her conceptually, her being 'voiceless' is neither altogether total nor is it qualified by the many ridges dividing Filipino women as a community. FAWAA was not designed for and by the 'mail-order bride' as a 'subaltern' woman; in fact, it is rather the opposite: it is a project for the acceptable with social, cultural and economic capital. FAWAA sits in the intersection between the political potential of women finally finding their voices but also remaining haunted and stunted by the internal class divide and the symbolic violence in representing others. Moreover, what enabled a middle class, conservative FAWAA in 2000 was the 'mass-based', ordinary 'mail-order bride' activism spurred by the broader issue of domestic violence in the 1990s. Earlier

actions (see Chapter 8) somehow democratised a closed Australian public which could accommodate exercises such as FAWAA, and possibly catalysed the 'gentrification' of the Filipino woman. That while FAWAA is collective narcissism, it is a kind particular to middle class narcissism partially imposed on the desiring other. These revelations, I believe, are the usefulness of the exercise which its very failure engendered.

**From letter writing to literacy:
'Romances, after all, start in various ways'⁶⁰**

Life-writing is invested with the 'authority of experience' but is also given greater magnitude because of the power of literacy. The paradox of finding a kind of resolution in writing—a possessing of one's truth—as an act of politicisation describes a journey that started with words. The demeaning ways in which the very term 'mail-order bride' has been used and misused have at their core the use of letters: logocentric conveyance of a message encapsulated in an envelope. Victorian-era courtship was suffused with amorous declarations on paper. However, third-world women and first-world men whose profiles were sourced in catalogues breach the 'moral' codes of romantic letter writing: literate, bourgeois and leisurely. The subsequent vilification of the Filipino woman who worked her way to Australia via letter writing imprisoned women within a culture of silence, denial, and self-justification. These varying shades of working around the 'problem' of (mis)recognition are all evident in the FAWAA anthologies, in both the ACT (2002) and Queensland (2001).

⁶⁰ Agmata-Tucker, Marlene. 2002. *Crossing the Barriers*, p. 159.

To begin, in the FAWAA Queensland anthology (2001), twenty out of thirty non-winning narratives do not reveal how the women met their Australian husbands. Although a few of these introduced the presence of the men as 'the former German teacher' or 'the Englishman', none of them detailed how they met the German or the Englishman. There were quiet hints such as 'on fiancée visa', or the less revealing, 'before coming to Australia in year ____' to mark the significant moment of migration. The majority of women in both states carry non-Filipino surnames, a hint of their union with an 'Australian' male. I put 'Australian' in quotation marks because thirty-eight per cent of these men are overseas-born from non-English speaking background, a higher number than the marriages involving 'long-time Australians' (Australia Bureau of Statistics 2006). Notice the avoidance of using the term 'Anglo-Celtic Australians' or variations thereof despite the vagueness of the modifier 'long-time' which connotes 'real', 'white' Australians. The men are mostly divorced, significantly older, and on disability pension (Cunneen and Stubbs 1997, 19). 'Foreigners' marrying 'foreigners'—male migrants of earlier waves (Italians, Yugoslavs, Greeks) sponsoring Filipino women—is a coupling that attracts unwanted attention of the host society. The sociological implication of this is revealing of the new social relations and reordering of 'peoples' that Australia experienced because of Philippine-born migration.

The humility in saying 'I married an Australian to come to this country'—the invocation of the memory of one's migration as a 'bride'—is, on the other hand, absent in the narratives of the winners both in the ACT and Queensland.⁶¹ The

⁶¹ The 'humility' or one's attitude towards one's marriage to an 'Australian' is relative to location and audience. It can vacillate from disavowal in Australia or arrogance in the Philippines. The pride among Filipino-Australians in Manila's show business in claiming 'my Dad is Australian' is

textual self-effacement that typifies many of the narratives amongst 'brides' does not register amongst those who can establish their achievements. Maria Lourdes Barrios, winner FAWAA ACT in 2000, for instance, clearly detailed that her migration to Australia for a job at a hotel was a result of her managerial position in the hospitality industry. Agmata-Tucker, editor of the ACT anthology, grounds her first meeting with dentist husband in her years as a diplomatic staff member of the Philippine embassy. Maria Lourdes Doronila, daughter to the writer, Amado, also narrated her first few days in Melbourne as a teenager whose father escaped the intensifying suppression of Marcos and received an offer to write for *The Age*. Doronila is cognizant of how lucky she is in her subject position compared to many Filipino women in Australia but she also takes this as a challenge to effect a positive change through her poetry (Maria Lourdes Doronila, interview, October 1, 2010).

Constructing one's life-history into print means entering a collective constitution, a kind of grand narrative of Filipino-Australians where one is a node in a nexus of intertextualities. With or without intending to, one sets up a binary opposition—or at least subscribes to an already existing one—where women are branded as either 'mail-order bride' or not and the latter category places an onus of proof on the woman. Agmata-Tucker's long narrative of her achievements as a student, her career in Australia and her successes—immodest perhaps compared to the inadequacy of others—exemplifies this desire to authenticate one's status (2002, 193-207). The woman autobiographer breaks her silence through denial. Because trauma 'is not locatable in the simple violent or original event'—such as being asked to admit in public if one were a 'mail-order bride' by the Minister of Immigration—

opposite the reticence in saying 'my Mum is a Filipina'. I have met 'white' Filipino-Australians in Sydney who would not raise the fact unless asked or 'found'.

trauma 'returns to haunt the survivor later on' (Caruth 1996, 4). The spectre of the 'mail-order bride' could make itself felt in denial.

Self-justification, on the one hand, while it safely couches the humility of those whose admission is silent, it is a repudiation as well. There are women whose articulate narration of their meeting and then later union with their Australian husbands exemplifies what Athena Vrettos calls the 'curative domains' of women writing because 'healing may take place through discursive acts' (in Mitchell 2002, 17). However, a few of these writings are contradictory in their deferral of signification, the delaying of surrender, the unwillingness to yield easily to be interpellated as 'mail-order bride', thus the use of textual strategies to *not* acquiesce. The best example among the many is Luwalhati Kendrick who met 'the man of [her] dreams' during an art exhibition of her godfather, painter Hernando Ocampo, in 1971:

It was not until December 1974 that I decided to send a Christmas card to Gary. It was *purely by chance*, I found his name and address in my bedroom drawer *although I could not remember where and how I met him*. As I had many extra Christmas cards, I decided to send him one. At that stage, he was already posted in Sydney but the Brisbane Post Office forwarded the mail to him. He later told me that he immediately wrote to me and proposed to marry me as he never forgot our first encounter in Manila.

I did not, however, receive Gary's letter. However, *Filipinos have adopted the American tradition of exchanging cards with their loved ones on Valentine's day*. On that occasion, *I again had a spare card and not wanting to waste it*, I sent it to the Australian whose face I only half remembered and *whose address had had somehow managed to survive in the chaos of my drawer*. Gary realised that his earlier proposal had gone astray and we then commenced corresponding. (Agmata-Tucker 2002, 48; my emphasis)

To cut the story short, Gary arrived in Manila in December 1975 and they left for Australia on Christmas Eve where '[her] teaching career, [her] new-found fame as a

poet, friends and family were now a world away' (2002, 48). While quite far from being a 'traumatically shattered subject' like women in slavery, Kendrick's narrative manifests that women's writing is a therapeutic exercise, a 'scriptotherapy' to '[reinvent] the self and [reconstruct] the subject' (Henke 2000, xxii-xv). I do not suggest that her narrative is not true but of greater interest are the narratological techniques that suspend a semantic conflation of her Valentine card-sending with her eventual migration to Australia.

The healing from trauma (Vrettos' 'curative domains') is more palpable in Francisca Batistic's narrative which, unlike Kendrick's, does not justify the act of sending a card overseas to a man one hardly remembers. Batistic is ashamed neither of naming herself as 'mail-order bride' nor of admitting her poor origin. The problem is that she never had to say: 'I, Francisca Batistic, am a 'mail-order bride''; instead, the editor did it for her. The third-person pronoun indicates the intervention of Agmata-Tucker who admitted that she had to work from the raw materials submitted by the thirty-two nominees and re-sent the 'doctored' essays for their 'approval'. As editor, she had to interview them in person or through phone to substantiate in preparation for publication (Marlene Agmata-Tucker, interview, April 18, 2002). There are those whose works were originally written by them while some were written for them. Kendrick, being a writer herself, even sampling her poetry in the essay, wrote a seventeen-page self-portrait. Batistic, however, is represented by another woman's voice; it is not exactly her voice that we hear nor her decision to not defer her 'confession' but that of Agmata-Tucker's. The narrative of 'recovery' is not hers to own despite the unrehearsed honesty. Spivak herself admits how 'editorial control can simulate spontaneity' for she herself had done that to her

subalterns (1998, 9). Through the editor, Batistic, collectively speaks for the whole 'imagined community' of marriage migrants. She, through *her* text, is lip-synching:

She met her husband Vladimir through an advertisement in a local newspaper in Iloilo. This fact is something that Francisca does not hide—*romances, after all, start in various ways and hers happens to have started with a pen and a piece of paper.*

Francisca found her destiny through correspondence and it saddens her to hear of other people talking negatively about relationships that started through the mail, correspondence, or pen friendship. She believes that *they fail to see the uniqueness in every relationship regardless of how they started.* She has many friends and acquaintances who like her, met their spouses through correspondence. A majority of their marriages, like hers, are genuinely grounded on love and deep commitment. (Agmata-Tucker 2002, 159-160; my emphasis)

Another example similar to Batistic's reclaiming the label 'mail-order bride' is Maria Diwanni Simonds' story. The narrative speaks of the confrontation not simply against Australian and the Filipino-Australian community but also with and for oneself. Albeit also mediated by the 'learned' use of language by Agmata-Tucker, Simonds' telling of the travesties of poverty she underwent is brave but it is even braver, funny at times, if one juxtaposed her with the seriousness of the winning personalities in the FAWAA ACT who, as we shall see later, compete against each other's achievements. The healing of Simonds stretches further back before her migration to Australia; she:

...married Allan in Townsville, Australia in 1991 and envisioned a life of a Queen [sic] living in a mansion and turning white-skinned but only to find out the reality that she knew little of the English language, unknowledgeable on the use of electricity, and finding herself living in a tin shed for five years! Nonetheless, even under such poor conditions, Diwanni says she was very happy....[She] prides herself of her beautiful son and daughter, now a nice and comfortable house (beside the old tin shed) and another house that they rent out; a house for her family back home and jeepney business in Pitalo managed by her sister who wrote the first replies to her beloved husband! (FAWAA 2001, 88)

All these narratives of women—from the silent to disavowal—exemplify how the FAWAA anthologies' transposition of women's real lives into textual lives has the feminist potential towards a reconstruction of the Filipino woman's subjectivity. Recognising the difficulty of facing one's past and healing the traumatic phase of a settling in woman migrant in a masculine and white Australia, these narratives vary in their discursive strategies depending on the level of intervention and representation of the narratives. Women's writing in the FAWAA publications has materialised that which had not been attempted before: a return to writing that which started her journey, a cathartic excision of guilt for being a woman.

**Race for distinction:
Because not all 'brides' are created equal⁶²**

The table below is a short summary of the 'Guidelines for the Filipino-Australian Achievement Award Selection Panel' (2001):

<p>Criterion 1 40 points Nominees' exemplary work should raise the status of Filipino-Australian women in Australian society</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'empowering other women' • 'a role model to her own family members' • 'no type of work is preferred over others'
<p>Criterion 2 40 points Nominees' achievements should reflect the qualities of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dedication • persistence • compassion • sense of identity • generosity
<p>Criterion 3 20 points Documentary evidence in support of claims made in the nomination form</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'certified by a Justice of the Peace or other officers...' • 'panel may seek clarification from referees'

Table 4 Selected points from the 'Guidelines for the Filipino-Australian Achievement Award Selection Panel'

⁶² My use of this conceit does not intend to lump all Filipino women married to Australian men as 'mail-order brides' or do I wish to reduce women as 'brides', thus, the use of quotation marks. The use of this phrase I believe compliments the idea of FAWAA creating a space for these women to engage in a contest.

I would like to begin this last section on the dimension of class divide in the FAWAA project with the set of criteria above because it shows the double-edged potential of the whole exercise. The document is a reminder to the judges that the playing field is not equal: Filipino migrants suffer non-recognition of overseas qualifications and language difficulties. This implies that many women are farmed out to jobs with little social status while few may be lucky to have key job positions. It likewise stressed the difficulties of residing in geographically remote areas where educational and trade opportunities may be fewer than in the metropolis. Also, it emphasised the importance of advocacy, community volunteerism, public service and others by downplaying the status of mainstream employment. In criterion 2, virtues are the centre of judgment and not a list of achievements: whether in the home or outside, paid or voluntary, winners must exhibit a sense of social justice by 'reach[ing] out to those in need' and a sense of ethnic pride by being 'a respectable member of the Filipino-Australian community'. However, I believe this is a move to create a safety net to consider the imbalance amongst skilled and unskilled, the 'brides' and the 'non-brides'; a 'given' that the organisers already knew.

The problem starts with Criterion 3, with what I think is the procedural loophole of the entire project which reveals its early elitism that would culminate in a *race for distinction*. Although it can be argued that support by documentation is standard procedure in any competition, this practice is, nonetheless, a word-based, paper-based process unfriendly to the likes of Simonds and Batistic, and indeed, the majority of nominees. Documentation through paper work, certification, diplomas, Justice of the Peace-approved documents and letters from referees easily work for the eventual winners—the PhD holders, the government employees, teachers, to

mention a few—but not for others. For a migrant who has struggled with the English language and was socially constructed to fear writing in all its ramifications (the law, contracts, instructions, manuals), documentary evidence to back up one's claims is prohibitive. Since there are many alternative forms of community service—most of those that matter are voluntary thereby remain undocumented—one's chances could just be undercut because of logocentric practices. How does one, for instance, produce a document to certify that one initiated raising funeral funds for a murdered 'mail-order bride' in Mt. Isa?⁶³ (This is a true story from one of the narratives.)

The majority of these narratives open with a recollection of the women's childhood chronicling their birth, the economic circumstances of the family, number of siblings, early education, high school and college days. One obvious thread in these openings is the opportunities taken to reveal social class. Some are done matter-of-factly, some are forceful, a few subtly dropped, a good deal forgotten. Pierre Bourdieu's (1984) notion of *distinction* is a useful concept in reading these Filipino women's narratives in relation to the community's imagined and real subjectivity in Australia. The race towards distinction through social class seems to be a compelling reason for these narratives to turn out the way they did. The effect of detailed narratives that discuss, for instance, that one's father is an aircraft engineer or that one's mother is racially hybrid or that one was born in Spain, are clear suggestions of that migrant's social class. Bourdieu's attention to the power of

⁶³ According to Agmata-Tucker, the FAWAA ACT task force put together a committee of judges who 'decided the winners alone'; one representative from the task force was present during the deliberation of winners but she was not allowed to divulge what transpired during the meeting. The final weight of the selection criteria was not available although the task force composed a suggested measurement.

education to reproduce social and cultural dominance and how it translates economic privilege into merit is very well illustrated in the FAWAA narratives. A reader will notice the recurrence of descriptors such as 'Catholic school', 'all-girls', 'exclusive' and 'private'. Some hint at one's educational investment is given by stating the name of the school and then following it up with old tales of nuns and prayers: an imprimatur of wealth and standing historically rooted in the religio-comprador coupling in feudal Philippines. To illustrate: 'I *pride* myself as an alumnus of the *prestigious 400-year old* University of Santo Tomas with a Diploma of Bachelor of Science in Medical Technology' (FAWAA 2001, 76; my emphasis). Although schools are indeed part of the 'biography' of the migrant, the attention given to them and the distinctive significations of attending private, Catholic institutions in the Philippines cannot be passed over. Educational institutions do spell out one's social class, outlining a person's social and cultural capital at once, and possibly predicting his/her capacity to accumulate more capital, in particular, economic capital (Bourdieu 1984). The challenges in the embodied dispositions or 'habitus' that migration necessitates have exacerbated the centrality of social capital amongst these women; so much so that a kind of symbolic violence is imposed on the 'mail-order brides' by those who objectify them as an underclass.

To negate such elitism, a considerable number of narratives justified the economic lack through 'poor-but-intelligent girl' discourse. Agmata-Tucker is the best example. After belabouring the point of her family's 'unfortunate circumstance' that was much reflected by the land of her birth in the northernmost region of the

Philippines,⁶⁴ she went on to explain how this was compensated by the brood's 'common gift' of 'more-than-average sense of intelligence' (Agmata-Tucker 2002, 194). Footnoted in her essay is the result of this gift where all six siblings have become 'professionals'—a captain, a lawyer-diplomat, a medical doctor and three nurses in the United States and the United Kingdom: a good example of how overseas Filipinos have been socio-economically transformed into the 'new *mestizo*'. Her narrative of breaking the barrier of poverty continued as she pursued higher education at the elite Ateneo de Manila University on a scholarship, and then later in the 'the learned halls' of the University of the Philippines Law School. In exploring such discourse of distinction-despite-poverty, little social and cultural capital is often credited as the push-motivation factor to excel in the real world. A literary trope very much venerated in the Philippines—a truth that has become cliché so to speak—Agmata-Tucker's 'real life' turned into narrative is a classic example of this triumph.

Some demonstrate a racialised approach to distinction. Because the Philippines is ethno-linguistically diverse and colonised by Europeans, there exists a hierarchy based on skin colour. With considerable similarities to the construction of the *criollo* in Spanish America (Stewart 2007)—racially white but born in the new world—the *mestizo* in the Philippines, despite the downgrading due to 'miscegenation', held and still holds 'racial capital'. The *mestizo*, as a social class that resulted from the Spanish conquest, is a category separate from the *insulares* (island-born) and the *peninsulares* (European-born). The Chinese merchant class

⁶⁴ In narrating her childhood in Abra, Agmata-Tucker foregrounded this through an opposition between Visayans and Ilocanos (her grouping). Visayans, according to her, are 'feast-loving, generous and more often than not, extravagant in their ways' (2002, 193). Ilocanos, on the other hand, 'toiled hard' and 'parsimonious' who wear 'simple clothes'. One wonders if peasants in the Visayas are not parsimonious, hardworking farmers as well. Her stereotyping is not unrelated to the opening discussion of this chapter on Visayan women and 'mail-order brides'.

married into the 'natives' that produced the *mestizo* class; a small number of Spanish-Chinese mixing called *tornatras* contributed to this racial class.⁶⁵ Therefore, before the Americans found themselves in this racial commingling, an 'ambiguous' Eurasian—Spanish, Filipino, Chinese—is a facial and bodily representation of the privilege of class. However, there are *mestizos* and *mestizas* whose social standing preclude them from claiming the same interracial status.⁶⁶ In many instances, 'beauty' (whiteness) spelled by one's racial origins—no matter in what way it was inherited—almost always means privilege. But to be able to make a claim to both white race and wealth is highly regarded. Take, for instance, Marie-Louise Singson's careful attention to her racial pedigree:

Marguerita Marie Veronica Ruiz y Jardine and Jose Buenaventura Antonio Flor y Justo whose *influential families* hail from the north of the Philippines. My mother, whose *multi-racial background is more European than Asian* has a beauty that radiates from outside as well as inside... My father's illustrious naval career explodes with success, travel and heights of military honours, yet he is silent and humble of these achievement.
(Agmata-Tucker 2002, 115-16; my emphasis)

Another telling example is former 'house manager' Teresita Stravopodis: 'As my name [Librando] indicates, we have both Spanish and Filipino blood. We live in a nice home in Manila' (Agmata-Tucker 2008, 128).⁶⁷ The pride attached to anything Spanish is likewise apparent in Leonor Xyrakis' early days in Australia: 'My circle of friends were mostly Filipinos of Spanish origin who migrated when they were only

⁶⁵ Thanks to Caroline Hau for pointing this out.

⁶⁶ The discourse on the subject of racialised hierarchy in the Philippines merits a longer discussion. For now, two phenomena prove that mobility is possible by having a lighter skin tone than mahogany. First is the fate of Asian-American children who later end up in Manila's film industry's sexy films. Second are the plethora of skin products in the Philippine market that 'whitens', from facial wash to lotion to vitamins and other skin-colour altering commodities.

⁶⁷ Majority of the surnames used in the Philippines today have originated from the Spanish colonial dictate to make 'primitive' natives legible by naming them. 'Librando' (a conjugated form of the verb 'to free') is a common name in the Philippines where Spaniards used everything from flora and fauna, verbs, nouns, adjectives, places, and so on and so forth, to name people. To say that one has 'Spanish and Filipino blood' based on one's surname is superfluous.

teenagers...' (148). I do not refute the veracity of these claims to *la madre España*; however, claims of links to colonial Spanish regime are never without signification, in fact, they are value-laden affectations that follow the colonial regime of truth. These claims are never irrelevant despite misplaced arrogance. Some migrants I met in Sydney repeat—not mindlessly—that their 'ancestors' are Spaniards. 'Racial capital' in the Philippines, or anywhere, is never to be underestimated. The migration of *mestizos* to Australia in the 1960s, discussed in Chapter 6, is a continuation of the ease, comfort and benefits of being *ma(puti)* (meaning 'fair' with root word meaning 'white') in postcolonial Philippines.

The race for distinction continues as the reader moves from one form of success to another: academic, trade, vocation and family life. The narrative of Eva Abal, an academic, is replete with information on her Bachelor, Master and Doctoral years and then followed by her flourishing career. She wrote extensively about her fieldwork in Moreton Bay before writing her thesis and then her subsequent postings. Maria Lourdes Barrios, also from Queensland, similarly outlined in her narrative the many changes in her career in hospitality and her successes. The readers are informed that 'my hard work resulted in the [Sheraton Brisbane] Hotel's revenue growth from \$2 million dollars to \$10 million dollars annually in my department alone' (FAWAA 2001, 36). There are many passages to exemplify my point. While it is easy to interpret the centrality of their successes as self-gratification it could also be seen as a migrant woman's pride in her accomplishments amidst the difficult path towards creating a subjectivity outside the sexual other.

The unintentional grouping of these women into two, thus, the playing up of the 'mail-order bride' trope is nowhere seen better than in the layout of the anthologies. Queensland's version highlighted the stature of its seven winners by placing their narratives before all other nominees. Their stories were even introduced by a flyleaf that showcases photographs with their families, their weddings, themselves in-action at work, and a profile shot with their 'recognition gift'. Following these chronicles of success are the twenty-nine 'other nominees'—those who did not make the cut—with a short summary of who they are and what they have accomplished. The write-ups are in third-person and often two paragraphs long. A winner's narrative, for the sake of contrast, can run up to nine pages. Then, last come the *lesser* 'other nominees'—those who did not even make the 'other nominee' cut: a mere list of names. More significantly, the winning narratives are all in the first-person point of view giving more urgency to the language by which they need to tell their stories. The distancing effect of the third-person pronoun drops not only the immediacy of the discourse but neutralises the details that make stories unique by summarising chunks of a lifetime into a few sentences; the details that make the story of a 'bride' or a nanny or a housemaid compelling. Without the living persona who offers her story in the present, these women on the backbench could only appear as subordinate—if not inferior—because their writings cannot possibly match the logocentrism (thus the effect) of those who won; thereby reinforcing the bias that they could not articulate well.

The goal to change white Australia's racist attitudes towards Filipino women, in particular, and the Filipino community, in general, lies in FAWAA's diligence in publishing these anthologies. A hybrid between 'life-writing' and a souvenir program

of a 'beauty contest', the anthology encompasses the categories of ethnic writing, women's writing and migrant writing. The power of materiality—the permanence of print—is FAWAA's final act of rectificatory campaign. However, with the physical arrangement of the narratives, not to mention their content, one wonders how an initial printing of two hundred copies marketed mostly to Filipino-Australians in the ACT could actually change white Australia. Despite the few orders received from other states, there was no 'proper' marketing or distribution strategy for the book, not even in the local bookstores in Canberra (Marlene Agmata-Tucker, interview, April 18, 2010). It spread by word of mouth with a very limited circulation. Although the news of the publication reached the Philippines via *The Philippine Inquirer*, the book was neither marketed nor sold publicly. The anthologies, I argue, have not penetrated the market for which it was created in the first place. Ambassador Albert and the two editors' vision to parade the middle-class professionals amongst Filipino women may have been achieved but this does not go very far. Yet, the very existence of these anthologies—paid for with the \$1500 earnings of the FAWAA dinner and the charity of some—is traceable to the community's intervention against its sexualisation. The FAWAA as print culture is a result of the tension between unsuitable engagement and proactive intervention that, nonetheless, has a very concrete cultural production.

Conclusion

The symbolic violence in the representation—*Who really is the Filipino woman in Australia?*—is a symptom of the agency of the middle-class in the beginning of the journey of migration. After the glitter and glamour of FAWAA awards—'parang Oscars' [like the Oscars] in the words of Agmata-Tucker—the legacy of informing the

Australian mainstream that there are Filipino women who went to school and could speak grammatical English is clear. On the other hand, images of the maid and the sexualised female interloper in *The Australian* and *The Sydney Morning Herald* remain unchanged. Without entirely downplaying its successes, the FAWAA could possibly have used the 'mail-order bride' as an easy scapegoat. Although these women function as a subject of advocacy and a reconstructive project to heal the trauma through the life-writings, the unintentional treatment they received, at the same time, undermines and contests the call for a women's solidarity.

Some of the organisers, awardees and nominees of FAWAA in the ACT and Queensland *might* have been once-'mail-ordered'. Decades later, their goal 'to change the status of Filipino women' was achievable by highlighting the achievements of the 'good' ones in the FAWAA ceremonies and publications. However, the apparent *distanciation*—the 'mail-order bride' as spectral—was a compelling revelation regarding how agency works while at the same time divides these women bound by gender and ethnicity but not by class and socialisation. The articulation of the 'mail-order bride' as 'somebody but not me' or 'I was once but not anymore' or 'I may have been but there is nothing wrong with it' is an indication of the cracks within a solid-looking gender-based solidarity campaign. These cracks could result in two counter-political acts: the forgetting of the racialisation of the Filipino migrant as sexual other; and the neutralisation of class hierarchy in the Philippines as exported and redefined in Australia. In the final instance, while it may be argued that the entire praxis of awards and publications were an act of *recuperation*—agential and radical as they are commonly described—from the humiliation of Australian racism and elitism, misguided awards and publications may

as well be reinforcements of the supremacist ideologies they tried to combat. Thus, the spectre of the 'mail-order bride' remains unerased.

This spectrality that is either a platform for solidarity or an avenue of reactionary patriarchy is rooted in the body. In the next chapter, I trace how the construction of a subjugated 'mail-order bride' subjectivity is in the hands of the Filipino community. The community as an authorial body and the corporal body of the 'bride' as inscribable facilitate in rendering such subjectivity as illegitimate.

The racialised and sexualised citizenship of foreign brides married to white males in the first world is inscribed in the political economy of nations as much as in the valuation of women's bodies underwritten by the unequal regimes that govern the lives and desires of men and women. To situate the alien body of the Filipino woman in white Australia as interpreted by the community's cultural producers is the central theme of this chapter. Using the literary and extra-literary examples of Aida Verde, Renato Perdon, Erwin Cabucos, Merlinda Bobis and Cesar Leyco Aguila, I read the significations that the 'mail-order bride's' body has engendered and have, in turn, 'corporealised' these women. As in the previous chapters, the works that will be discussed here are responses in the struggle against the representation of Filipino women as 'embodiment of exchange' (So 2008); an effort to have a say in shaping the construction of their discursive selves. The 'mail-order bride' as an identifiable other or, in the words of Aihwa Ong 'transnational ethnicized subjectivity', is a gendered body concomitantly feminised/Orientalised/Filipinised whose formation is locally and globally configured (1999, 243).

The construction of the 'mail-order bride' subject—a subjectivity that preceded her physical arrival—necessitates a processing of her 'mail-order brideness' through the writings of Filipino migrants who claim the 'right' to re-create her as a cultural exercise. Judith Butler's (1990) concept of gender as produced performatively is informative in reading the writings of the community itself as performing 'mail-order brideness'. Writing the 'mail-order bride' is performing her again and again, not simply textually but also in embodied ways by which her subjectivity is made and remade by the community. By discursively inscribing the embarrassment of being a Filipino in Australia, some of the works addressed in this

chapter either reclaim— thus, salvage—the embodied subject in diaspora, or they move towards the disavowal, thus, *salvage*⁷⁰ the memory of the female migrant whose very materiality is inscribed in contemporary multicultural Australia.

The first section of the chapter discusses the tropes of the 'mail-order bride': the *puta*, the wife and the bourgeois intellectual as schematised in Verde's *River with No Name* (2005).⁷¹ The intertextual crossings between *women-as-transgressors* and *women's-bodies-as-transgressive* show how the Filipino woman is carved into the very specificities of constructing the body as docile. However, this docile body also follows the grammar of ethnocentrism and class hierarchy, not to mention the heteronormativity, of the ethnic body. The second section discusses Perdon's lexicography which situates the 'mail-order' in linguistic order of the 'male-ordered'. The dictionaries translate—literally and figuratively—for in migrant woman the Australian landscape while in the process reflecting the role by which the country positions the Filipino community. The third and final section interrogates two techniques of the 'male-order': that of self-subalternisation and 'passing'. The latter is instructive in how it disavows the body while the former for what it exposes.

⁷⁰ I play here with the semantic of the word 'salvage' which, in its normative use, means to rescue or preserve. However, in Filipino English, to 'salvage' is to assassinate or execute extrajudicially. Its usage began as an anglicisation of the Tagalog word *salbahe*, whose references range from a naughty child to an abusive person. The word is derived from the Spanish *salvaje* for 'wild' (Lacaba 2006). In Manila, tabloids use the Filipino 'salvage' with no semantic confusion. Filipinos who first used the word in English jumped from the Spanish/Filipino use without considering its English equivalent.

⁷¹ Aida Morden who is quoted in other parts of this thesis as editor in chief of a newspaper and Aida Verde, the author of *River with No Name*, are the same person.

Body, sex and reproduction

Often glossed over in the 'mail-order bride' discourse is the centrality of the 'bride's' body as a biological unit contributing to the reproduction of the social body. Most literature on the 'mail-order bride' focus on the transnational conditions of her being a 'bride'; what becomes of her as a reproductive agent is hardly ever discussed. But because the body is the main battleground where gender is constructed and practised (Conboy *et al* 1997, 1-3), the 'mail-order bride' sits at the heart of embodiment. The body and the way it lends itself to be a symbol, an agent and a material site have been studied in many ways: as a menstruating and reproducing body (Martin 1989), as a violable body (MacKinnon 1989), as commodity (hooks 1992), as 'sexage' (Guillaumin 1995), as unbearable weight (Bordo 1993). The body as text, container and signifier of meanings has created in female subjectivity a pool of ideas, rituals and performances that constitute a sexualised reading of what a woman should look like and how she should be (Bordo 1997, 90-91). The female body is a contested site of dominant ideology and the discourses that ruling social conventions suppress. That is why it is the female body that gets bruised, abused, displayed, altered, molested, worshipped, bound, enslaved, raped and killed. But the embodied subjectivity also fights back. Her body could also be a source of strength and radical potential—in other words, of agency—to transform the body and effect change in her immediate surroundings. The body of the woman—and what it can accomplish materially—is open to many possibilities that usher change and negotiate social reality (Balsamo 1996, 3-6). And since 'the body is our general medium for having a world,' according to Merleau-Ponty (in Reischer and Koo 2004, 307), the body is both changed by the vicissitudes

of racialised patriarchy that marks it as target but also has the capacity that resists the dominant oppressive practices.

A reading of the body blends well with the concept of 'intersectionality', a term attributed to Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989, 1991), to refer to the overlapping critiques of gender, race and class. Intersectionality was later enriched by feminist and postcolonial critics to include more subtle strains of subjectivities at the 'intersection'. 'Single-axis' approaches, says Crenshaw, to sex, ethnicity and class are simply not enough; intersectionality proposes multi-pronged analyses (1989, 139). While the premise of the theory holds true, recent criticisms point to intersectionality's susceptibility to its own critique of not being inclusive enough. For instance, intersectionality is less preoccupied with colonial and heterosexual regimes of discourses (Pedwell 2010, 34-38) to which Judith Butler refers as the 'embarrassed "etc."', that which is way down below in the list of intersections (in Pedwell 2010, 38). The potential of intersectionality as a critical tool can be further improved through relational and embodiment approaches. Relationality looks at contextually specific process where practices and subjectivities are 're-constituted' in the way they relate to each other while embodiment is power relations set in place yet continually forges new formations in people's bodies and everyday life (Pedwell 2010, 118-120).

Annette Kuhn's formulation that representation of sexual difference is a 'form of regulation', a 'strategy of normalization' (1997, 204) is what the novel *River with No Name* initially tried to subvert. Verde, the author, attempts to shake the regulated representation of the Filipino woman by writing 'corrective' literature: the kind that answers back to Australia's essentialism against foreigners. I suggest that her work,

more than the FAWAA narratives or Bobis' version of magic realism set in postcolonial Philippines, has the greater capacity to confront for it lacks embarrassment or deflection. Verde's fiction is a voice of 'authenticity' that does not deny its accountability in speaking for and about the 'mail-order bride'. The power of Verde's writing, however, also contributes to the regulation of the 'mail-order bride' discourse; in fact, I would call her fiction pioneering in this 'genre', if there is one. Central to the regulation is the standardisation of archetypes within the encompassing term 'mail-order bride'. *River with No Name* identified three archetypes of the 'bride': the *puta*, the wife, and the bourgeois intellectual. From the myriad of representations available to her, Verde sifted them all and neatly delineated the tropes in the characters of Marilyn, Norma and Laura whose bodies are gendered, classed, ethnicised but uniformly heterosexual.

Unpacking the fetishisation of the alien body of the 'mail-order bride' by white Australia (but also by Verde) is essential because it calls attention to the marketisation of the 'third-world woman' 'shipped' transnationally. This is an allusion to slave trade centuries before as articulated by Paul Gilroy's 'black Atlantic' (1993). His re-reading of the transatlantic movement of black bodies resulting in a 'double consciousness' and a cultural modernity that is outside nation-states informs my reading as well (1993, 30-33). The diaspora of Filipino women's bodies from the Philippines to three points in the Pacific Rim—Japan to the north, Australia to the south and North America to the west—is imaginable following the model of the triangular trade of black bodies across the Atlantic. That these destinations have the highest number of Filipino women as 'brides' is not a mere coincidence. Like enslaved men and women in the new world, 'mail-order brides' are racialised

economic units with sex organs. The market exchange reduces black and women's bodies—seen as parts, not as beings (hooks 1997, 114-15)—into a fetish: a body of flesh, a platform for sex and a receptacle for reproduction. She is not merely imagined as a racial other, sexualised as exotic and class-discriminated as parasitical, she is intrusion personified: her dark hair and skin and tiny stature, unchangeable physical markers of her *difference*, simply do not fit in white Australia.

The flesh that embodies cultural, linguistic and ethnic separation but also the capital for exchange—'the third-word difference'—is also the receiving end of corporeal violence. The bodily harm 'mail-ordered brides' have been documented to suffer was as petrifying as being drowned, shot, knifed, slashed, hit on the head with a hammer, pushed into the water, strangled, cut up, stabbed thirty times, strangled with a lamp cord and then set on fire, bashed in the head, among others; sometimes her body is just made to 'disappear' as if she never existed at all (Cunneen and Stubbs 1997, 55-79). On the other hand, however, the body of the woman is also the 'receptacle' of biological reproduction, thus, of familial values that uphold the virtues of the nation-state. Her capacity to reproduce the mixed-raced child is a trace of her sexualised migration translatable as 'first-world' profit from 'foreign investment' in the third-world. The other extreme of the spectrum where the body is desired, caressed, loved, touched and raped is also part of discursive formation of the body as 'docile', 'deconstructed' and as object of 'surveillance' (Balsamo 1996, 80). The female body as knowable by and functional to the (white) male is captured in Verde's novel and is revealing of the ways the gendered body experienced migration as systemic alienation, how the body undergoes transmogrification by migration.

The novel opens with a scene of the barrio where the dead 'mail-order bride' hailed from: a place that accommodates inseparably mythical beliefs, indigenous practices and the Catholicism of Spanish colonialism. Then, a flashback to western Sydney where Marilyn Brookes was found dead after being bashed by her husband, Grant. At the present time, Norma and Reginald McIntyre, another interracial couple whose daughter, Iris, is manifesting supernatural power through her very long hair, are dealing with the complications of their middle-class suburban lives and the intrigues of being in a cross-cultural marriage. Norma is seeking justice for Marilyn through her volunteer work at a shelter for battered women, many of whom are Filipino. Reginald, on the other hand, escapes from the monotony of the newsagency he runs and of home by having an affair with Justine, sister of Grant. He tried his luck with a young 'bride' after being cuckolded by Maggie and engaging in a series of sexual encounters, one notable of which is with Noreen, a new age fanatic. The plot centres on an encounter between the poltergeist, Iris, and Grant, whose head was severed by the half-Filipina's hair possessed by spirits. The readers are told that Iris is Reginald's daughter by Marilyn; stolen by infertile Norma upon her death in an impoverished public housing estate. Grant's violence against Marilyn was precipitated by the unexpected pregnancy; Grant was sterile. Marilyn, a formerly prostituted woman, fell for Reginald who was ready to help the new bride. Iris' parents covered up Grant's murder and continually protected their goddess/daughter from the modernity represented by Sydney. She was later on sent to the barrio where her mother Marilyn came from. Iris is an incarnation of a deity, like her mother, and needs to be 'healed' by the Storytellers. Norma is stricken with cancer and later dies peacefully having forgiven Reginald for his trespasses and

revealing that Iris is not her child. Meanwhile, Laura, the upper class 'mail-order bride' of working class Neil, continues her activism on behalf of violated women while remaining the lover of Reginald's brother, a doctor who loves her unconditionally.

**The *puta*, the wife and the bourgeois intellectual:
Embodiment of transgression**

Marilyn (the whore), Norma (the housewife) and Laura (the gifted pianist/activist) are three 'mail-order brides' in the novel; even their names are indicative of their characters. Their bodies are used to characterise decay, death, life, resurrection, fertility, infertility, beauty, youth, desirability, and resistance at different stages of their lives. The material exchange by which they have 'traded' their bodies to be in Australia—salvation from a life of prostitution (Marilyn), a life of poverty (Norma) and a life of political persecution (Laura)—is sculpted by Verde who accords the woman's body as a given: responsive to sex, to reproduction, to valorisation, and to fear and violation. The woman's body as expendable, however, is contingent upon one's class and proximity to modern apparatuses (westernisation). Although all three women lament their 'being ethnic', 'an infraction', 'a mistake', it is actually only Laura who could articulate the experience of xenophobia in Australia. She also happens to be the one who experienced the least bodily harm and alienation as a migrant; in fact, she is the cause of torment of both her husband and lover. It is as if her capacity to speak and articulate disqualifies her from the fate of self-effacement that ordinary 'mail-order brides' are doomed to suffer. Laura is bestowed much symbolic power with which she can blunt whiteness. Her class offsets the liabilities of her ethnicity and gender. What seems to appear in Verde's imagining of the 'mail-order bride' is that the power to offend, to

'trouble' to use Butler's terminology, to transgress the normativity of race, class and gender is proportional to the amount of bodily exposure to sex, reproduction, rape and abuse. However, the notion of what transgression is must be defined here: to transgress white Australia without a measure of agency is given to Marilyn whose ultimate act of docility is her death, while to transgress in the manner given to Laura is to resist domination through a body harnessed by culture, something that neither Marilyn nor Norma possess.

Susan Bordo talks about how the 'unbearable weight' of being a woman—women 'weighed down' by being women in the words of de Beauvoir—is deduced from the notion that the body is something 'apart from the true self', something outside mimetic of what is inside (in Bordo 1993, 5). While men are characterised by their active spirit, women are saddled by their passive bodies; an external baggage that is 'both construction and resource' (Bordo 1993, 5; emphasis original)). The weight of the body surfaces in the ways Verde depicts not only the three 'mail-order brides' but also the Australian women in the persons of Noreen, Justine and Maggie in the novel. Sara Ahmed uses the term 'inter-embodiment' to show how the construction of women's bodies as alien or other is relational upon the bodies of others from which differentiation is judged (2000, 47-49). The tiny, brown body of the 'mail-order bride' is, vis-à-vis the Australian woman's body, ethnicised and hyperfeminised. White women are strong, aggressive, open; 'Asiatic' women are frail, sensual and closed. Yet because such 'modern' characterisation of the western woman's body allows agency, Verde caricatured the white woman as sexually aberrant, excessive and transgressive: Noreen as the corpulent sex guru, Justine as

the incestuous white trash, and Maggie as the adulterer. They all had sexual relationships with Reginald at one point.

On the other hand, the body of the 'mail-order bride' is conceptually and materially controllable; hypersexual machines in a virgin's body. However, I argue that 'inter-embodiment' is not exclusively a comparative exercise between racial classes: white women against brown women. The concept works as well to reveal the more subtle distinctions within a supposedly homogenous group of the 'mail-order bride' body. But can one spot the 'mail-order bride' from a non-'mail-order bride' Filipino woman based on the body 'weight' she carries?

The novel opens when Marilyn is being mauled and beaten to death by Grant, the scene's resemblance to the sex act is unmissable. They first became acquainted in the Blue Hawaii Club in Ermita, Manila where 'smoke was all [Marilyn was] wearing when [he] first saw [her] with those fucking men' (79). Later, Marilyn found herself in a housing commission unit in western Sydney, no network of family and friends, no skills and limited conversational English. Characterised by Verde in the most typical way, Marilyn is a stereotypical Magdalena in Philippine literature. She grew up in the countryside with nine family members sleeping side by side in a *nipa* hut (dwelling made from organic materials). As the eldest daughter, she could not pursue schooling and had to help the impoverished family. First working as a nanny to a provincial elite, Marilyn soon found herself in the capital's sex tourism hot spot in the 1980s. She is five feet tall with long black hair and golden brown skin. Her small-boned physique is emphasised in Verde's description of how Grant mauls her

with relative ease: '[t]he same hand grabs her hair and as he stands, lifts her to her full height until her toes are barely touching the floor' (vii).

Marilyn as an embodiment of colonial and patriarchal violence is expressed by Verde in physical terms: white 'men would squeeze her breasts' or their 'embrace would almost choke her' or their 'violent thrust felt like it would rip her apart' (80). The deconstruction of the gendered body piece by piece—breast, neck, cervix—continues in the symbolic act of marriage where the woman's other body parts gain 'weight'—limbs that cook, wash and clean. Even at the hour of her death, it is her body that synthesises the sum of her earthly experiences: 'the woman's left cheek from whence is flowing, like tears from an unblinking eye...blood also sluices out of the crushed nose, split lips and cloven gums...from between the supine woman's legs...in silent, gentle creeping, announcing the imminence of birth in solitude' (viii). Her life in diaspora is almost already a sexual confession written on the body. Marilyn as *terra nullius* is constructed as wide open to be colonised: from the mythical hair to the sun-baked skin that racialise her, the passive body she carries is not hers but can be violated, raped and impregnated by others. Her sexuality is 'a thing to be stolen, sold, bought, bartered, or exchanged', to the extent that to be treated like a property would be an improvement (MacKinnon 1997, 43).

Norma is the everywoman; your everyday 'mail-order bride', the western Sydney 'mail-order bride'. Norma's journey to Australia is through neither sex tourism nor introduction agencies but through a chance encounter between her and cuckolded Reginald when his Australian friend visited her bride to be in their hometown. Norma's youth and innocence 'charmed' the foreigner who needed

salvation from the liberated white woman. Older than Marilyn, Norma's sexualised body has been partly neutralised by years of accumulated fat; her 'weight pulled her down and made her look like a billboard,' says Reginald (23). One can assume though that like Marilyn—and all other 'Filipino babies'—Norma was once frail and child-like; the latent eroticism upon which the 'mail-order bride' industry thrives. Unlike the strong sexuality of white women and Eastern European 'brides' alike, 'Asian' brides exude the aura of unrealised sexual beings that men will have to uncover. The tiny brown body and the towering white man are subjects governed by 'cartographies of desire' operating on the larger scale of global political economy (Pflugfelder 1999).

Like bodies in the market, however, women's bodies expire; they lose eroticism as they age and dexterity as they bulk up. The characterisation of Norma in her forties as fat and short complements her infertility; or rather, her de-sexualisation as an ageing woman is signalled by the accumulation of fat in her midsection. Penguin-like, Norma slowly ceased to be the exotic import; 'so tiny', 'so young' in the early years. Because a 'mail-order bride' cannot be a young bride forever as she loses the market value that placed her in the 'traffic', her embodiment is transformed as well. Norma's years of immersion in the Australian society that values accumulation means the alternation of her constitution; western living entails the weight of prosperity. The scarcity that a Philippine rural village signified in a body of a frail teenager is no longer visible in the overweight middle-aged migrant. The 'mail-order bride's' emplacement is also her embodiment. Constable (2003) pointed this out in her ethnography of Chinese and Filipino 'brides'. While U.S. men want their wives tiny, not the stereotypical 'fat and lazy' white woman, the 'fat and lazy' Filipino

housewife is not necessarily bad, it is 'part of the American dream' (2003, 101). According to Constable, traditional views in the Philippines place 'fat and lazy' as markers of wealth and comfort, a colonial legacy. Migration, as upward mobility, entails a 'fattening', a 'stuffing', that is written on the body. However, this is not simply 'part of the American dream'; the penguin-shaped 'mail-order bride' is a debris, a body that is no longer what it was, a consumed desexualised other, a vitality lost in displacement.

With a name aptly chosen by Verde, Norma is the normative who balances those who fall by the wayside around her. In fact, for the author, she is the character Verde sees as very much like her: 'I can very much empathise with her; a combination of a woman who is aware of her poverty; embraces her being Filipina, intelligent and love her children' (Aida Morden, interview, February 23, 2010). Like Norma, Verde came to Australia in September 1987 to be with Keith Morden.⁷² She left three children in Bicol, south of Manila; their father had been imprisoned for his underground activities against Marcos. From a family where her male siblings were all part of the left, Verde found herself fighting for a socialist revolution as a teenager in the early 1970s in Bicol where mass-based support for insurgency was high. Married and a mother at sixteen, she continued to plod on with the hard struggle of a student, single mother and activist until she met Keith, the visiting Australian, and has since then lived in Sydney. Without any professional writing experience but with many years of living in Australia, Verde took on the challenge of what I would now call 'mail-order bride' literature. Norma typifies most Filipino women married to an

⁷² Keith Morden is one of the few Australian husbands of the Filipino women I met during fieldwork. The Australia Post manager was present during the dinner party for the Fifth Annual Induction Ceremony of Bicol Communities League Incorporated where Aida Morden is an officer. He discussed with me what he thought about his wife's literary production and in general, the Filipinos in Australia and him being a part of it, so to speak.

Australian: the good wife 'mail-order bride' cooped up in a mortgaged house tending to her mixed-race children and seething with anger each time prime time television reduces her to being an alien intruder that 'colours' the Australian family. While Verde's portrayal of Norma borders on the condescending, she was able to textually breathe life into her with a bit of tenderness:

'The bastard called me a mail-order bride.' Norma threw the paper on the table.
'The reporter is a woman,' Reginald smiled, a futile exercise, he knew, to deflect the predictable escalating melodrama.
'Don't start on me, Reginald, ha. I'm serious. That bitch...'
'Sweetheart. They call all migrant wives mail-order brides. You know that.'
'But I am not a mail-order,' Norma protested...
'It is derogatory,' Norma insisted. 'It means an Asian woman who has been bought. You know, like when you order from a catalogue. Laura says it's objectifying Filipino women, treating them like objects.'
Reginald suppressed his smile. *Derogatory*. An addition to her limited, although expanding, English vocabulary. The inflection was on the wrong syllable, but her intonation was sharp and confident. (20-21)

This is the most compelling discussion in the novel about the subject of the 'mail-order bride' because this exchange between the couple captures both the tragic and the comedic in the relationship. The conversation continues:

'These media people will say that it was Marilyn's fault that she killed because she married that bastard...just to come to Australia. I bet my thumb, there will be a show on mail-order brides on TV tonight or the next day and the next. And I bet my other thumb, they will show a bar full of Aussies holding a beer and half-clothed Filipinas dancing on the stage in a nightclub in Manila. And you know who the owners of these nightclubs are. Bloody Australians.'
'One or two. Not all,' Reginald was defending himself. 'The media blow things up. That's how they earn money.'
'They give ammunition to racist attitudes.'
Ammunition to racist attitudes. Reginald repeated the words in his brain. Too much of Laura's influence. He shook his head and in spite of himself, laughed briefly.
'What's funny, ha?' Norma's confrontational voice reverberated to the ceiling....
'Nothing? Why are you laughing then? You are laughing at me, ha?'...
'You don't know how it feels to be stared at from head to feet. Everybody thinks that when a Filipina like me is married to a white man, she is a mail-order bride and a prostitute. Tell me, am I a prostitute? Did you buy me?' Only her imperfect English prevented her from talking as fast as she would have preferred.

'Of course not. And even if you were, I don't give a damn what people say. It's my decision.'

'What do you mean 'even if you were'? You mean you are doubting me? That I could be a prostitute?'

'No. That's not what I meant. I am sure you're not. But even if you were, for example...'

'For example...bullshit.' Norma swore under her breath. '*Mga walanghiya, mga pakialamero.*' ['Shameless, you're all sneaky beak.']

Reginald braced himself for a round of verbal accusations. 'You are just like them,' she added.

'Now, that's not fair. I would not have married you.' Reginald felt like a tape recorder for he had said these lines several times before.

Norma mumbled some more in her own language, her crying bout a repetitious combination of wailing and blowing her nose on the collar of her nightgown....

'All right. What do you want me to do? Call the newspaper? Write a letter to the editor?' Reginald asked.

'I bet you won't!...'

'Childish,' he mumbled. Childishness that would be transformed into political assertiveness as tenacious as it was devoid of polish. Initially, it had been easier to just agree. 'Yes, it is racism.' But this would arouse her unwavering zeal and competent ability to organize her people. 'Her people,' he repeated to himself.

He could picture her on the telephone rounding up her friends for hours. 'My husband says...'. 'Reginald agrees with me...'

She would return home late from some meeting here or there, discussing this mail-order bride issue, prejudice, sexism...it was never-ending.

(Verde 2005, 20-23; emphasis and translation are original)

The long passage above is humorous as it is seriously critical. It shows varying emotions between the couple and the stage of their union. Reginald's impatience with Norma's increasingly politicised grasp of her 'people' in relation to Australia's racism is met by Reginald's lack of emotional involvement; it is read as the husband's whiteness being complicituous with the apparatus that oppresses 'her people'. Together with Norma's intellectual growth is the acquisition of the vocabulary that was previously alien to a 'normal' 'mail-order bride' like her; a fact that does not escape the husband ('she sounds funny,' says his son). The suppressed laughter from Reginald upon hearing overtly militant statements from the formerly *provinciana* wife borders on the condescending and the sexist; either a gesture of disbelief upon her newly-found strength or a 'universal' masculine disregard of women's empowerment.

However, it can be argued that the Australian's attitude towards the whole 'mail-order bride' discourse could also be fatigue; the repetitive occasion of having to crucify Australia as a sign of his love. Moreover, even though Norma was clearly incensed with Reginald's nonchalance, she proudly quotes him regarding the issue; a hint that the man takes part in the discourse through her. For him, the cycle of 'melodrama' is 'never-ending': an incident, then a media report, then an argument of offense and defense, and finally, Norma's walk-out while blowing her nose on her sleeves. Her 'mediocrity' is still performed by the body.

Infused with 'Filipinisms'—the tone and the idioms I can spot—this exchange could possibly be a good approximation of Filipino wives and their Australian husbands all over the country; at least those who are within the 'normal' range of the spectrum. This means the majority of Australian men who do not beat up their wives, who have decent jobs to raise families, and who provide solace to wives crying 'foul' in the privacy of their homes. On the other hand, the middle ground also means the Filipino woman who was neither a prostitute nor a striptease dancer, who may not come from middle-class families, or may not have a PhD making her a potential FAWAA awardee, but may have silently participated in community affairs. Verde's narrative politicises the 'mail-order bride' but also humanises the Australian man. The archetypal 'good wife' immigrant is shown in the novel as someone who can redeem her lowly beginnings through the unexpected intellectualisation in which gender economy has placed her. Indeed, most 'brides' do not understand what the fuss is all about. Norma's life in Australia goes perfectly according to a 'neat' plot of the 'good wife'; however, for someone like Marilyn, the *puta* 'mail-order bride', there is no redemption. All the tragedy that is her birth, her life, her migration, her betrayal of

Grant, her death are but a confirmation of the narrative of her archetype. The irony of it all, in Australia's 'mail-order bride list of casualty is that, the *puta* is not as common; almost always they are a Norma but end up a Marilyn.⁷³

The differentiation of bodies amongst 'mail-order brides' is further illustrated by Laura's archetype: the bourgeois intellectual. Neither a Marilyn nor a Norma, she was born to a landowning family who could afford to send her to a music conservatory. From a moneyed (feudal) family, she exudes the confidence of possessors of social and cultural capital. She came to Australia with a radical education and dated Edwin Tan, a staunch student leader whose character is patterned after Jose Maria Sison, founder of the Communist Party of the Philippines. (More background discussion on insurgency in Chapter 8.) Therefore, her foray into women's activism as counsellor in the Blacktown Women's Refuge is predicated on her political and intellectual rigour. Needless to say, the 'mail-order bride' is an opportunity for someone like Laura to make herself relevant (and distinguish herself as well) in Australia. This tendency is also apparent in real-life ex-communists who initiated migrant activism (see Chapter 8). The enjoyment and privileges of activism position Laura not as the 'bride' that she really is but as someone *above* them all. I see the same tendency amongst real-life brides/activists.

The construction of the bourgeois intellectual archetype begins in the body. Laura may be medium-built but this relative lack—neither short nor frail—is compensated by high-heeled boots; a mark of sophistication. While the two wives

⁷³ Saroca's (2002) fieldwork in the Philippines for her thesis on the 'mail-order bride' revealed that many whose lives ended tragically by their brutal murders were of some education and raised by 'good' families, an analysis that is hinged though in a classist view of who qualifies as 'murderable' and who does not.

have round facial features, Laura has a 'delicate jaw', 'elfin eyes', 'high cheek-bones', and 'full lips' (113). She does not exude the visual aesthetics of a 'dark-faced Filipino baby' so that Neil thought he was marrying the maid Laura brought along with her in the airport. Verde's conflation of beauty with class is a correct approximation of how 'beauty' is constructed in the Philippines which has remained colonial. Although Laura is not explicitly described as dark or light-skinned, one could imagine that she is lighter than sun-baked Marilyn and Norma that marked their bodies as 'peasantry'. (See the photographs of Porteous, Alvarez Solon and Casalme in Chapter 4). The body of the 'mail-order bride' is of a particular constitution that betrays difference, desire and deprivation.

The body, however, behaves according to certain rules of comportment. Can the bourgeois intellectual be childish? Unlike most Filipino women Neil knew, Laura never sent one photo during correspondence. She was described as a 'stranger', 'mysterious' and 'confronting'; her silence is only magnified by her 'charm' and 'grace' plus her exceptional talent at the piano (122-23). Neil knew that Laura did not marry him for love or visa. This 'mail-order' was not seeking greener pasture; she was escaping from the political persecution of the past that left her with no family member except for a young boy, a nephew from a dead *guerrilla* sister and a comrade. Her parents were also killed in a clash between the military and insurgents.

Laura's coldness towards Neil is the opposite kind to the lover she is with Dr. McIntyre—truly a 'luxury' that other brides do not have. Laura is positioned by her class to challenge the 'mail-order bride' for she cannot be bought; privileged 'third world women' are symbolically beyond the economics of exchange. Moreover, her

refusal to be a docile body—never pregnant, no children to raise, displaying overt eroticism with two men in her life—is an inversion of the 'mail-order' body, her erasure of the 'male ordered' regime. Moreover, the continuum of masculinity and politics is also ascribed to Laura. In my interviews, it is the men and not the women who raise the spectre of the martial law as push factor to emigrate. The character of Laura reined in upper-class arrogance by marrying down; a white man for a visa. Her self-contempt and intolerance towards Neil and her relationship of equality with the doctor, point to the 'universality' of class. That a privileged 'third-world woman' negotiates her marginality through class arrogance is not surprising.

In the new land, however, she had to face another kind of persecution; Laura felt what it was like to be 'ethnic, belonging to a minority' (287). 'I walk into shops and no one sees me except when the money is in my hands. One time I even thought of shoplifting to get the attention of shop assistants...When once I treasured obscurity, I now loathe it' (287).⁷⁴ The privileged 'third world woman' script does not work all the time. This is why Verde reserves a soft spot for Laura because she is the author's platform to voice out the pains of being an ethnic woman. Also, she reserved for Ka Revlon, Laura's *cadre* sister, songs of the revolution she learned as a young activist. One can sense Verde's political persuasion as she romanticises the cold nights in the mountains when comrades sing their songs of freedom; for her, the socialist flame for a 'humane and just society' 'is still burning' (in the dedication page). She reserves for

⁷⁴ During the interview, Morden told me the story of an incident in David Jones where she was routinely snubbed by shop clerks. What is also autobiographical were her years as an activist and in a relationship with a comrade. It was a love fortified by fear, imprisonment and separation. 'I was threatened politically and very insecure economically.' 'I am a mail-order bride!' she said. 'I proudly admit that on TV and in newspapers, in talks where I get invited.' (Aida Morden, interview, February 23, 2010).

Laura and Ka Revlon (after the shampoo she brought to the mountain, for which she was chastised) the pure and young love between revolutionaries.

Despite Verde's idealisation of Norma, it is Laura—the bourgeois and the intellectual—who is valorised in the end; she is the 'mail-order bride' who is, in fact, not one. Like the valorisation of middle-class women by FAWAA anthologies, here is another text that invents the 'middle-class bride' in Australia. *Not all brides are poor—look at me!* The obsession to excuse one's 'brideness' because one is middle-class works against the very premise of politicising the subject. Laura as the foil of the *puta* and the good-wife archetype is a 'hyperagent' who has a choice, the means and the cultural capital to shape the community. Because Verde's concept of the body follows the ordering of the male, not even her sympathetic language can escape wor(l)ding of the 'mail-order bride' subject.

Learning 'Australian-English': Wor(l)ding the male-order

This section shows the dominance of few in Filipino print culture, but it also interrogates how the wor(l)ding of the 'mail-order bride' relies much on the 'native' male as exemplified by Perdon,. He writes for and edits *Bayanihan News*, and *Pilipino Herald* prior to that, has written and self-published two collections of essays, *Brown Americans of Asia* (1998) and *Footnotes to Philippine History* (2008a), a book on Jose Rizal (2011a), has published works by Cabucos (2008) and Pura Castrence (2006), and his own dictionaries and wordbooks. Known amongst 'Blacktown Filipinos' as the man who makes the *diario*, Perdon describes himself as a 'historian, curator, teacher, translator and cultural heritage consultant' (1998, backpage). The

masculinist tendencies of his production—from the male perspective of history to the sexualisation of the Filipino woman in his dictionaries—impale the body of the 'mail-order bride' despite a few token essays about her. With tones that range from passivity to disentanglement, from denial to humiliation, the preponderance of his works are symptomatic of a mentality that has kept the 'mail-order bride' a 'woman question'. As his masculinist historical essays are meant to erase the memory of the 'mail-order bride', his dictionaries inscribe her material body in a world of semanticity that reduces the female body to sex, reproduction and domestic drudgery.

Arguably, judging by the titles of his essays on Philippine history, Perdon is preoccupied with the 'postcolonial question' yet without the usual theorising that accompanies the discipline. This might as well suit Perdon (2011b) who has clear anti-academic sentiments particularly those 'dime-a-dozen' PhDs.⁷⁵ *Brown Americans of Asia* (1998), an injuriously-titled book—a reference to the United States' colonisation of the Philippines that hybridised the brown bodies into white-masked natives misplaced in non-Christian Asia—is, however, about Filipinos in Australia. Perdon articulates the postcoloniality of 'Filipinoness' for his representations of the colonised body as impure, unsalvageable and contaminated yet romanticised. *Footnotes to Philippine History* (2008a), on the other hand, traces the postcolonial Filipino identity in official terms that saw the rise of nationalism in the Philippines where objects, symbols, representations of 'culture' are invoked to imagine belonging. Couched in the language of nationalism, these essays take the path of grand narratives of the Philippines. He reprints pictures to illustrate 'Filipinoness' one way or

⁷⁵ In an article titled 'Lobbyists and People with Delusion of Grandeur', he admits being 'almost always mistaken for a holder of a PhD' in academic events he attends. He is not thrilled by it at all, he claims (Perdon 2011b).

another: from national heroes to ethnic minorities, to contemporary artists and a dictator and his wife. Both books are premised on Perdon's crusade that Filipino-Australians need to know their past before embracing their 'white' (non-racialised) culture as opposed to their 'brown' (racialised) nature.

The 'mail-order bride' is inevitably discussed in both books: distant and messianic at once. In *Brown Americans of Asia*, Perdon gives a statistical, demographic, descriptive, cultural and historical angle to the Filipino woman in Australia. At times sympathetic to victims, he predicted that the 'mail-order bride' tag of the community would remain like a 'scar' since 'Filipino brides, no matter what perception the public has of them, will be a permanent part of the community because they are filling a particular need in the Australian social structure' (1998, 30; my emphasis). This framing harks back to a 'feminist', 'authentic insider' analysis of the bride and Australia as 'fulfilling a mutual need' (Wall 1983, 220; my emphasis). Neither articulated what 'need' this might be, except—what I understood as—that Australian men need women and the Philippines has a surplus of vaginas. As a gatekeeper, Perdon is responsive to the usability of the 'mail-order bride' as a subject. In his eagerness to criticise the ineffectual presence of ethnic organisations, he asks in the essay 'Are Filipino associations relevant?' what is the point of having 216 associations (Perdon 2008a, 151). Perdon bemoans the insensitivity of these organisations to issues that truly matter such as the 'mail-order bride' problem. Although this does not engage the question of cultural representation directly, it does raise the question of political representation within the community. He correctly asked the question where these organisations' were to intervene when Filipino women were either being murdered or abused. Perdon scrutinised the community's

responsibility towards each other; however, the same critique can be used to interrogate cultural gatekeepers: where were *you* at the time your intervention was needed most? Like a female Lazarus resurrected from the dead, the 'mail-order bride' is the perfect scapegoat of the marginalised community: a panacea, a call for solidarity, a subject, an object and a thesis topic.

The above introduction lays down the tradition of writing and material production within which Perdon constructs the female body in diaspora in his dictionaries. He published several but there are two volumes that are particularly of interest: *English-Filipino Wordbook* (1996) and *Learning and Speaking Filipino* (2008b). 'To the Filipino expatriates around the world,' he dedicates the latter volume, while the first one is his offering as a cultural bridge for 'interracial marriages' between Filipinos and Australians. These publications are an entry—literally and figuratively—into the symbolic order of (white) Australia by Filipinos. I argue that 'third-worldist' constructions are emplaced, in particular, the making of the Filipino woman as *puta* is conditioned by print materials distributed for 'her' consumption.

The table below is my summary of some of the terms found in Perdon's *Wordbook* (1996). The group of words is categorised based on my own understanding of his uses and the semantic similarities he ascribes to the words. I deliberately dropped the Filipino equivalents for the purpose of brevity:

racist/elitist

abo, chink, commie, darkie, garlic muncher, Geordie, goondie, groper, ikey (Jew), Itie, jungle bunny, kike (Jew), lubra, magpie (SA), nig-nog, ocker, Pakis, Pig Island (NZ), Queen Street bushie, ratbag, red neck, Richard Cranium, rock ape, Roman hands and Russian fingers, sandgroper (WA), shiny-arse, bladger, slopeyheads (Asian), westie, wog

<p>vagina bearded clam, beaver, cherry, clit, crack, cunt, fanny, female genital organ, golden doughnut, growler, gutted rabbit, hairpie, hymen, Joe Hunt, jugs, labia majora, labia minora, lips, man hole, man's best friend, mickey, muff, prepuce, prepuce of clitoris, pussy, quim, rosebuds, tight as a mouse's ears, twat, vaginal orifice, vulva.</p>
<p>breasts/body charlies, chassis, fatso, menstruation, jigglers, knockers, lungs, mammaries, mons pubis, mons veneris, montezumas, more front than Myers, nipple, norks, nubbies, nubs, nungers, pair</p>
<p>penis/ scrotum/erect penis blue-vein steak, cobblers, cock, cods, crack a fat, dick, dong, ferret, gland, gonads, groin, horn, jigger, joy-slick, knob, male genital organ, mutton, mutton-dagger, nob, noodle, old boy, percy, peter, pills, pink oboe, penis, penis glands, rubber (condom), sausage, schlong, stiff, tassel, testicles, tilt in his kilt, tonk, virile (manly), walloper, whistle, wick, wife's best friend, willie</p>
<p>semen gism, seminal vesicle, sperm, sperm cell</p>
<p>gay cocksucker, dung-puncher, dyke, fag, faggot, fancy pants, gay, ginger-beer, homosexual, pansy, pillow biter, poofter, pounce, pouffe, queen, shit puncher, wonk, woofter</p>
<p>body parts/terms arsehole, cervix, menstruation, dilation and curettage, ort, prat, pubic hair, ring piece</p>
<p>prostitute Aspro, good time girl, grunter, hooker, local bike, Lucy looselegs, molly, prossie, prostitute, slack moll, working girl, x-rated</p>
<p>sex blowjob, carpet burns, crack it, deep throat, deliver the goods, did you dip the wick?, dine at the Y, dirty deed, dud bash, exercise the ferret, facts of life, feel horny, finger fuck, frigidity, gangie, get a bit, get a length, get off at Redfern, get screwed, give a head, sex glands, gnaw the nana, go all the way, good screw, hairpie, have relations, hickey, hide the sausage, horny, interpret sex without embarrassment, iron pants (woman), itch, jig-a-jig, jollies, kink, KY, laid, lay in the hay, lech, libido, like a bitch on heat, like having a shower with a raincoat on, live in sin, lousy fuck, lube, lust, lustful, maul, minute man, miss out, nooki-nooki, on a good screw, on a promise, on heat, orgasm, pash, peck, pecker, peeping Tom, poke, quickie, randy as a drover's dog, red-blooded, ride, root, roots like a rattle snake, run around, screw, screw around, secko, shag, shagger's back, shoot bolt, sink a sausage, the old one-two, tumble in the hay, urge, warm-blooded, wolf (man)</p>
<p>masturbation beat the meat, dick-whacker, dildo, feed the chooks, jack off, masturbation, twanging the wire, whack off</p>
<p>violence belt in the lug, domestic violence, once over, pack a shitty</p>
<p>woman/pregnant Charlie, crow, fishwife, in the pudding club, in trouble (preg), iron maiden, jade, jam tart, knackers (panties), lesbo, lessa, man-hole cover (sanitary napkin), mistake, nice piece of work, nympho, old bag, old bat, old chook, old biddy, boiler, panty, pantilet, Ruggedy Anne (dirty), scarlet woman, scrubber, she'd fuck anything wearing trousers, sheila, single mother, tabby (crazy woman), tart, virgin, virginity, vixen, wide-on (horny woman), wifey, working girl</p>
<p>venereal disease Cop a load, dose, gonorrhoea, fair sex, get a load, load, pox, vaginites, woman disease</p>
<p>drugs and alcohol Grog, reefer, marijuana, smack-freak, wino</p>

physique fatso
expletives shut your face, SOB

Table 5 Selected entries from *English-Filipino Wordbook* by Renato Perdon

The workbook from which these terms come from is Perdon's, one might say, unusual 'gift' to Filipino women in Australia as his dedication implies. In the introduction, Perdon warns his readers that many of the entries are slang that average Australians use, implying that racist, elitist, sexist, lookist and ageist slurs are commonly used; that working class Australians exhibit these tendencies; that this is white Australia's language; and that newly arrived migrants would benefit from familiarising themselves as the possibility of being subjected to slang is high as in everyday 'multicultural' life.

Yet, what is disturbing is Perdon's deliberate framing of his lexicography: to serve as a 'bridge' for Filipino women entering Australia as wives and girlfriends. It is as if Perdon has found his niche market: 'mail-order brides' will need a dictionary that will make sense of their world for them, or rather, he helped with this publication the conflation of the Filipino with 'mail-order brides', sex, and prostitution. The wordbook prepares the woman entering her new society for a regime of knowledge, a world of sexist, racist, anti-intellectual, homophobic and elitist linguistic order, and positions her subjectivity as a body in passivity where being a woman means *being* a 'venereal disease', not simply a carrier of it, but an embodied infection of the sex.⁷⁶ The intended user of the reference book is presumed to be confined within a world where she performs sex, receives physical and verbal abuse, faces possible abortion,

⁷⁶ He equates 'venereal disease' with '*sakit sa babae*', literally 'a woman disease'. The translations of Perdon into Tagalog have a more upsetting effect on me because it is my native language where 'taboo' words are carefully used in context or not at all.

endures racism, puts up with alcoholism and drug abuse, among others. The 'mail-order bride' straddling 'cross-cultural' worlds as she is represented in Australian mainstream media is equally—if not insidiously—discursively prostituted by an 'ethnicity entrepreneur' (Kasinitz 1992, 163).

This treatment of the 'Filipina' by a Filipino resembles Franz Fanon's generalising but simplistic analysis of Martinique women as critiqued by Chow (2010, 60). Whereby a coloured woman's coupling with a white man is driven by 'a knowledgeable, calculating' desire to participate legitimately in his world; she is 'if not always a whore, a sell-out, and hence a traitor to her own ethnic community' (2010, 65). The misogyny against the 'native' woman in the act of protecting her from 'white men' by a 'native' brother is exemplified by Perdon's work. The centrality of print production to express misogynistic contempt is best exemplified by a scene in *Border Security Australia*, a television show featuring customs inspection. In an episode, a Malay-looking (Filipino?) woman was stopped by immigration officers and was suspected as an 'illegitimate traveller', a term often used in the notoriously racist show; her bags were searched and they found a book on sex and relationships possibly one of Perdon's.⁷⁷ The frame freezes on the book: what is she planning to do in Australia?

The wordbook is designed to facilitate the entry of the woman not just into a world of domesticity but also the complexity of the material 'everyday life' that is unfamiliar. Perdon initiates the new wife into the jargon of Australian official establishments, politics, business, trade, money, rental, loans, interest rates, law,

⁷⁷ I unfortunately do not have the details of that episode. My letter to the producers remains unanswered until the time of writing.

judiciary, liability, land use, taxation, transportation, bouncing cheques, social security, Centrelink, dole, among many others. Because the foreign woman has to perform domestic roles, she needs to be efficiently knowledgeable in the new regime. This includes, in Perdon's 'mail order bride' *habitus*, the list of fish commonly available for the Australian market, fruits and vegetables, pork and beef cuts and milk types. The Filipino wife would also apparently be better off knowing the difference between Aussie-rules football and regular football. The rule of heteronormativity in the life of a 'mail-order bride's' has inscribed her body into sex work and domestic work, sometimes even extra-domestic jobs like digging drains and building cement walls. By putting together this wordbook, Perdon anticipates what awaits the 'mail-order bride'; he 'worlds' their world even before arrival. His dictionary introduces the gendered body to the word 'household' but not 'family', 'functional' but not 'love', 'immigrant' but not 'citizenship', 'fucking' but not 'making love'.

The other book, *Learning and Speaking Filipino* (2008b) focuses on the Filipino migratory experience in Australia. Using the cartoons by Eldis Tenorio from *Bayanihan News* where Perdon is *de facto* editor, the 'grammar' book (it does not teach the syntax of the language at all) creates scenarios about migrant life as such: the cold weather, fishing, bowling with friends, having a swim in Bondi, buying real estate, Medicare, to mention a few. But what is particularly interesting—although not surprising—is Perdon's inclusion of conversations about 'mixed marriages'. Some examples are at a wedding reception, a telephone conversation between 'pen pals', courtship exchanges and an Australian 'looking for a wife, preferably a lovely Filipina'. In these scenarios, Perdon is defensive in making it understood that these

women are either employed or possess university qualifications. But the thematic of sexualisation returns yet again. Take, for example, the case of Ronald and Estela wherein Perdon dramatises the Filipino woman's attempt to demand safe sex from her Australian husband; and Michael who would not wear a condom and Marissa who is a virgin. Below are two illustrations found in this section of the book:

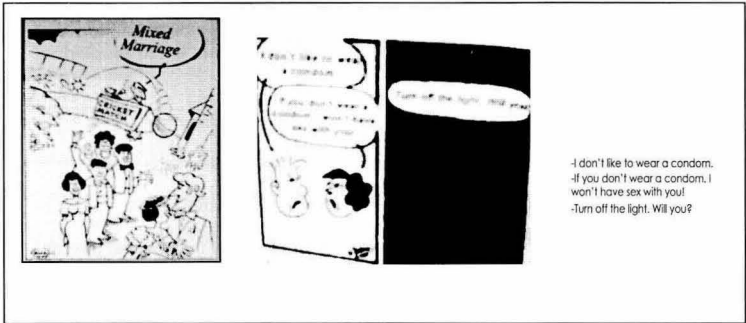


Figure 9 Cartoons depicting interracial marriages in Australia

While it is easier to dismiss Perdon's dictionaries and 'grammar' books as market-driven efforts to sell racialised, classed and gendered bodies—indeed, he knows who his clientele is, another 'grammar' book is entitled *Making Out in Tagalog* (2003)—these publications are informative in the way they locate the body in diaspora, and the diasporic within the body. In particular, these works disprove the notion that racialising the Filipino woman is the sole monopoly of white Australian media. While community newspapers and organisations crucify mainstream white media for its malpractices, I wonder if community members looked within their backyard. However, to see Perdon and other merchandisers of ethnic and migrant subjectivities simply as the enemy from within risks the self-defeating exercise of

crucifying the 'ethnic Judas', so to speak, without framing these print productions as evidence of cultural imperialism as practiced by the colonised 'native' making sense of his experience of the 'whiteness' at large. I would view Perdon's works as embodied set of intersecting relations—colonialism, sexism, racialism, heterosexism, elitism—that are nationally and globally harnessed.

**To subalternise or to pass:
Techniques of the 'male-ordered'**

In this last section, I juxtapose two male-ordered techniques made evident in print culture which either expose or hide the 'male-ordered' body. As in the previous sections, I argue here that the reading and writing of the Filipino woman by 'nativist' sexism is forged by the contingencies of diaspora. The two techniques I discuss are self-subalternisation and passing, strategies often accessible to those who have leverage over the male-ordered subject.

Erwin Cabucos, a Queensland-based schoolteacher, settled in Australia after marrying his girlfriend whom he met as a student on a scholarship in Newcastle (Erwin Cabucos, interview, February 6, 2010). His stories began appearing in ethnic newspapers like *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* in the late 1990s and were later collected in two volumes: *The Beach Spirit and Other Stories* (2001) by Ginninderra Press, an alternative publishing house of Stephen Matthews and *Greenblood* (2008) by The Manila Prints of Renato Perdon. Cabucos writes about his *barrio* in North Cotobato in Mindanao and the migrant experience in Australia, in particular, that of the 'male-order bride'. Cabucos' corpus of short stories is curious less for the writing style which he admitted to be amateurish and inconsistently

written but more for his subject position as a Filipino 'groom' married to a white Australian (Erwin Cabucos, interview, February 6, 2010). His 'mail-order bride' fiction, which caught the attention of a small Australian press, explores sexual citizenship yet in problematic ways. While Cabucos tells me that his foremost aim in writing about the 'mail-order bride' is 'to give voice to them', his output betrays his own racial, class, gender and sexual prejudices. Cabucos' fiction remains within masculinist discourse, making it impossible to provide nuanced readings of the sexualised Filipino woman on which his own superior status depends.

Nonetheless, the author expresses solidarity with all the 'mail-order brides' who supported him through his writing. The women from Newcastle are, so to speak, the inspiration for his fiction which is a homage to their sacrifices. Cabucos exhibits what Chow calls 'self-subalternization', that which relatively privileged subjects undergo on the occasion of the inevitable violation of a represented subject because of her lack (2010, 40). One good example of such are intellectuals who self-dramatise—whether 'sincere or delusional'—their alterity, often a further validation of their privilege. What is doubly interesting in this case—compared to Verde's imagining of the *puta* archetype—is that in Cabucos' fiction the *puta* is not actually one yet she is portrayed as such. The vilification of 'mail-order brides' in his writing allows a male subject to 'alterise' himself through expressions of solidarity; to own his victimisation by white supremacy. However, self-subalternisation works only in so far as one is never willing to let go of one's privileging, thus, the recognition that one's position necessitates solidarity with the underclass. In this case, Cabucos is a Filipino inhabiting the male body that escapes scrutiny; his is neither for sale nor 'rapeable'.

'A household appliance with sex organ' hardly ever conjures the image of a male body.

In a first-person interview-style, 'Fusion', a 'mail-order bride' reflects on her body and sexuality based on the dynamics of power that position her in relation to a white Australian. Cabucos' cultural production—identifiably postcolonial and sympathetic with the 'mail-order bride', however, betrays his self-subalternisation that draws its strength from the very powerlessness by which he renders his characters.

So you're married to an Australian? Yes, I'm a mail-order bride. You know, one of those disgusting, ambitious sex machines from the poverty-stricken and depressed area...who advertise their names in the newspapers in the pen pal section, hoping to be read by travelling white males. I met Andrew, a forty-six-year-old Newcastle retrenched steel worker, five feet nine tall, stocky, a champion in bed. He has a great tool, and I'm proud of him....
I have lots of tales to tell you. No, they are not about him being unable to get it up again after he has the first one—he's the first person I know who can have three orgasms in one night. We can even explore ten positions in one sitting. No, you see our marriage is not entirely based on sex. It's more than that. He was an outgoing white Australian male and I am a reserved Filipina. (2001, 50)

So, has he hit you yet? Yes. But it was my fault, I suppose. One time, I withdrew some of our savings without letting him know. (2001, 48)

From the way Cabucos weaves the subject as a 'sex machine'—though not without sarcasm—quantifying her husband's sexual power to her acceptance of misogyny, the text sexualises the Filipino woman as a whore. The writer constructed, like Perdon, the Filipino woman as a subject who reduced herself to a usable body; she is, in Cabucos' wor(l)ding, the embodiment of the violable person who equates her sex with her finance, her excitability with her exchangeability. This is the kind of 'social realism' the author sells his 'Australian' market that is also published in Filipino newspapers as sample of their community's literary production.

Another story, 'Diaspora' (also published as 'G'day, Welcome to Australia'), is about the reunion between Emily and the 'mail-order bride' mother who abandoned her. The woman left an impoverished husband and children to marry Peter after corresponding with him behind her husband's back. The 'mail-order bride' in the story showed no remorse as she packed her bags to leave for Australia. Her character is a hyperagent who left a man symbolising Filipino forms of patriarchy, but the initial strength disappeared and the hyperagent became a meek whore as Cabucos takes his readers to a scene in Sydney:

'I'm a plain housewife here, Emily. Peter and I agreed that I should never work, so I can have his dinner ready when he comes home. And so the house will be clean, too, when he comes home.'
In Tagalog, I ask Mama if she really wants it this way...
'What did she say, Mary?'
'Nothing,' Mama answers. 'She was only asking if I've ever tried working in Australia....'
I ask Mama in Tagalog what work she'll do if she ever finds a job. She answers in Tagalog again. 'I might work as a waitress or as a sandwich hand. I've never got any Australian qualifications to allow me to do anything else....'
He brakes suddenly, screeching the tyres...'For fuck sake, Mary,' Peter transforms into a bizarre tiger in the driver's seat.
'There you are again! How many times have I told you, when I'm around, you should always speak in English. English, English, English! You're in Australia now! If you use your language again, I'll hit you! You've never learned your lesson, eh!' (2008, 105-07)

It is interesting to note two things in the passage above: first, the implied denigration of proletarian work as a result of ethnicisation of unskilled jobs; and second, the vilification of the white male for using violence in his request to understand the ongoing conversation in a foreign language. Mary's transgressive act of abandoning a marriage to emancipate herself (and by implication her children, too) is contradictory to the amount of oppression she tolerates from the Australian. The self-effacement towards Peter despite her self-consciousness as a woman who can make choices hints at the narrative's conferment of greater power to the white male

over the racialised male. Both men physically abuse Mary. The authority of a Filipino male is emasculated in favour of the white power: Peter's racial and therefore class superiority is the new patriarchal order, which the coloured woman was complicit in forging. The conflation of Mary as a white man's meek whore (but also the strong wife of a racial other) represents the 'mail-order bride' as hyperagent only within the limit of her class and ethnicity. The characterisation of Mary as 'embodiment of exchange', however, tacitly legitimises a 'nationalist' reading of her first and only-legitimate marriage. In Chapter 8 where I discuss elderly women marrying white Australians for visa, this trope of love reserved for a co-national is strongly evident. Because Mary (or any other Filipino woman) cannot possibly love a white man, she can only be a commodified body in the international economy of desire.

The continuum (or shall I say 'intersection') between Peter and the Filipino husband reminds us of the single spectrum that Cabucos and the 'mail-order bride' inhabit. While the author correctly places Mary's self-fashioning as 'mail-order bride' as a revolt against 'local' patriarchy—a reading that Constable (2003) would probably interpret as agentic contrary to the 'third world woman' as an immovable subject, given Constable's propensity to read 'mail-order brides' as wielders of power—the insight is short-sighted given the woman's subjugation under white power. In a similar vein, Cabucos appears to be on the same plane as any 'mail-order bride' he wished to 'give voice to': because they share the same marginality in Australia. However, despite owning the privilege of speaking for them, the Filipino groom finds little in common with the 'Filipina bride'; the sexualisation of the 'Asian' male has specificities different from the 'Asian' female. On interracial coupling where the ethnic other is the female, Cabucos upon 'seeing a [young] Filipina with

an old Australian, somehow I feel disgust. [It's] revolting. For the reason just to be here [in Australia]. It's not supposed to be' (Erwin Cabucos, interview, February 6, 2010). This echoes what everyone else is thinking: there are no 'mail-order husbands' because white women's sexuality exceeds that of the 'Asian' male (Constable 2003, 172). The racialising regime behind the emasculation of the 'Asian' male is simplified by Cabucos in these terms: 'mas acceptable ang male Filipino and female Australian. Parang novelty, cute, like Ogie and Michelle' [Male Filipino and female Australian couplings are more acceptable. We're like a novelty...] (Erwin Cabucos, interview, February 6, 2010).⁷⁸ The uncommonness, the visual rarity and the admissibility of a transaction perceived to be outside market exchange give Cabucos the licence to demarcate his position from Filipino 'brides' because he is constructed as a desexualised 'Asian' male vis-à-vis the white woman.

Self-subalternisation, however, works effectively through sympathy from the outside. Cabucos' self-subalternisation exhibits traces of the colonial legacy of othering, appropriating and humanising the ethnic other. Stephen Matthews, the publisher of Ginninderra Press, applies the same principles to exalt Cabucos' exceptionalism to represent 'his people'. He subscribes to the view that the Filipino writer's possession of the 'ethnic' voice is itself resistance to dominant discourses in Australia. Despite the rawness of Cabucos' language and the rough edges of narration, Matthews said that the author is in a subject position to reveal a world unknown to Australia. 'He's not yet Hemingway [but] his writings are legitimised by

⁷⁸ When Michelle Van Eimeren was candidate to Miss Universe held in Manila in the 1990s, she met Ogie Alcasid, a singer, composer and actor. The 'novelty' of a white girl and a Filipino boyfriend was even more magnified by her sheer height and his diminutive stature. They have long since divorced. Cabucos mentioned that his courtship and marriage with his Australian wife coincided with those of the celebrities'.

those [migrant] experiences' (Stephen Matthews, interview, July 1, 2010). The publisher never met the Filipino writer but decided to publish the manuscript on the strength of what he perceived as the need to be heard by (a very tiny portion of) Australia. Matthews edited the stories for the grammar—"quite a lot of it"—but decided to keep the language quirks for their obvious exercise of 'authenticity' (Stephen Matthews, interview, July 1, 2010). Such was the belief of the publisher in the value of 'ethnic' writing that he paid Cabucos his royalty (which Perdon did not offer except for a cut in sales), printed, marketed and sold 185 copies of *The Beach Spirit and Other Stories* (2001), a 'good number' for the 'diasporic writing' genre. The publication of a first-time writer like Cabucos is a kind of reward for the courage to put up against the 'inherent arrogance of the English speaking countries' like Australia by its peripheral citizens (Stephen Matthews, interview, July 1, 2010).

In Matthew's formulation, native informants ('ethnics', 'third-world women', 'insiders') could do no wrong in representing a culture they 'own' and possess, which only they can represent. Since Cabucos is a construct of 'Filipinoness', he must know how to write about 'Filipino' 'mail-order brideness' as well. Matthews' designation of the schoolteacher as someone who can 'teach' white Australia is alterisation of the migrant other in practice. *You criticise Australia through the space I confer upon you*. The emasculated body of Cabucos as 'Asian' male, the self-subalternisation effect he aims for and, in turn, his alterity by the white establishment, are techniques by which the male-order construct the 'mail-order bride'. His exposition of a 'fictitious sympathy' is confirmation of the status of those who 'spoke for', the opposite of hiding that which guards oneself from being revealed.

The literature of 'passing', like passing off as somebody else in real life, requires a 'passable' level of reading skill to be uncovered. Reading with understanding takes familiarity, an intimacy, a sharing of secrets that members-only participated in. The chapter on FAWAA narratives reveals that 'passing' as a non-maid, non-'mail-order bride', or non-marriage migrant is common enough; self-disavowal and other forms of deferral of identity may be a successful means to avoid day-to-day humiliation. Because non-bride Filipino women often rub their difference in, it is not surprising for 'brides' to attempt 'passing'. Often simplistically perceived as an erasure—the disappearance of the traces of a material identity—'passing' is not the opposite of embodiment. The corporeality of the body is neither diminished nor masked away; rather 'passing' is an exercise of carrying the unbearable weight of the matter. One's embodiment is neither disposed of nor altered; what is 'passing' is a *wounding* to the body and a trembling of the psyche. Telling people that one's migration is this or that, for the 'mail-order bride', is a wounding of her body that endured the alienation of migration which, in the first place, made it possible. However, it is not just the 'mail-order bride' who wounds herself; others like me who tried 'passing' unequivocally wound the 'mail-order bride' subject as well.⁷⁹ This section looks at 'passing' as a technique *not* of survival but of a valorisation of an idea that there exists a *non-bride* Filipino woman in Australia.

Bobis' short story 'Fruit Stall' tells the story of a 'mail-order bride' who lives a life of 'passing'. With a PhD in Creative Writing and a list of literary awards and grants under her belt, Bobis is not another 'Blacktown Filipino' self-publishing her works. She

⁷⁹ In a social setting with non-Filipinos where I felt I was insulted by being a 'Filipino woman', I pursued the idea that I was what they thought I was. I spun a narrative of my 'Australian fiancé', my sponsorship, the exchange of sex and domesticity, and all the details that come with it. This inversion of 'passing' was not as difficult as the other; rather, I believe it was an abuse of my position as a non-bride.

is indeed in the market of postcolonial literature/diasporic writing in Australia as she herself implicitly claimed (Bobis 2008, 120). Although she resists being lumped into the category 'Asian-Australian'—'My voice is culturally specific: it is *not* Asian-Australian'—Bobis ironically participates in 'Asian-Australian' networks and has identified herself as someone who writes as a 'Southeast Asian' in Australia (2008, 120).⁸⁰ Published by major but not mainstream publishing houses in Australia, she is singularly the writer who maps the exotic about the Philippines in a 'magic realist' way (Granado 2003; Herrero 2006).

'Fruit Stall' is a first-person narrative of a forty-year old Filipino woman passing off as anyone else but 'Filipina'. With a paler complexion than the ordinary *Pinay* and with hair dyed brown, she tells her customers that she is either an Italian, Mexican or even Spanish. Racial mixture is a privilege by which some women's bodies can lie more than others. 'I am a Filipina, but this is my secret' (Bobis 1999, 4). The divorced 'mail-order bride' one day ran into a customer with a young woman who looked at her straight in the eye and asked: '*Kamusta.*' 'You mean, *como esta?*' I pretend to look confused. "Of course, of course—*muy bien,*" (8). The confused newly arrived could only respond in disbelief: 'you're not Filipina?' The story reminds me of an interracial couple where the Australian (jokingly?) urged his wife to pass off as Malaysian in social settings to avoid the embarrassment of being Filipino. One editor told me about another male editor who upon being asked by a stranger, '*Sir, Filipino po kayo?*' [Sir, are you Filipino?], gave a terse reply: 'no' and then moved away. This was in Sydney in the early 1980s.

⁸⁰ She is a member of the Asian Australian Studies Research Network and is one of Capili's (2009) featured writers in his thesis on Southeast Asian writing community.

The short story is poignant and a compelling consequence of sexualised citizenship, apart from displaying how passing is a 'weapon of the weak'. This weapon, however, is not for everyone. But there is a profound motivation to pass off as somebody else in multicultural Australia if one possesses some racial or social capital. The culture of denial that underwrites 'passing' is always already a return to and a recognition of the construction against which the Filipino community has been struggling. Whatever practical benefits one draws from keeping one's being a Filipino secret are rather short-lived compared to the reinforcing effect of responding to the need to pass. It is in this sense that passing is a wounding that opens up, closes, sutures, and then opens up again the injuries of a sexualised migration.

Bobis, who never has had to pass herself off—as a 'postcolonial' artist, it would not be beneficial—understands only too well the difficulties of the Filipino woman's subjectivity. Reflecting on her career as a 'migrant writer' and being the 'token ethnic', she complains of not being heard and understood by Australians at all; in fact, she would be reduced to tears with comments like 'Who wrote this shit?' from editors (2008, 121). One cannot simply assume that Philippine writing qualifies as 'writing' in Australia. In as much as Bobis' writing style cannot pass off—not that she attempted to—and does not pass as 'acceptable' English hints at the difficulty of producing migrant print culture that aims to reach out to white Australia, thus, the general insularity of the whole exercise. Yet, the nature of migrant print culture itself as an outcome of the specific cultural intersections engenders (ab)normalities grounded in diasporic history.

One of such cases is that of a writer's ambivalence to use 'Filipino' to describe himself and his total ownership of the 'Filipino' history in his fiction. *Between Two Worlds* (2004) is a novel by Cesar Leyco Aguila who describes himself as: 'an Australian writer of Hispanic and Asian background' (my emphasis; back cover). Aguila was Filipino, not a (white) Australian of Eurasian stock. Aguila is a Filipino immigrant based in Sydney and featured by Capili (2009) in a Filipino-Australian anthology discussed in the next chapter. Growing up in the Philippines, he attended the University of Santo Tomas before emigrating where he later became a producer for The Special Broadcasting Service (SBS). Based on such a description, Aguila could have been a China-born Spanish migrant in Australia (or variants thereof), yet his fiction has the Philippines written all over it. While his 'passing' may serve specific purposes in the publishing market, I argue that the amputation of the 'Filipino'—the deliberate erasure of that which is the source of one's embarrassment—could never be complete. His writing is the embodiment of his being Filipino; his literature is haunting his very attempt at forgetting; his self-published book is that which reveals the very act of 'passing' through which he wanted to write himself off. *What was so wrong about being a 'Filipino' in Australia?*

I do not intend to write a summary of a long historiographical novel divided into four 'books' that begins in year 1500 and ends in 2000. Suffice it to say, it is a saga of the (male) Monteros whose patriarch was nephew of Fernando Magellan, 'discoverer' of the Philippines: sired heroic *mestizos* who shaped the history of their (unidentified) country, from the revolutionary *illustardo* to the *insurrecto* against 'American' colonialists, to the modern-day male scion fighting a socialist revolution. There is a Montero for every poignant point in the history the country whose similarity

to the Philippines is indubitable. The novel is a celebration of *machista* culture that colonialism engenders where women are naked, peasants are illiterate, and everybody else is without agency or name or given a face. The migrant subjectivity in Aguila does not figure in the novel: no mention of diaspora and much less the 'mail-order bride'; to state the obvious, any reference to either would be tantamount to disclosure or blowing his disguise. Ironically, the care with which the author 'hides' the Filipino is dropped by his choice of Theodor de Bry's 'Peregrinations' (1595), a rendition of the Battle of Mactan (in Cebu, Philippines) where Lapu-lapu killed Magellan in action. Although Aguila does not contribute to the male-ordered representations of the Filipino woman, in the way Perdon and Cabucos did, his tacit disavowal by 'passing' as an ambiguous subject is telling of the pervasiveness of his own sexualised citizenship in Australia. I argue that there is a continuum between publishing an overtly anti-women dictionary and a non-descript text by an 'Australian' immigrant rooted in the collective embarrassment of being Filipino in Australia.

The making of the 'Filipina' in Australia as an alien and gendered body lies not only on what is written but also—if not more significantly—on what is not desired to be written. The deconstructive notion of absence in the present and the presence in the absent is insightful in explaining the inclination towards 'passing' as performance of an identity that is not one's own. The symbolic and material body of the 'mail-order bride' in Australia is so pervasive that even male professionals like Aguila behave, perhaps unintentionally, like the fruit seller in Bobis' fiction: *I am a Filipino but it is my secret*. The paradox of (mis)identification works against 'passing' for as long as the power relations that operate on the colonised, gendered, classed

and heteronormative subject continue to impinge on the rights of others to live with dignity. By 'passing' as someone else, one only perpetuates the terrorism that has been inflicted on the sexualised alien subject because the terror is towards oneself.

Conclusion

The cultural constructions of the alien body as unhealthy, malnourished, oversexed and diseased are carried over to the ways Filipino-Australians write their own bodies. Despite the epistemological distance that people writing from a position of power maintain from the 'mail order bride', one could say that the very *raison d'être* of their production is traceable to the marginal subject. While in the everyday, the 'mail-order bride' mother is valorised for her capacity to reproduce hybrid children: healthy, strong, and with the potential towards 'whiteness', her status as outsider is written on colonised body. From the creation of archetypes, to the normalisation of their representations and then the inscription of these into language, Filipino-Australians are both resistant to and complicit with—in different degrees and in various ways—the configuration of xenophobia against their own.

This complicity of the 'ethnic' insider is attributable to the double-consciousness of a postcolonised racial subject. Because the complicity of the community to their own ethnicisation is—understandably—rooted in the historical, it points to a validation of their own moral superiority over white Australia. In the literatures discussed in this chapter, the moral upper-hand of some is evident in that of 'protestant ethnic' (Chow 2002, 48)—the resisting racialised subject—against white Australia. Verde, Perdon, Cabucos, Bobis and Aguila—in varying degrees—are

'protestant ethnics' whose moral ascendancy drives their cultural production. Although this righteousness turns against *its own*, it is never impossible that this could be the same force that creates potentially resistant literatures.

In the next chapter I continue to discuss how the 'ethnic' insider exploits the moral rectitude necessary in excising the guilt of being the 'mail-order bride' community to further cleave class divisions of Filipinos in diaspora. Through class-consciousness exported to Australia, migrant communities subsequently forge a unique expression of class stratification that meets that of the local.

Chapter 6

Class and Filipinos: Reinscribing the 'Great Divide' in the Australian context

Filipino 1: You look stressed out, bro. I reckon you don't do much else for recreation.

Filipino 2: I do actually. Every Sunday I go on fishing trips and on Saturdays I play golf. On Mondays I bowl and go to the movies twice a week.

Filipino 1: 'Wow! That's terrific! What is the problem, then?'

Filipino 2: 'I only earn fifty dollars a week!'⁸¹

The proliferation of *balikabayan* jokes—meant to make a mockery of the flaunted affluence—is also a testament of the upwardly mobile trajectory of the living standards of Filipinos in the first-world. More often, jokes make fun of working class migrants who grapple with the changes in their material culture and physical environment. That 'native' Filipinos in a white society seem to be an intrinsically unnatural and paradoxical phenomenon that engenders humour is a class-based interpretation of alienation. The jokes which I find very funny and precise—they remind me of relatives in the U.S. and acquaintances in Australia—mostly hint at the aspirations of migrants to accumulate economic, social and capital disproportionate to their racial capital as 'Filipinos'.

This chapter, like these jokes, interrogates how Filipinos in Australia have transplanted social class hierarchies and tensions that accompany divisions along race and wealth conditioned by the Philippines' feudal past and postcolonial present. I argue that while a transnational implantation of class relations is apparent,

⁸¹ The passage is my translation (except for the quoted lines) of a cartoon by Eldis Tenorio in Renato Perdon's *Learning and Speaking Filipino* (2008b, 15), originally published in *Bayanihan News*. This is just one of the many amusing situations captured by Tenorio that touch on social class and Filipino-Australians.

Filipinos do not perform the same repertoire of social relations. Class amongst Filipino-Australians is not a mere replica; it is regulated by the conditions of permanent diaspora. In the same way that Avtar Brah (1996, 30) noted how the Indian caste system could not work 'properly' in the British context, the feudal-comprador arrangements in the Philippines meet resistance in Australia's social and economic landscape. The relocation of many women migrants meant entry into 'white' households, thus, an upgrading of social class as seen in narratives featured in the FAWAA anthologies (2001, 2002) and *Age of Wisdom* (2002). But this class repositioning is also contraindicated by the stigma attached to being a potential 'mail-order bride'; economic accumulation does not necessarily translate to status. Also, the lumping together of Filipinos as 'economic migrants' in most advanced societies—especially where the concentration of feminised 'intimate labour' is high—almost always predicts the ceiling of their mobility. But whatever economic gains Filipinos overseas have, or hostilities they face, for that matter, they will inevitably affect diasporic class relations.

With a specific orientation on how class operates in cultural production, this discussion will look at two book titles, *Manila: A Memoir of Love & Loss* (2000) and *Salu-salu: In Conversation with Filipinos: An Anthology of Philippine-Australian Writings* (2008) along with a few ethnic newspapers to illustrate how the 'Great Divide' forms allegiances, practices, readership and groupings among Filipino-Australians. The structure of the chapter starts with a general discussion of class and migration to Australia. I then look at a work of autobiographical fiction, *Manila*, in the light of Spanish-Filipino migration. Then, I present the first 'official' (middle class) anthology of the community with an imagined readership that celebrates hybridity, typical of

gatekeepers who triumph in bi-culturalism. After which, I discuss the vitality of ethnic newspapers to serve many interests and diverse migrant affairs; also as the cultural production that involves greater participation from 'Blacktown Filipinos'. I end the chapter with an analysis of an ethnic newspaper perceived as tasteless and de-cultured. I will do this by showing how a migrant newspaper wields a power too influential to be ignored even by the forerunners of 'culture'.

Class, migration and the Filipino as working class 'Australian'

One tag attached to Philippine and other postcolonial societies is the marked class inequality between the rich and the poor. The country is torn along class lines based on its feudal and colonial past, and its postcolonial present where ten per cent of families possess thirty-six percent of the wealth as opposed to thirty-five per cent owned by the bottom seventy percent of the population.⁸² Only twenty per cent of the eighty-seven million Filipinos in 2006 could be considered as 'middle class' based on these figures. The grim projection of this ever-widening chasm has a long and complex history of colonial relations with Spain (1521-1898) and the United States (1900-1941), and then the intensification of the export-oriented market under neo-liberalism today. Anyone familiar with the poverty in the country made notorious to a world audience by the Smokey Mountain in Tondo, Manila in the 1980s, and then the ostentatious wealth of Forbes Park dwellers who dominate political, economic, and socio-cultural spheres, would agree that 'Great Divide' is the most apt term to

⁸² According to Ibon Foundation (2010), a 'research-education-information development institution' based in the Philippines, the 'severe rich-poor income gap' is so alarming because the twenty richest families in the country own US\$20.4 billion collectively which is almost the equivalent of the combined income of 12 million Filipino families. The report also said that rural poverty in the Philippines outweighs urban poverty by 45:14 out of 100 people in 2006.

describe the massive class inequality.⁸³ The 'semi-feudal' and 'neo-colonial' socio-economic realities in the Philippines today are often dramatised and represented in literature and film in the persons of Spanish-Filipino *mestizos*, a handful of families mainly based in Manila, Cebu and other metropolis who own vast resources of 'old money', metropolitan real estate, farmlands and industries; the Chinese-Filipino billionaires who control airlines, shopping malls, banks, and real estate; and finally, the 'natives' who dominate the political scene from the *barangay* level to the executive and legislative electoral positions.⁸⁴

Class relations in the Philippines are much intertwined with racial gradations that may seem unrecognisable to outsiders. While masses of Malay-looking, economically disadvantaged 'natives' dominate the population, there is a segment of Philippine society perpetually overlooked because of the centuries-old normalisation of their marginal position: the aboriginals, the *lumad*, the highlanders, the ethnic minorities. This 'fourth world' and the *lumpen* have remained much outside the Filipino participation in neoliberal globalisation; they who have not enough capital to migrate overseas. Today, the racially-determined ruling class has been displaced by the *nouveau riche* of the dollar economy; a restructuring of class more mass-based. This is a class of OFWs (Overseas Filipino Workers) gaining greater visibility and economic power in their localities but without 'social' prestige in the old sense.

⁸³ Smokey Mountain was a garbage dumping ground in Tondo, Manila that received two million tons of waste from the overcrowded city for four decades. It got its name from the literal smoke that came out of the dump for the high decomposition temperature. Thousands of illegal settlers have rounded the area to scavenge through the garbage and then sell the recyclable as a source of living. In the 1990s, the 'eye sore' was slowly removed by ceasing its operations and relocating the inhabitants at the cost of US\$347,000. (Asian Development Bank 2011) Forbes Park, located in Makati City, ten kilometres from Tondo, is a gated private subdivision home to ambassadors, foreign businessmen, the Manila Golf and Polo Club and the nation's wealthiest.

⁸⁴ The *barangay* is the smallest political unit in the Philippine structure of local governance. It usually consists of a dozen streets that make up a 'block'; a good comparison would be the size of a suburb in Australia. Although considered as the smallest, *barangay*-level politics is considered serious by its players and stakeholders that electoral violence is high even at this level.

However, settlement migration to the United States, Canada, Australia and other advanced economies accumulates greater capital. While contractual migration is a territory of the lower middle class, the upper middle class would find the first-world countries more suited, thus, responsive as well to their socio-economic matrices.

Ong calls this suitability 'flexible citizenship' where moneyed elites from dragon or tiger economies in the Asia Pacific seek 'to both circumvent *and* benefit from different nation-state regimes by selecting different sites for investment, work, and family relocation' (1999, 112). Philippine-born, however, are hardly this type; in fact, citing former Singapore Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, Ong hints that among Southeast Asians, Filipinos are *not* 'flexible citizens'. Filipinos are characterised by either the inflexibility of the very poor or the coercive mobility of a labour migrant, not exactly the kind of flexibility of the globally competitive citizens. The loosening of immigration policies for the skilled professionals and the tightening of them for the global underclass are based on the demands for labour in the world's financial centres. The easy path towards emigration through family reunion scheme to the United States and Australia has been streamlined to give way to the select migration of a technical workforce armed with elite education and English-language acquisition. There is, on the other hand, a kind of 'flexibility' exhibited by a sector of Philippine-born migrants that 'mail-order brides' do not have. They are the Chinese-Filipinos who have moved twice: first as Southeast Asians from China and then, second, as Southeast Asian nationals to first-world destinations. Ong (2006, 64) noted the economic status often ascribed to Southeast Asian Chinese compared to the 'native' population that prepared them for this second-move migration. So, *where are the Chinese-Filipinos in Australia?*

In 2006, 3.5 per cent, a sizeable 4,760, claimed Chinese ancestry out of all Philippine-born migrants ('Community Information Summary: Philippines-born 2006). Yet, in my three-year stay in Australia, the Chinese have not been visible to me. I did not see them in *fiestas*, or in newspapers; neither have I come across an organisation nor a celebration organised by them. I asked informants about Chinese-Filipinos but they do not seem to be in the know. Ong's (1999) ethnography on the transnational movement of 'Asian' Pacific Rim capital is again useful in hypothesising about their 'disappearance'. Ethnically Chinese southeast Asians have symbolised new capital in the West where real estate, hotel, malls, and many other businesses are driven by their entrepreneurial, 'Confucian' savvy. Ownership in the United States, formerly only associated with the Japanese and Koreans, has expanded to include Singaporean, Malaysian and Taiwanese Chinese (Ong 1999). The money that precipitated 'Asian modernity' (unabashed capitalism with 'Asian' values) is visible as well in Australia. The 'disappearance' of Chinese-Filipino Australians as 'Philippine-born' may not be deliberate but it is strategic given the primacy given to 'Chineseness' in Australia and the burden of a sexualised Filipino community. The pan-Asian (Chinese) ethnicity often touted as a result of an essentialist religio-cultural origin is the space which allows Chinese descendants convertability of their social and cultural capital which Spanish *mestizos* also have but 'native' Filipinos do not.

However, the alleged 'disappearance' of Chinese-Filipinos in Australia is not constantly correct for they surface from time to time. Under the volume of articles on Filipino women like Porteus, Alvarez and Casalme (discussed in Chapter 4), Dante Tan, for bribing an immigration officer, buying his residency, and corrupting the stock exchange, and Eduardo Cojuangco, for buying Australia's National Foods and

owning tracts of land in Mudgee, found their names in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Australian*. They both are in the news *not* because they are ethnically Chinese—neither do I formulaically conflate 'Chineseness' with money as a form of racialising them—but for the moveable capital they drive transnationally. Arlene Chai, the best-selling author of *The Last Time I Saw Mother* (1995), published by Random House Australia, 'was born and educated in Manila'. Despite the obvious centrality of the Philippines in her work—partly autobiographical as it is about the return of a Sydney migrant to Manila as she reminisced a very privileged childhood—Chai never really claimed 'Filipinoness'; she only owns the spatiality of Manila. In her page in the Random House website, it says 'in 1982 she migrated to Australia with her parents and sisters, and now lives in Sydney's northern beaches area'. Three points are made clear here: first, she is not a Filipino; second, it was a family migration, and third, she does not live in western Sydney. In fact, her ethnic, cultural, linguistic self-representations say there is nothing 'Filipina' about her. The ambivalence explains the 'disappearance'. In this, I detect a counter-phenomenon from Ong's observation that the Chinese in Southeast Asia 'stress their nationality rather than their ethnic [Chineseness] status' (2006, 64) or the subjectivity within which Ien Ang (2001) positions herself as Chinese-Indonesian Dutch who cannot speak 'Chinese'. I read that Chai's flexibility in Australia is an appropriation of cultural and social values privileged in white society—re-Sinicisation of sorts—and, in effect, a disavowal of the lesser 'Filipinoness'.

Chai's reluctance to be known as 'Filipino' (this is without suggesting that she claimed to be) and her assertion of her 'Chineseness' are not simply a decision rooted in the personal. The influence of the *huaqiao* (overseas Chinese) and their

networks and the power of 'Asian' modernity in the West located and marketed Chai as the 'Amy Tan of Australia'. The risks of this flattening of ethnicity in the background of global capitalism that is still racially white, of course, should be necessarily raised to critique a view that sees Chai simply as an intellectual capitalist over and beyond orientalist frames, but this is outside my scope for now. The racialisation of class that put Chai where she is was something that Bobis, discussed in Chapter 5, does not possess: she cannot convert ethnically, thus, cannot 'disappear' as a Filipino subject. Her status as *the* postcolonial writer from the Philippines in Australia—writing about swimming white turtles, 'banana heart summer', a 'fish-hair woman' catching the dead—is equivalent to her racial and class identity. This shows how 'Philippine-born migrants' is a racial and class-'controlled' term; it interpellates the majority ('mail-order brides') but hides a privileged few (Spanish and Chinese *mestizos*). The 'disappeared' may socially recede from view as 'Philippine-born' but they materialise in other social formations. What my discussion points to is the inadequacy of nationality on which the notion of 'Filipinoness' rests. The question of citizenship clashes with the more porous boundaries of identity, whether it be cultural or economic belonging.

The visibility of 'native' Filipino migrants, on the other hand, is deeply informed by class formation and the working class profile of the majority of entrants. In Chapter 3, I discussed the cultural geography of western Sydney where Filipinos are subsumed under the Australian working class. Most studies on the migrant focus on their racial otherness but not as significant constituents in the labour force for Australian and global capital. In 1994, one quarter of the work force was born outside Australia while two-thirds of this figure is from non-English speaking

background (Fieldes 1996, 26). In 1996, a total of 44.1 per cent of immigrants from Southeast Asia worked in 'blue collar' jobs where Filipinos have a huge membership (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006). The table below shows some indicators of the Filipino community's economic standing based on the 2006 census:

	Philippine-born average	Australian-born average
	\$538	\$488
Educational Attainment		
Degree & higher qualification	36%	16%
Advanced diploma & diploma	5%	5%
Certificate level	11.9%	17%
Attending educ. institution	8%	8%
Employment		
Labour force participation	73.1%	64.6%
Unemployment rate	5.2%	5.2%
Participation by Industry		
Labourers	21%	11%
Clerks and admin workers	19%	15%
Professionals	18%	20%
Technicians and trades	11%	14%
Communication and personnel	11%	9%
Machine operators and drivers	8%	7%
Sales workers	8%	10%
Managers	5%	13%

Table 6 Selected statistics between Philippine-born and Australian-born by educational attainment, employment and participation by industry, 2006

The figures above are indicative of decent income for Filipino migrants, a fairly high level of qualifications and active participation in the labour force, yet overrepresentation in labouring jobs. This, however, is not specific to Filipinos but to all migrants from non-English speaking backgrounds. Tierney (1996), Collins (1991) and Hage (1998) have all commented on multiculturalism's formation of an immigrant working class that maintains the rule of the elite in Australia. The forging of a white working class unity and identity at the expense of race discrimination is the centre of class-based critique of multiculturalism. The perpetuation of inequality of wealth is anchored partly on the availability of an 'ethnic' workforce; the division of

the working class along racial lines (Callinicos 1993, 34). This is something that did not escape Marx who saw English proletarian hostility against the immigrant Irish (in Callinicos 1993, 35). The demand for migrants to integrate into the national family is fraught with class tension in the entry of migrants into the Australian proletariat who, in turn, imagine a common identity with white capitalist class. What is dismissively taken as the docility of migrant bodies as fodder to low-paid jobs, as putting up with labour abuse and as timid towards unionism undermines the potential of these migrants to radicalise white unionism. At the same time, one cannot assume that just because they come from the third-world—with a possibly strong socialist landscape—immigrants are predisposed to labour activism. While they are almost already class-configured before migration, this configuration may as well be conservative and reactionary. It would be difficult to radicalise a sector of migrants who think that on-the-job racial discrimination is an improvement over the smaller income back home. Michael Reich's bargaining power theory reads racial and class dilemmas such as this as benefitting, in the last instance, capitalists "'whether or not they have individually or collectively practiced racial discrimination'" (in Omi and Winant 1994, 31).

Moreover, the flattening of class struggle by multiculturalism continues as those from non-English speaking backgrounds are encouraged to practice culture through food and music but not in socially proactive measures (Tierney 1996, 103-05). Multiculturalism effaces a deeply working class history of Australia and, alarmingly, renders immigrants as 'non-political', 'non-class based' and 'ahistorical' in the process where a regime of discipline produces a compliant working class (Tierney 1996, 97). Without being deductive, I was a participant-observer in two major labour

mobilisations in Sydney and Adelaide which I could describe as a singularly 'white' affair. However, there are formations such as Migrante Australia—an activist group originally from the Philippines—that advance labour and civil rights of migrant workers and link up with established Australian unions (discussed in Chapter 8). This ethnicisation of labour collectivism is response to the racialisation of labour itself in most 'multicultural' advanced societies. The intimate ties between racialisation of groups of people and the continued accumulation of wealth in capitalist system explain the continued divisiveness fostered between supposedly one working class; this intimacy between race and class is also a flattening of the 'basic contradictions of historical capitalism' (Wallerstein 1991, 84).

A Filipino migrant's insertion into the Australian working class and her understanding of this insertion necessitates an unpacking as to how class is performed from an 'alien' position. Many perceive that their 'proletarianisation' is due to 'de-skilling' because overseas qualifications are not recognised in Australia. On the other hand, migrants may interpret the improvement in their standard of living *not* as an effect of the disparity between the Philippines and Australia in global capitalism but as upward mobility in their social class driven by neoliberal ethos of self-propelled growth. A 'mail-order bride' factory worker, for instance, may read car ownership and access to a tennis club as 'middle-classness'. In my interviews, it was common to hear expressions of accumulation: properties, leisure, mobility, social capital, souvenir magnets on the fridge, to mention a few. This, I suggest, leads the working class Filipinos to believe that they may have crossed into the *petit-bourgeoisie*; an illusory assessment ignoring the specificities of white middle-classness. The middle class posturing in the Philippines previously unattainable to some migrants

is not only navigable but also possibly surpassable. The result is a gap: a disparity between economic class (in dollars) and social aspirations harnessed in the old country. While the acquisition of social and cultural capital may necessarily follow affluence, there is often the 'lag' which characterises the incongruity between a cashed up migrant and Filipino middle-classness. The 'lack of manners' attributed by an interviewee to 'native' Filipinos—particularly the 'Blacktown Filipinos'—point to this 'lag' that new money cannot buy.⁸⁵ The ferocity of class-consciousness among Filipino-Australians—further exacerbated by the 'mail-order bride' cringe—is seen in the struggle for 'taste' in ethnic newspapers, and the imagining of the middle class in a literary anthology.

Old antagonisms and Spanish-Filipino Australians

In January 1977's issue of *Bagumbayan*, the first ever newspaper/magazine of the Filipino community in Sydney and possibly in Australia, an article 'The Filipino in Australia' described the profile of the emerging ethnic group. With only 4,000 Philippine families, according to the article, a large proportion of this number was Spanish-Filipino *mestizos*: 'those who could pass themselves off as white and thus become acceptable within the framework of the old White Australia Policy' ('The Filipino in Australia' 1977).⁸⁶ In the 2006 census, 5.8 per cent (7,820) declared Spanish ancestry amongst Philippine-born migrants. The so-called post-White Australia 'first

⁸⁵ Instead of using here terms such as 'social capital', 'cultural capital' or other terms that convey my point, I used De Ubago's characterisation of 'native' Filipinos in Australia, referring to their uncouth behaviour (Benjie de Ubago, interview, March 8, 2010). The flexibility of her term implicates the class prejudice behind the demand for proper comportment; this raises the point whether her comment is classist primarily and racial secondarily and not the other way around.

⁸⁶ Although the article did not specify its writer, it is most likely that Larry Rivera, editor, wrote the feature. During our interview on April 6, 2010 in Hampton Park, New South Wales, he stated that he did almost everything for the publication: typesetting, photoengraving, lay outting, writing, editing, proofreading and financing.

wave' migration could sensibly be dated in the 1960s until the 1970s.⁸⁷ The biopower of whiteness that characterised early migration to Australia from southern European countries like Greece and Italy had never really been singled out as the motivation for Philippine-born *mestizo* immigrants. 'Passing off' as a symptom of racial governmentality was not something 'officially' related to Filipinos who are often imagined as 'southeast Asian', 'Malay-skinned', 'non-white' and 'non-English speaking'. An interesting result of this research is the identification of the Spanish-Filipino *mestizo* as a kind of immigrant 'excess' that silently slips past categories of racial groupings. *Mestizos* are a fluid, shifting identity in contemporary Australia yet at the same time a collective that is clearly moored to its historical past of colonisation, migration and settlement in feudal Philippines.

The *Bagumbayan* article was critical of the *mestizo* for the double racialising effect they inflict to already-sexualised 'natives':

No matter whether they were less or more educated than the later Filipino migrants, they tended to move in their own *exclusivistic* circles, spouting off their *bastardized* Castilian, and *looking down* their noses at the other Filipinos of darker skin. But while the majority of Filipinos are appalled by the fact of racism in other people, they have generally learned to shutter out the uglier sides of life—*living sometimes in a dream world of their own imagination*. (Bagumbayan 1977, 2-3; my emphasis)

The 'exclusivistic' character of the Spanish-Filipino could, however, be interpreted differently by those who 'belong' to this group. One such reading is Eduardo Ugarte's: that they are 'not united' at all or do they attempt to be exclusive as

⁸⁷ Raul Perterra, academic, moved to Sydney as a young man with his family in the mid-1960s. Eduardo Ugarte, a scion of the San Miguel Corporation's executive elite, immigrated with his family during the early days of the Martial Law. Television director and journalist Jaime Kelly Pimentel arrived in 1971 with his family; wife Isabel Crame, another *mestiza*. Benjie de Ubago also came to Australia in 1971. Purita Echevarria de Gonzalez arrived in 1970 together with husband and four children. Caloy Loyzaga, Filipino basketball icon, is a known *mestizo* immigrant. In another narrative by Priscilla Esguerra Bleach, she recalled how in 1964, 'the only Filipinos we found were the 'White' Spanish migrants (*mestizos*)' (in Agmata-Tucker and Pattugalan 2002, 10).

something deliberate. Ugarte who himself comes from a wealthy family has the idea of *mestizo* communities as cellular: 'networks of families who are either relatives or old friends from the Philippines, which stretches from Gosford to Sydney...smallish networks bound together by kinship and friendship ties' (Eduardo Ugarte, email message to author, October 20, 2010). The accusation of Rivera that they live in a 'dream world' may have come from an organisation way back in the 1970s that Benjie de Ubago, one-time editor, suggested as mostly *mestizos* but without naming the group as such. She even recalled how her mother and father have its 'membership cards' (Benjie de Ubago, email message to author, October 20, 2010). The organisation does not mention 'Spanish-Filipino' in its name because while Spanish-Filipinos are different in colour...they did consider themselves as Filipinos' (Benjie de Ubago, email message to author, October 20, 2010). She thinks that while there were comments similar to those made in *Bagumbayan* that Spanish-Filipinos 'might have felt they were better than the other Filipinos', it just boils down to a simple case of not liking the 'native' migrants' '*yabangan*' (arrogant banter); the 'lack of manners'; and 'clannish[ness]' (Benjie de Ubago, interview, March 8, 2010).

There is a conflation here of the racial and the cultural: *we are not Filipinos that is why we are different*. This 'inherent' difference puts *mestizos* in the spectrum closer to white Australians. De Ubago said 'we really did not feel different from Australians' so it was easy to 'mix and mingle' (Benjie de Ubago, email message to author, October 20, 2010). The *mestizo* being 'almost white' gives them the confidence and allows them easier access to the mainstream. More over, de Ubago thinks mixing with Australians was their way out of the battle of the 'egos' as played out in the organisations' petty quarrels or outdoing each other which is, loosely

speaking, 'native', opposed to the more relaxed *mestizos*. De Ubago related how this clash of egos where fairly successful members of the community outdo each other is a symptom of their minority status—big fish in a very small pond—as the condition of their invisibility. The effortlessness by which Spanish-Filipinos entered the host society, which in great measure was brought about by their good education and thus better handle of the English language, and the presumed wealth that go with social and cultural capital, means that the 'crab mentality' that accompanies clashing egos does not purportedly hound the *mestizo* class.

The Filipino community in Australia is sensitive to the intersections of class and race that resurrect old antagonisms. The resentment of the *indio* against the feudal-comprador class of the whites and the *mestizos* in the Philippines is maintained but not in ways that follow the more rigid race relations back home. While there are *mestizo* cliques 'some of whom fantasise that they're still in Manila,' migration has armed 'natives' with some social and economic capital that narrows the gap between the old division (Eduardo Ugarte, email message to author, October 20, 2010). If *mestizos* play golf in the Philippines, so can 'natives' in Australia. The *mestizo* class, apart from its racial capital, does not possess as much symbolic power in diaspora; the colonialist terror *mestizos* used to invoke has lost its traction in Australia where they themselves are *not* really white. More so, there are a few *mestizos* who marry into enterprising 'native' families where racial capital is 'humbled' by diasporic money. This narrowing of the gap, however, is relatively insignificant compared to the class and racial re-calibration manifested in the 'disappearance' of Chinese-Filipinos and Spanish *mestizos* experience. The memoir of Purita Echevarria de

Gonzalez is a good example of the finer divisions and internal tension that describe Filipino identities under the conditions of diaspora.

Old Manila: 'What those times were!'

I was able to experience first-hand the advantages but also the limits of a small community with 'exclusivistic' membership in my search for the writer of *Manila: A Memoir of Love & Loss* (2000). Because the book is almost mainstream, Purita Echeverría de Gonzalez's memoir is one of the very first titles by a Filipino I had heard of when I embarked on this research. I read book reviews of it, although short, in *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Sun Herald* long before I found other migrant publications. While it was easy to find Gonzalez's Hale & Iremonger-published book, contacting her was not as easy as it was to track Filipinos in the western Sydney enclave. In the 'native' Filipino community, Gonzalez is unknown; asking my informants yielded no results. It took a few introductions to *mestizos* through the grapevine before I secured an interview with Gonzalez.

Manila is not the only attempt of Spanish-Filipinos in Australia to document a unique part of their hybrid heritage in postcolonial Philippines. However, it is only Gonzalez's that was printed in Australia by an established publisher at five thousand copies and then successfully promoted in the media and sold in bookshops. With 'no career, so to speak', no professional writing experience, Gonzalez embarked on writing the history of her family's pre-war years in 'enchanted' Manila, the city's subsequent destruction in the hands of the Japanese and then Americans 'liberating' the city. 'I wrote it for my family,' she said (Purita Echevarria de Gonzalez,

interview, May 17, 2010). But positive comments on her manuscript made her entertain the idea of sharing it with the public. Unfortunately, a letter from David Rosenberg of Simon & Schuster, stated: 'I regret that we don't think we could sell enough copies to make publication viable, simply because of the lack of Australian interest in the Philippines. I still find this hard to understand'.⁸⁸ The second attempt by Gonzalez was with Hale & Iremonger.⁸⁹ In the interview, she recalled how swiftly everything happened which convinced her that the 'publication of that book was fate'. She gave the office a call at around five in the afternoon when secretaries are no longer around (a key detail, according to her).

One of the big bosses picked up the phone and I had a good conversation with him. I was told to send two chapters and then after one week, a deal has been settled. I was not asked to change anything except for the Australian spelling...I was given a satisfying contract.
(Purita Echevarria de Gonzalez, interview, May 17, 2010)

The ease by which *Manila* was published compared to other 'native' Filipino works is singularly impressive for the following reasons. Gonzalez did not have to dig in her own pockets to finance the publication of her book, thus, carrying the stigma of self-published books. Second, *Manila* did not have to face the censure of grammatical and stylistic editing suffered by Cabucos (see Chapter 5) and Michael Estepa, a young Filipino from Liverpool, Sydney who published *Purged by Darkness* (2004).⁹⁰

⁸⁸ This document was shown to me by Gonzalez. I was given permission to copy the letter dated September 10, 1999.

⁸⁹ Hale & Iremonger was a Sydney-based publishing house founded by John Iremonger, who later joined Allen and Unwin, and Sylvia Hale, a Greens MP. It enjoyed a respectable run with a good list of titles.

⁹⁰ Noting his 'lack of and problematic writing techniques', major publishers in Sydney like Random House, Hippo Books and Harper Collins rejected the enthusiasm of Estepa who at that time had just finished Year 10 (Michael Estepa, interview, August 15, 2010). His gangster novel is about the life and times of Dailo Kai Li, 'of Asian background', as a rising member of a Victoria-based underground syndicate.

Although Gonzalez stayed home and took care of her four boys and husband, her flawless writing honed under the Assumption sisters more than sixty years ago took care of the style that the Australian establishment found acceptable. Gonzalez has such profound faith in her elite education in the Philippines which she thought 'is better than in Australia'.⁹¹ Her fiction—untutored by creative writing institutions—is 'beautifully written', 'a splendid work' (Kraus 2001); a palatable read that does not have the 'idiomatic quirks' of Cabucos (Stephen Matthews, interview, July 1, 2010), the 'dense' and 'blunted' prose of Bobis (Goldsworthy 2008), or the 'Filipino English' of Verde. Gonzalez's unchallenged acceptance into Australian literature is exemplified by Paul Kraus' (2001) evaluation of *Manila*: 'a significant contribution to the literature of multicultural Australia and in particular the literature of the immigrant experience'. To claim that *Manila* is the Filipino community's representative work in the pool of Australia's richly heterogeneous migrant literature is both correct and wide of the mark. The autobiographical work is loud in its identification with the 'Filipino': its title, *Manila*, its subject matter and Gonzalez's introduction of herself as born and bred in the Philippines. She has shown that it is possible that a Philippine-born can be read in Australia and by (white) Australians; to pass off using a defective set of identities is unnecessary.

Gonzalez's creative nonfiction, however, celebrates her hybridity more than anything else; her *mestiza*/Basque/Castellano-speaking/Filipino identification is the conditional imperative that guided the workings of her young life in pre-war Manila in the company of family and friends defined by their wealth, social status, linguistic

⁹¹ Queen Regent Maria Cristina sent the Religious of the Assumption in 1892 to the Philippines to pioneer women's education in the colony. Marie Eugenie Milleret de Brou instilled among its students 'character formation of the young women in line with the Assumption philosophy' (Assumption College 2010). The school, based in Makati City, is known to be the breeding ground for young females who come from the wealthiest families in the Philippines.

difference and racial hybridity. Her world of distinction was to a great extent highlighted by the proximity of those around her: the entourage of 'native' *katulong* (servants), the Filipino acquaintances made during the tumultuous war years, loud and unmannered GIs, and the ruthless Japanese soldiers—all of whom are subjects marked by race, sex and class. Purita's hybridity (pun intended)—much coated by the many layers of distinction her family had accumulated under the bureaucracy of colonialism—is truly a 'Filipino' story.

However, to cast *Manila* as representative of the Filipino in Australian multiculturalism is an overestimation. It is an aberration in the migrant print culture's production and consumption of literature, most of which is self-published, unpromoted, underexposed, undistributed, 'unreadable' for the mainstream, and with very minimal sales. More over, 'literature of the immigrant experience' does not quite capture *Manila*. It is neither a narrative of migration nor is it the kind of story that typifies 'Filipinoness'. On the contrary, the narrative is a throwback to a bygone era with the lavish settings of Manila's *alta de sociedad* creating a nostalgic past of the author's Spanish Basque ancestors where children sip 'thick sweet chocolate' and then men in between 'gulps of cognac' utter '*Que tiempos aquellos!*' ('What times those were!') (Gonzalez 2000, 18).

The world that Gonzalez depicted in 'her' *Manila* is precisely the system that perpetuated the Philippine 'great divide' long after the Spanish were gone. The racialism, elitism and even the patriarchy that undergird the seduction sold by *Manila* plague Filipinos in very real terms—then and now. The transnational leap of this 'great divide' between classes and races is manifested in the literature that Filipino-

Australians produce. None of the Spanish-Filipino identified autobiographical works of Joaquin Garcia (2001), Anna Maria Calero (2001) and Gonzalez really talked about Australia; this could be what Ugarte called the continuation of the *mestizo* 'fantasy' where migration has left them untouched. Therefore, the sentiments expressed in *Bagumbayan* way back in 1977 were an early symptom of the old antagonism, roused but not exactly replicated. The racial privileging that has defined the *mestizo*—the arrogance of being almost white and the envy of those who are not—has resurfaced in Sydney more than three decades later.

Jaime Pimentel, whose contribution to migrant print culture is discussed in Chapter 3, questions that invisible line that separates 'us' from 'them', the perpetuation of the logic that 'native' Filipinos are inherently different from Spanish-Filipinos such as de Ubago's views. For Pimentel, who is part Spanish, Irish and Filipino, it is regrettable that 'brown-skinned Filipinos who started coming later appeared to have lumped all white-skinned Filipinos into one category: Spanish-Filipino' (Jaime Pimentel, email message to author, October 26, 2010). He insightfully raised the question whether 'there was such a thing as a particular Spanish-Filipino immigration' because many of those boxed into the category were actually part Italian, German and even Greek; he was part Irish but then lumped as *tisoy*, a colloquialism for *mestizo* (Jaime Pimentel, email message to author, October 26, 2010). It was not only the sameness of complexion that led 'native' Filipinos to this pooling but also because 'most fair-skinned *Pinoys* spoke Spanish as a second language' back then whether they be of American, Swiss or German extraction. Pimentel further argued that the resentment against fair-skinned Filipinos as an extension of the dislike, and I must add, envy, of the *mestizo* and what they stand for, does not apply to any other

non-Spanish *mestizos*, especially 'not to those with American bloodlines' (Jaime Pimentel, email message to author, October 26, 2010). This distinction is clear in the discursive construction of the *mestizo* as evil—from the caricature of the voracious Spanish cleric to the oppressive landowners and their indolent heirs who ruled the country for three centuries—has affected who would be resented and who would escape such treatment.

This brings the question of imaging the community in diaspora: the reconstructive power of Australia-as-home to redefine class and social relations among Philippine-born migrants. I asked Gonzalez if she received support from the Filipino community in Sydney, implying that this is her community, too:

From the Filipino community? *Nothing*. Maybe because of the lack of commonality. No ill feelings. They are not interested in buying. It was featured in the *Philippine Community Herald* but no article at all, just a picture. I sent promotional press to relevant Filipino organisations all over Australia, in all states, but no one responded (Purita Echevarria de Gonzalez, interview, May 17, 2010).

The cold reception of *Manila* from 'Blacktown Filipinos' may be read either as the 'resentment' that Pimentel talked about or 'the lack of commonality' which Gonzalez and De Ubago hinted at. Both reasons are rooted in the racial essentialisms of the colonial regime. Underlying the logic of 'lack of commonality' is the implication that 'native' Filipinos would support 'native' cultural production but not hers, which is not the case either. Why read what excludes and racialises them to perpetuate the racial divide even in diaspora? It is not only that *Manila* portrays 'natives' as servants and chauffeurs, Tagalog as the language for the *katulong* (servant), and Manila as the city designed for the elite, it presents a world of comfort that sits on the very wound of Filipino misery. While Australian readers were bemused

by the long-gone world of old Manila at the turn of the century's sugarcane boom, Filipino-Australians just might find the narrative a digging of old wounds, an insult that refreshes the indignity of being *indio* in Las Islas Filipinas.

The relative visibility of *Manila* and the introduction of Gonzalez to Australia through Hale & Iremonger's significant efforts to promote the book—she was interviewed on television by ABC and SBS and on the radio—then later the positive critical responses from critics made it a grand time to be 'Filipino' in Australia. In all the literature regarding Gonzalez, the Filipino was not once associated with the 'mail-order bride'. In short, *Manila* was able to steer clear of the racist and sexualist dominant discourses that haunted the community. This is the power of Gonzalez's hybridity and elite past: a combination that even a racist society could not brush aside. However, the question whether Gonzalez's work contributed to the betterment of the Filipino standing in Australia by some measure of fascination and desirability of the Philippines is rather a tricky one. The good reviews *Manila* gathered from Australian critics are not translatable to the general Filipino-Australian community, more particularly, not the 'mail-order bride' sector through which it has gained infamy. It is as if there are two Philippines here. 'I got very good reviews one could wish for but it did nothing in Australia on the image of the Filipino' (Purita Echevarria de Gonzalez, interview, May 17, 2010).

The disconnection between the world of Gonzalez and 'other Filipinos' is so vast that she does not think she sold copies of her book to the community. *Manila* found its way to the members of her Bridge Club in Sydney and to members of the Philippines' elite via informal distribution by friends: Zobel, Roces, Ledesma, Ortigas,

Madrigal, Kalaw, Rocha, amongst other 'exclusivistic' surnames.⁹² It can be presumed that based on her account of the swift spread of *Manila* among Manila's elites, a looking-glass narrative so to speak, Filipinos who celebrated the book are those who shared her young life in the Philippines, not those she just happened to share a city with after emigrating. This positioning of *Manila* is further strengthened by Gonzalez's own self-identity. She said that she 'feel[s] very Australian'; however, 'inside of me, I am Spanish' (Purita Echevarria de Gonzalez, interview, May 17, 2010). Gonzalez neither pointed out the 'Filipino' in her despite being born, raised and raising her family in the Philippines, nor did she identify with her Basque origin (singing Basque hymns as a child, hearing sermons in Euskari and being called *roja* by pro-Franco classmates). What may seem to be contradictions in her over-determination as *mestiza* and later on as migrant are reinforcements of Gonzalez's power to 'disappear' in Australia and to demonstrate how the transnational 'great divide' in diaspora operates. Living as a 'native' amongst 'Filipinos' vis-à-vis as an 'ethnic' migrant in Australia are two 'borderland' subjectivities that are kept and maintained because *and* despite of diasporic geography.

Imagining the Filipino-Australian middle class

The arguments made so far on the re-calibrating of Philippine class structure in Australia as migration reconfigures the social relations of people and their access to capital, gain more traction in an anthology's imagining of a middle class in diaspora.

⁹² Gonzalez approached National Bookstore, the biggest chain in the Philippines, to distribute *Manila*, an attempt on her part to reach greater readership. In a letter dated 18 January 2003, the bookstore turned down the proposition to import *Manila* because of 'economic crisis'. It did not work out for *Manila* to be released in the Philippines. Upon my suggestion that a Spanish version of *Manila* may be a good idea, she said she no longer has any plans to write or do another project. Gonzalez was 84 years old at the time of the interview (Purita Echevarria de Gonzalez, interview, May 17, 2010).

The 'middle space' that the first 'official' anthology constructed is the desire to claim the community's place in multiculturalism with the legitimacy that comes with institutional support and literariness 'as we know it'. 'Official', a term I use to describe *Salu-salo: In Conversation with Filipinos: An Anthology of Philippine-Australian Writings*, comes from its self-promotion as the collection that gathered 'key writers and thinkers' of the community (Capili and Cheeseman 2008, 8).⁹³ Although *Salu-salo* shares with other anthologies government support, its institutional imprint is more mainstream as manifested in the quality of printing, its publishers and the two 'cultural houses' that endorsed the project. It was even annexed to Sydney Writers' Festival programming. Published by Casual Powerhouse (Liverpool) and Blacktown Arts Centre and edited by Jose Wendell Capili and John Cheeseman, *Salu-salo* avoided the self-published, guerrilla-editing that characterised 'community-based' publications. This institutional backing is one of the most important details in the anthology's making. The anthology is also an instalment in a series of volumes published and coordinated by Casula Powerhouse and Blacktown Arts Centre that included Vietnamese-Australian (Hoang 2004) and Lao-Australian (Viravong 2007) writings: a kind of legitimation practice that situates *Salu-salo*'s importance within the context of immigrant literature.

As soon as I knew about the anthology, I immediately started securing a copy. This does not mean, however, that it is easily available like *Manila*. My search for a copy is informative for what it reveals regarding the place of Filipino-Australian

⁹³ There had been collections put together by Filipino-Australians long before *Salu-salo*. Collections such as *Simbuyo (Passion)* in 2005 and *Saglit (Moments)* in 2002, both edited by Noonee Doronila; *Age of Wisdom: A Collection of Essays, Poems and Recipes* (2002), and the much earlier *Ani (Harvest): Selected writings of Filipino-Australian elderly in Victoria* (1997) are examples. Capili, however, believes that *Salu-salo* is 'probably the first Australia-wide anthology' (Jose Wendell Capili, interview online, March 14, 2010).

writing in particular and of multicultural literature in general. More importantly, it hinted at the incompatibility between Blacktown—the working class 'ghetto'—and the book's reception by those who supposedly inspired it. After searching in major libraries, I thought maybe Blacktown City libraries would hold a copy for the obvious reason. But the city has no copy of this first 'official' anthology. I contacted Casula Powerhouse to ask about buying a copy of 'Filipino-Australian anthology'; the response was a casual: we do not have a 'Fiji-Australian anthology'. At this point, I marvelled at either the inefficiency of the very institution that published it, or the general insignificance of what I thought was a landmark publication. I corresponded with Blacktown Arts Centre's reception and inquired if I could buy the book which it co-published. The answer was very satisfying: a free copy of the book would be sent to my address. Three important observations surfaced in this experience: [1] the anthology is not available in major resource centres; [2] a multicultural institution is represented by someone who does not know the difference between 'Fiji' and 'Filipino'; and [3] I received the copy for free. These observations may lead one to ask: who gets to read this 'representative' anthology? How do social class issues figure in the production of this collection?

Although on the whole the project is an attempt to 'make Australia realize that there ARE Filipinos in Australia', and that literature is a most effective conduit of raising cultural sensitivity, the entire collection seems to reflect on the Filipino-Australian experience with disengagement; a neat selection of everything and everybody (Jose Wendell Capili, interview online, March 14, 2010; emphasis original). The disconnect I detected is based on the whole procedure of anthologising that guided the then-PhD student Capili and Cheeseman, the cultural manager; a

formulaic procedure that not only adheres to a concept of 'anthology' as selective of the 'good' quality and institutionally accepted, but also to rules that segregate Filipino-Australian community members into two: those who can and those who cannot. It is in this light that *Salu-salo* is an acutely pregnant site of class analysis as writing is praxis of distinction-making. 'We privileged good writing,' said Capili. Those who write 'good' literature had to pass through a selection process that involved blind refereeing by three to five 'experts across Southeast Asia and Australia many times,' claims Capili (Jose Wendell Capili, interview online, March 14, 2010). The featured writers in the collection were chosen based on the following 'coordinates':

Nationality	Filipinos who are/were either Australian citizens or residents
Stature as writers	these writers have been published in reputable books, journals and anthologies in Australia and/or overseas; Many have also received prizes, grants and citations for their works in Australia and elsewhere
Educational attainment	most of these writers are university- educated/received education from reputable educational institutions
Geographical location	these writers are residing/ have resided in Australia
Occupation	these writers are professionals
Literary language	these writers write in English/write to be translated in English in Australia; some are bilingual or multilingual

Table 7 Coordinates used in the selection of writings in *Salu-Salo* (2008) (Capili and Cheeseman, 2008, 14-15)

With such strict 'coordinates', it is no wonder that only eleven authors are featured out of the alleged sixty-plus 'submissions'. But the decision to print a slim volume is a 'practical' move because it would be 'difficult to sell a thick anthology'. However, to include more authors does not negate what has been established as *Salu-salo*'s quest towards exclusivity from beginning to end. Capili said there was a call for 'submission' but it was not publicised, a contradiction in terms: 'we did not want the call to be *too public*' (my emphasis). The editors then 'invited writers,

editors and scholars to nominate people', who were asked to submit and from that pool they managed to choose eleven (Jose Wendell Capili, email message to author, 14 March 2010). The not 'too public' call for submission meant nomination and invitation to a select group of people. Despite the project's vision to have an 'Australia-wide' representation of the members of the community, the editors restricted the 'call' for submission. This cabbala-like procedure— unsurprisingly— yielded a rather predictable result where the most illustrious names emerged; most of whom Capili featured in his thesis. The 'coordinates' set based on the value-judgements of Capili is a privileging of those who have already 'made it' in Australia.⁹⁴ As social and cultural capital begets more social and cultural capital, the ones who caught the attention of Capili were those who have considerable investment in the cultural side of Filipino ethnic community-building, or, rather those who have done so *outside* it.

However, the stratification that *Salu-salu* accentuated via its elitist 'coordinates' is also a victim of its own phantasm. While it is clear that Capili targeted the most esteemed Filipino-Australians in the field, one wonders why the 'white-accommodated', more mainstream authors did not make it to the collection; that is, if they bothered to submit. Arlene Chai and Ranulfo Concon are names not found in the anthology. Chai, discussed earlier, who earned her comparisons with Isabel Allende and Amy Tan, is recognisably the pride of the community (Random House 2010), and Concon is also a 'white-published' Filipino-Australian who fits the 'coordinates' but did not make it in *Salu-salu*. Their absence in the definitive, 'first

⁹⁴ Capili himself admitted that he was the one 'assigned to focus on the manuscript' while Cheeseman and Cuong Phu Le, the former Asian-Australian Affairs officer, managed the finances and other aspects of the publication (Jose Wendell Capili, email message to author, 14 March 2010).

Australia-wide anthology' is not surprising and yet somehow unexpected. The exclusion principle *Salu-salo* anthology applied to its selection of 'good writing' that denied access to those without the prescribed 'stature', 'educational attainment', 'publication', 'profession' and 'literary language' worked against itself. In its elitist imaginary of distinction, *Salu-salo*—literally a sharing in a banquet—weeded out those 'uncoordinated' Filipino-Australians who may have a story to tell about migrant experience; in turn, it highlights how peripheral, how tiny it is in the gamut of Australian literature where partaking in the feast is by invitation only.

Salu-salo's inclination towards 'good writing' and exclusive 'coordinates' is further made problematic not only by the homogeneity of its writers but also by the content it chose. These authors also 'represent the contexts and nature of Philippine migration to Australia,' says Capili, despite *Salu-salo*'s articles not subscribing to such requirement.⁹⁵ What becomes apparent here is *Salu-salo*'s notion that 'represent[ation] [of] the contexts and nature of Philippine emigration to Australia' is achievable *not* by the texts themselves. It is as if it was enough that these contributors have, at one point in their lives, lived in Australia. Ramiscal and Koo's temporary student migration is presumably under this consideration. On one hand, *Salu-salo* is inclusive by not discriminating against those whose migration is temporary: students pursuing higher degrees, travellers, workers on skilled visa 457, or maybe even relatives on tourist visas doing childcare work for their nephews, nieces

⁹⁵ In Noel Ramiscal's poems 'If you read this', 'Nanda Devi', and 'The Kiss'; none deal with the Philippine immigrant experience. Another example, Crystal Koo's 'Benito Salazar's Last Creation', is about the 'Jorge Luis Borges of the Philippines', creator of the 'holonovel' and his encounter with young Samantha; there is no element of Filipino-Australian emigration in the long short story. Before her stint in Sydney, Koo studied at the University of the Philippines in the department where Capili is a professor, while Ramiscal is a childhood friend.

and grandchildren. In short, it did not matter what visa or residency one holds as long as one is also published, educated, professional and literary.

The editors, on the other hand, also expected to receive submissions in other Philippine languages but they did not get any; 'the submissions were all in English' (Jose Wendell Capili, interview online, March 14, 2010.) One would question the tokenism of this gesture when Capili has set his strict standards in such a manner. With such coordinates, who would seriously write in major or minor Philippine languages when English is not really an option but rather mandatory for inclusion? Elderly Filipino migrants in Victoria were able to put together a collection where a considerable number of essays and poems are in Filipino and other Philippine languages (see Chapter 7). However, they fall outside the 'coordinates'. The openness set for language, citizenship and residency, I argue, constitutes false declarations of inclusivity that characterise *Salu-salo*, a first 'Australia-wide' from the community, financed by multicultural government arms, prepared by a PhD student, and founded on 'coordinates' of literary elitism and personal relationships, a transnational effect of the 'literary *barkada*' that shapes Philippine literary production.⁹⁶ The Filipino middle class ethics represented in its literature in English has transnationally crossed borders where an anthology claiming representation bypassed the class and cultural specificity of diaspora to imagine a middle class reading for working class Filipino-Australians. The anthology is a product of transporting Manila cultural and literary elitism to western Sydney. Its absence in libraries and the fact that only four

⁹⁶ '*Barkada*' is a term that is translatable as 'gang' or 'circle of friends'; however, 'literary *barkada*' connotes a kind of clique, a ring of people who not only enjoy each others' company but also advances their lot. 'Literary *barkada*' is a term of Gemino Abad to refer to his group of writer-friends, the Philippine Literary Arts Council (in Hau 2000, 184). I suggest that the *barkada* being the basic unit of structure in Manila's literary production has a transnational effect; publishing people from the same department, or the same alma mater.

amongst all of my interviewees know about it (they also happened to be canonised in the collection) is a symptom of the larger community's indifference.

Despite the attempt to valorise the middle class culturati—not quite Arlene Chai but not Aida Verde either—*Salu-salo* has met the resistance of 'Blacktown Filipino' sensibilities. While it can be argued that the coordinates the editors designed are themselves an anti-Blacktown safeguard, the posturing that *Salu-salo* only published the 'best' among Filipino-Australian writing operates on the same logic of proving to Australia that *we have writers, too, because we are middle class*. More so, the grandstanding of *Salu-salo* undermines the many efforts of Filipino-Australian migrants to produce literature since the 1980s. Not only was it not an 'Australia-wide' effort, the very claim of a 'national' scope does not make much sense in a country as huge as Australia with a Filipino migrant population that does not cohere into one unit.

Para sa masa, para sa 'mail-order bride'
[For the masses, for the 'mail-order brides']

Ethnographic fieldwork with Filipino-Australians has prepared me to answer 'standard' questions such as: [1] *Taga-saan ka sa atin?* (Where are you from back home?); [2] *Saan ka nag-aral?* (Where did you study [read: university]?). [3] *Anong ginagawa mo dito sa Australia?* (What are you doing here in Australia?) and [4] *Ano ka may scholarship?* (You have a scholarship, right?) Almost always I have answered these same questions in a variety of situations to which my reply is 'standard' as well: [1] Manila; [2] University of the Philippines; and [3] PhD at the University of Sydney; and [4] Ford Fellowship. As a researcher, I am informed that these queries are not

random ways of getting to know someone who, in turn, gathers information about them. The frequency of the questions is telling how answers to these questions are significant to my subjects. However, more critically, what these questions ascertain is my class positioning: where one has lived and schools attended. Question number three is, moreover, a mapping, a categorising of one's migrant grouping (a worker, a student, a bride perhaps). The last question that I always had to clarify is a rather awkward way to validate how I could possibly afford thousands of tuition fees. As if it were a justification of my stay, the clueless Filipino would finally ask away: '*Eh di magtatrabajo ka sa Ford pag natapos ka?*' (So will you work for Ford when you finished?) I narrate this revealing facet of my interface with Filipino-Australians because it is reflective of the ability of migrants to 'read' each other in relation to their class status hinted by the social and cultural capital they possess.

On a recent trip to Spain, a souvenir shop clerk and a waitress on separate occasions, after the initial greetings, asked me a question Australians ask me as well: 'Where are you from?' *Manila*. 'No, where are you *really* from?' *Manila*. With a bit of irritation, they asked: '*Saan ka based?*' (Where are you based?) In Abu Dhabi, duty-free shops are mostly administered by Filipinos; I say 'mostly' because I hear Tagalog and other Philippine vernacular in every shop. In those shops, to my surprise, I was routinely ignored. I realised a few things with these encounters: [1] that Filipinos do not think Filipinos could travel; [2] Filipinos find themselves and others only as labour migrants and nothing else; and [3] labour migrants position themselves against non-labour migrant Filipinos in public social settings. This deftness in assessing, placing, affiliating is an ability harnessed back 'home' but nevertheless refined under the conditions of Filipinos' underclass status in diaspora.

Class tensions in diaspora also manifest in ethnic newspapers. During interviews, I asked what newspaper is serving the community best. Some of them said 'none', a few said *Bayanihan News* is faring better than *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* (TPCHN); but quite a number agreed that TPCHN has been doing a terrible job in its role of 'representing' the Filipino community. TPCHN is singled out for its poor quality, its disregard for journalism's rules, and its crass commercialism. For Dino Crescini of *Philippine Sentinel*, 'nobody really found it interesting; pages are full of pictures. Is this the kind of mentality that Filipinos have in Australia?' (Dino Crescini, interview, February 16, 2010). Benjie de Ubago said that TPCHN 'lacks professionalism. *Bayanihan News* is better' (Benjie de Ubago, interview, March 8, 2010). Aida Morden, editor at the time of the interview, expressed disappointment with the way the publisher was running the newspaper and was considering resigning from her post (Aida Morden, interview, February 23, 2010).⁹⁷ The severe criticism that TPCHN is reaping is not only about Zaragoza's decision to publish whatever is handed to her: photographs, congratulatory messages, news on picnics, births, weddings, baptisms, graduations, and what-not, and more photographs.⁹⁸ I argue that, to a great extent, all Filipino ethnic newspapers are guilty of this; community newspapers are about *their* people in the first place. Even broadsheets print pictures of the famed and wealthy with wine glasses in their hands. Which among the titles that ever existed did not print photographs that could have remained in the photo album?

⁹⁷ In the September 2011 issue, Morden's name is longer in the staff box of TPCHN.

⁹⁸ She admits that her contributors are 'readers, *kaibigan* (friends), solicitors, community leaders...some are volunteers, some are invited but not paid.' The notion of contributive writing for Zaragoza is just about accommodation that at times 'may naglatampo kapag hindi napagbigyan' ['some were miffed when not accommodated'] (Evelyn Zaragoza interview, March 8, 2010).

The perception of TPCHN's crass ethics on editorial decisions is based on what it wants to project as a newspaper: 'pang-masa' ['for the people']. Today, under its masthead is the line 'The People-Oriented Newspaper'. In its final issue for 1996, it stated that TPCHN is '*ang pahayagang handang maglingkod sa mga Filipino, Filipino-Australian at kaibigan ng ating mga kababayan. ITO ANG PAHAYAGANG PANGMASA*. The newspaper for readers from all walks of life' ['it is the newspaper ready to serve the Filipino, Filipino-Australian and friends of our countrymen/women. THIS IS THE NEWSPAPER OF/FOR THE PEOPLE'] (TPCHN Nov-Dec 1996). TPCHN does not have qualms in admitting that it is *pang-masa*. In the Philippine social context, the use of the term '*masang Pilipino*' has always been associated with leftist discourses. The *masa* is the nameless, faceless, property-less lumpen-proletariat that makes up the majority of the population. The *masa* has always been imbued with the romanticism of the urban working class toiling for the capitalist elites and the peasant class for their feudal lords. They are the *bakya* (literally 'wooden clogs') crowd who line up for film star Nora Aunor's movies, the unshod who voted for ex-film star President Joseph Estrada, the toothless who await any chance to 'win' a 'livelihood showcase'.⁹⁹ The *bakya* crowd has been historicised as those who use wooden shoes to go to downtown areas. For TPCHN to attach itself to the *masa* crowd is a statement of anti-distinction; a move not unlikely for Zaragoza who grew up in Tondo, famous for its Smokey Mountain. It does not intend to make claims that

⁹⁹ Nora Aunor is the petite dramatic actress who has been considered the actress for the common people. Considered too dark amidst the plethora of *mestiza* actors, she later became a multi-awarded premier actress. Her early beginnings as someone who sold water in the railway station has always attached Aunor to the *masa* crowd, not to mention her perpetually humble way of expressing herself. (For an astute analysis of Nora Aunor's 'power', see Tadiar 2004.) 'Pangkabuhayan (livelihood) showcase' is what television noontime show dangles to its studio audience. The urban poor who troop to these shows are attracted by the possibility of getting something which they could not otherwise have in the playing field of the 'real' world. The show in ABS-CBN television Wowowee was responsible for the deaths of slightly under a hundred people in a stampede to get in the Ultra Stadium for one of its shows that promised winnings to its early patrons.

it is 'journalism'; in fact, during the interview, Zaragoza's emphasis is her role in the community: TPCHN is 'community service in its own little way' (Evelyn Zaragoza, interview, March 8, 2010).

On the other hand, *Bayanihan News* (BN), touted as the more readable newspaper with better content, chooses to be identified as the publication that encourages the recovery of Filipino culture amongst Filipino-Australians with the proliferation of cultural, historical, artistically-inclined articles. In all the pages of this title from 1999 up to 2010, historical essays, book reviews, literary criticism, socio-cultural essays, short stories, serialised novels or novelettes, among others, take up a huge space. Perdon, discussed in the previous chapter, is at the helm for these editorial choices. He said that BN emphasises 'the being of a Filipino' that is why 'we regularly publish articles on Filipino history and culture' (Renato Perdon, interview, September 7, 2009). Perdon has transnationally 'imported' essays from Ambeth Ocampo, a most readable Manila-based scholar today; he somehow coaxed Ocampo to let him re-publish them for free.¹⁰⁰ BN issues are replete with reprinted articles from National Historical Institute books, Cultural Centre of the Philippines' journals, the Chinese-Filipino *Kaisa sa Kaunlaran's* (Together in Progress) publications, National Centre for Culture and the Arts' books and journals, and few other established sources. Perdon chooses articles that may or may not interest Filipino-Australians but those written by known scholars in their field: Patrick Flores in art criticism, Imelda Cajipe-Endaya in arts, Go Bon Juan in Chinese-Filipino literature, Michael Tan in anthropology, to cite a few.

¹⁰⁰ Ambeth Ocampo has written books on the national heroes of the Philippines such as Jose Rizal, Andres Bonifacio, Juan Luna, Emilio Aguinaldo and other luminaries in Philippine history. His revelations on what breakfast Rizal ate in Spain or whether Luna really did shoot his wife in Paris have been very popular.

The 'people-oriented' TPCHN reaches more Filipinos in Australia with its 9,000 monthly circulation compared to BN's 7,000 copies, a proof of the bigger 'ethnic' capital that sustains it. (See the table comparing circulation size of all tabloids in Chapter 3.) The accusation of being virtually a catalogue of businesses is something Zaragoza fends off at the onset of our interview: '*hindi ako money-conscious*' ['I am not money-conscious'] (Evelyn Zaragoza, interview, March 8, 2002). She, however, admitted that she has 'no rules in accepting what to advertise.' Asked what her moral/political stand is on personal ads given the community's 'problem', Zaragoza said, 'I published personal ads even during the mail-order bride period' (Evelyn Zaragoza, interview, March 8, 2010). This practice has continued now; an eight-by-eight centimetre ad costs about one hundred dollars.

Australian man, 55, romantic, artistic, considerate, respectful, does not smoke, drink or gamble, seeks slim, affectionate lady (under 45 years) living in Melbourne for relationship. Please ring: Name (Phone number)'.
(TPCHN Sept 2009, 21).

Zaragoza defends her decision to accept personal ads (as recent as the September 2009 issue) as something that depended on mature adults' consensual decision to meet others. She is not accountable for what happens later on. However, for a community of sexualised citizens, the cringe that such mentality invites is expected.

Bayanihan News does not print personal ads as a matter of policy. According to Perdon, his brother, Domingo, believes that 'mail-order bride' ads are 'exploitati[ve]'. The 'mail-order bride' cringe is extensive amongst these gatekeepers. Pimentel of *Balita* said: 'I don't think I ever ran an ad like that', but the newspaper did (Jaime Pimentel, interview, March 6, 2010). The failure to remember on the part of

Pimentel is understandable for he was active in the 1980s. In the February 1985 issue of *Balita* alone there were three such advertisements:

The Philippine Connection: Asian marriage consultants:
Australia's largest Filipino marriage agency (Leslie T. Hardy)

Introlife: FILIPINO LADIES (single, separated or divorced)...
different from the ordinary. Honest discreet, and very selective

ASIAN PACIFIC Introductions: WE SPECIALISE in matching
eligible gentlemen with marriage minded Asian ladies here and
overseas. (*Philippine-Australian Balita* Feb 1985)

These overseas advertisements run against the official campaign of the Philippine government via RA 6955 that renders illegal to advertise Filipino women as brides to foreigners. These ads had been instrumental in supporting the very material existence of ethnic newspapers that 'serve' and 'build' the community. Even *The Philippine Voice* published by Evelyn Opilas promoting 'the lofty interests and ideals of the community' (TPV August 1990) resorted to this, albeit a more sanitised version: 'PENPAL: We wish to correspond with Catholic Australians' (TPV November 1990). Today, the collective amnesia on the 'mail-order bride'—a necessary forgetting—is betrayed by the very materiality of the institution of ethnic press which at certain times attempted to gentrify (ladify?) a gendered community.

The 'mail-order bride' remains the core of the post-'mail-order bride' community. The cringe and the amnesia on the issue by some of the editors is, more than anything, a symptom of the elitism that made it easy to target TPCHN as guilty of an offense that implicates everyone. It is easier to distance oneself and point fingers than to admit one's collusion. To print or not to print, that is the question, however, is not a mere question of ethical choice. The 'mail-order bride' is a disease of the poor; it is a result of unspeakable poverty in the Philippines where it is

feminised. The middle class posturing of political correctness and moral uprightness is picked up by ethnic newspaper players whose practices betray the 'lag' between middle class morality and understanding of one's class membership. The problem is that their views are *not* anti-'mail-order bride' nor are they anti-exploitation, rather they are *anti-poor*. There is a hostility against the working class, the immigrant as working class, and the images of this class; all of which manifest in the scapegoating of the 'mail-order bride': a form of class self-hatred that effaces the very core by which the community is built. For Rivera of *Bagumbayan*, the situation 'pains' him; 'so many people live in abject poverty [back home] and so we can't blame them... a blot to our reputation' (Larry Rivera, interview, April 6, 2010). That the 'blot' is gendered is hardly surprising; it plays well in constructing the victim/opportunist dichotomy derived from the sexualised and classed subjects. De Ubago remembers that she did not write about the 'mail-order bride' in *Fil-Oz Newspaper* because she 'hated that period'. She refuses to see them as 'victims' because this is a path they wilfully took (Benjie de Ubago, interview, March 8, 2010).

The 'ethical' question that the 'mail-order bride' rouses does not extend to advertisements that look for maids, carers, sitters and the likes. For a nation that has reaped a reputation as being the servant of the world—a Greek dictionary defined 'Filipineza' as 'a domestic servant or someone who performs non-essential auxiliary tasks'—ethnic newspapers in Australia have no qualms printing 'wanted nanny' or 'maid needed' (Rivera 2010). The publication of call outs for domestic services is well distributed among major titles at all times:

A fully experienced HOUSEKEEPER is required for the official residence of the *Canadian Consul General*. Duties will include general housekeeping assisting with food preparation and

serving at functions...
(TPCHN Oct-Nov 1995, 35)

HOUSEKEEPER – NANNY WANTED. Excellent accommodation offered. Must be experienced housekeeper and be fond of children...
(*Balita* July 1984, 11)

Live-in housekeeper. Wanted lady for domestic duties who likes sports and travelling. Must be healthy, non smoker and intelligent... Send photos and personals to...
(*The Philippine Herald Newspaper/Magazine* Dec-Jan 1994, 16)

WANTED CARER Elizabeth Bay Sydney...Must speak English.
(*Bayanihan News* Sept 2009, 19)

WANTED CARER – ST.IVES...Call Mr. Gordon.
(TPCHN Sept 2009, 22; capitalisation original; emphases are mine)

The Philippine Times and now-defunct *Pinoy News* do not place these advertisements in easy-to-spot boxes but as a listing under the heading 'Employment'. In *Pinoy News*' April 2008 issue, there were twenty-two out of twenty-three calls for a 'nanny-housekeeper' while in *The Philippine Times*' November 2009 issue, there were eight calls out of nine. The self-censorship accorded to that 'mail-order bride' among Filipino-Australians is not seen in their complicity as conduits of servitude. On the one hand, while some may perceive 'mail-order bride' personals, marriage introductions and other forms of interracial marriage avenues as a form of trafficking of women, this same kind of flock see nothing wrong in 'trafficking' servants, thus reinforcing the 'other' Filipino women stereotype: the maid.

The middle class posturing in the disapproval of Filipina-as-bride is paradoxically lost in their promotion of Filipina-as-maid. On the other hand, one might argue that these advertisements may not always operate between Australian/foreign nationals and Filipinos all the time, thus avoiding the conspicuous racist, sexist and elitist tangential relations. It could be that some of these calls for

housekeepers were from Filipino-Australians themselves.¹⁰¹ One cannot always assume that only 'white' households need domestic helpers and sitters. Moreover, one could argue that the use of maids and nannies is very much entrenched in the Filipino everyday life back 'home', more than it is practised in advanced countries. However, analysing the few examples given above, one cannot help but ask the question: *why did the Canadian Embassy, Mr. Gordon and the sport and travelling-minded family send these advertisements to a Filipino newspaper?* The relevance of these details are connotative significations that held oppositional values: Canadian consul employer versus Filipino housekeeper; sports/travelling-minded/healthy/non-smoking/intelligent employer versus Filipino housekeeper not ugly, not stupid; English-speaking employer versus Filipino carer who may not speak English; and last, Mr. Gordon of St. Ives as employer versus Filipino carer.

The continuum in the embodiment of sex work ('mail-order bride') and domestic work (maids, carers, mothers) will be discussed in the next chapter but the example above shows how Filipino migration is 'feminine' and 'feminised' through a surplus of bodies who can perform not only the functions of sexual partners but also of housekeepers and all those that fall in between. The community, in blaming white Australians for its feminisation, has often failed to see its own culpability. The failure to see the 'mail-order bride' and 'nanny-housekeeper' advertisements as related although dissimilar is symptomatic of the stigma that sex-associated gestures elicit among middle class-aspiring Filipinos as working class Australians.

¹⁰¹ Vergara discussed the class dimension of the diaspora as 'middle class' and that of having servants in the Philippines. 'To be maidless in America (and losing that particular class marker) seems reason enough to keep the upper middle class in its place' (2009, 143). While I believe that majority of Filipinos will not hire cleaners and gardeners paid by the hour in Australia, they do expropriate the labour of their kin as I discuss in Chapter 7.

In retrospect, Zaragoza's TPCHN which has been much maligned for its low-class, unprofessional, money-driven and unjournalistic practices with no conceptual and ethical separation about brides and maids, or high-brow and low-brow, is that which avoids middle class correctness and complicity. In the world of Zaragoza where Filipino-Australians are the *masang Pilipino*, imagining the Self as middle class is a fantasy that migration has engendered. The working class, however, has its uses; even those who are recognisably *anti-masa* could make use of it.

Mina Roces, from a *mestizo* family and an academic based at the University of New South Wales, published a call for participation for her 'mail-order bride' research in TPCHN. The decision to involve Zaragoza's widely-circulated and 'people-oriented' publication was a strategic move for Roces to solicit help for her academic study that involved Filipino women in Central Queensland. The oral history project was indeed successful as indicated by the publication of its results in the newspaper: 'Filipino Brides into Central Queensland: Gender, Migration and Support Services' (TPCHN Oct-Nov, Nov-Dec 1996). This case exemplifies the serviceability of Zaragoza's publication unfairly criticised for its lack of content and sophistication. The newspaper not only introduced Roces' legitimate academic endeavour to its 'subjects', the *masa* 'mail-order bride', but also legitimated itself by publishing a report on the ethnographic study.

The second example is Gonzalez, author of *Manila*, discussed above. One would expect that her Hale & Iremonger-published book and the mainstream promotion it received would no longer need the space such as Zaragoza's; most particularly not someone of Gonzalez's *anti-masa* stature. However, in an

unexpected move, Gonzalez's letter appeared on page twenty-five of TPCHN dated May 2001, months after the release of *Manila*. Together with a page-one promotion for the book, Gonzalez explained that although it was written for personal reasons, she felt 'very strongly that we have to change the poor image of Filipinos in this country. The average Australian who has had no personal contact with Filipinos here, stereotypes Filipinos from the images they get of Imelda's shoes, mail order brides and that appalling Rose Hancock' (TPCHN May 2001).¹⁰² During our interview, the author lamented the lack of interest from the Filipinos; she mentioned that her book was featured in the TPCHN but 'no article at all, just a picture'. She forgot to mention that a letter she wrote was published; a statement that optimistically hints at the possibility of ethnic consolidation to induce positive changes. It also happened that her newly published book was being promoted in mainstream platform. This case of writing a letter addressed to the *masa* in solidarity towards a fair treatment of Filipinos in Australia exemplifies how one *masa* ethnic publication is recognised for its power over its constituents; even from someone who is identifiably from the other side of the 'great divide' such as Gonzalez.

The last example to show how the *masa* TPCHN is legitimated at certain times by the class enemy is found in the September-October 1997 issue of TPCHN featuring a special on the infamous Rose Porteous. Suffice it to say, Porteous did not ever need additional exposure in a local ethnic newspaper when she already had all the coverage a maid/socialite could ever attract. The issue is a 'Rose special' considering the length of the article, the photographs that featured Porteous flanked

¹⁰² During the interview with the author, she emphasised how she feels 'very Australian' but inside of me, I am Spanish'. She mentioned though that in her father's side lies her Filipino lineage. It is curious that in this published letter, Gonzalez used the pronoun 'we' to include herself in the collective 'Filipinos'. (Purita Echevarria de Gonzalez, interview, May 17, 2010).

by other Filipinos, and the adulation that the interviewer and writer had given the Perth socialite. While it is true that money can buy many forms of legitimation, mining giant Lang Hancock's millions could not buy his Filipino wife respect and acceptance from the white Australian public. But Porteous would forever be the maid/prostitute who sold her sex to the millionaire. With a title such as 'A close encounter with the real Rose: Lady of steel, woman of substance', the article elevated her to impossible heights that no Australian publication would dare do. She was depicted as a 'wonderful lady' with 'endearing quality of gentility and charm' who 'exudes confidence'. Appearing without make-up for an interview which lasted for more than two hours, Zaragoza and her contributors were in awe of Porteous especially when she spoke in Inloggo, a vernacular in the south. 'A far cry from the untouchable goddess-like figure', the real Rose they met was 'without any trace of hypocrisy or artificiality': truly a 'most interesting, entertaining, bubbly' person whose 'charm, appeal and charisma come naturally' (TPCHN Sept-Oct 1997, 2).

I could go on quoting the article praising Rose but the message is clear: the Porteous interview lent the much-maligned woman a depiction that is unheard of. It portrayed the seducer as a simple woman whose convent school upbringing taught her 'conservative and old fashioned views about life'. The affirmation of Porteous reached its climax in an attempt for all Filipino-Australians to 'support her in all her efforts. *For her success is our recognition as a people*' (TPCHN Sept-Oct 1997, 3; my emphasis). Ironically, three years after this article was published, author Gonzalez would single out Porteous together with Imelda Marcos and the 'mail-order bride' (all are women) as the cause of the bad representations that Filipinos have in Australia (TPCHN May 2001, 25). This example highlights how legitimation is a two-way process:

Porteous bestowing some prestige to Zaragoza's *masa* publication for its exclusive interview while at the same time creating an alternative discourse to Porteus-as-gold-digger, an equally precious opportunity. Even though the article openly expressed its gratitude to Porteous for the 'rare' commodity of being up-close and personal, it was she who gained more in this exchange.

All these three examples point to the serviceability even to 'upper-crust' migrants of a *masa* newspaper such as TPCHN. I would argue that hierarchisation of Filipino-Australian journalists does not always mean that a *masa* newspaper would be ignored by those who do not need the support of the community. In the cases of Roces, Gonzalez and Porteus and what they represent—intelligensia, racial difference and wealth respectively—the *masa* ethnic newspaper has served them well without necessarily relinquishing the distinction that made them who they are in the first place. The *bakya* newspaper with its disregard for protocols and pretention could perhaps be the most reliable source of Filipino self-representation, the composition of the larger part of its immigrant population, and ways of relating to each other. Writing in TPCHN is framed, represented and thus constituted by the prevailing public life in the 'ghetto'. Furthermore, if juxtaposed with the kind of self-representation that *Manila* tried and successfully achieved—elitist, long-gone and sepia-like, untouched by the problems of contemporary Philippines—TPCHN is vivid and upfront with its depiction of the 'Filipino' as subject. Operating centrally within the triangle of Parramatta, Fairfield and Blacktown—the geography that materialises the existence of this small community in the Australian multicultural quilt—TPCHN dishes out the dirty, the treacherous, the money-grubbing, the contaminated and the nasty details of living on the edge of racial and economic boundaries. The

struggle for space in the pages of TPCHN, thus for the right to represent oneself and others, is where the 'Filipino-Australian' gets overdetermined. It is in the monthly grind of the *bakya* and the *masa* that class contradictions complicate 'ghetto' living.

Conclusion

Postcolonial relations of power that characterise the social life of Filipinos and their subsequent emigration have subtly found their way, transnationally re-fitted but not replicated and appropriated in the context of an ethnic minority being defined by a stronger social and cultural Australian domain. What is apparent are the *centripetal* and *centrifugal* effects of perceived subject positions in relation to one another. While the Chinese-Filipino has 'disappeared' into the category 'Asian', the Hispanic Filipinos 'disappeared' as well from the 'ghettoised' Filipinos' social functions and silently network among themselves. The centrifugal effect of somehow 'being almost white but not quite' was shown with the ease by which Gonzalez published her memoir. However, this did not stop Gonzalez from writing to Zaragoza's *masa* newspaper invoking 'oneness' among Filipinos: a centripetal call of the power of the multitude. This same gravitational pull attracted *Salu-salo*, the first 'official' anthology, towards writers of certain privileged 'coordinates'. Edited according to 'good writing', the anthology was conducted upon several layers of selective processes weeding out the 'non-professionals' and the 'non-literary'.

The questions of *who-writes* and *for-whom* extend to the power relations amongst the practitioners in Filipino ethnic newspaper publishing. A newspaper is presumed to be *masa* for its lack of 'journalistic' practices, but more so of the division

between those who did journalism before and those who did not. While some Filipino newspapers produce a centrifugal effect on some members who do not mix with 'Blacktown Filipinos', they have a centripetal effect on those nameless, faceless immigrants who otherwise could not taste and exert social power outside their own ethnic community. There are thousands of Filipinos in the interstices of the Australian *immigrant-scape* who revel in seeing their faces and their names printed. Indeed, Australia has 'given' them this chance they might otherwise not have in the Philippines.

What counts as opportunities in emigration, however, is open to interpretation, such as the case of elderly people who find themselves trapped in unfamiliar environment performing unpaid domestic work. In the following chapter I discuss the demands of a 'hidden' migration and how it imposes sectors of the migrant community to change, thus, provide openings for new institutions within.

Chapter 7

Unpaid and unseen: Domestic labour, violence and the elderly

*Isa, dalawa, tatlo
Ang lolo ay kalbo.
Apat, lima, anim,
Tungkod ay gamitin.
Pito, walo, siyam
Kuwentuhang mainam.
Pagdating ng sampu,
Lolo, salamat po.*

[One, two, three
Grandad's a baldie
Four, five, six
He uses walking sticks
Seven, eight, nine
His stories are still fine
And now I reach ten
Thank you, Grandad, once again.]¹⁰³

On December 1989, The Filipino Association of South Australia, Inc. (FILASA), together with its media arm, Radyo Pilipino, held its very first 'Araw ng Lolo at Lola' (Grandparents Day) (Juanta 2005). Composed mostly of friends aged sixty and above among the scattered Filipino migrants in Adelaide and its surrounds, the event was a testament to the well-reinforced notion that Filipinos have utmost regard towards their elderly. The introduction of such an anticipated one-day celebration, which has since then become a yearly event in Adelaide, is to encourage three-generational households in the community. Dante Juanta, a community leader in South Australia, recounted how his children had 'experienced the company, the joy, that privilege of unconditional love and care' of a grandfather (2005, 21). From one's grandparents, a child learns not to talk back when reprimanded; what can be

¹⁰³ A nursery rhyme from Fe Gilbey's *Filipiniana* (1984, 1), based on my list, the very first book (manuscript-style) published by a Filipino-Australian. The book is a collection of 'Filipino rhymes, games, beliefs and superstitions, poems, proverbs, folk tales, folk songs and recipes'; an early attempt to preserve migrant culture.

described as subservient gestures are markers of respectability towards the elderly. One workshop headed by Juanta on elderly migrant support is a tacit defense of the vertical relations between grandparents and grandchildren. He created an opposition between 'natural-born' Filipino grandparents and white Australian grandparents. Filipino grandparents see themselves as 'integral' to the well-being of the family while Australian participants were 'inclined to take the back seat' and encouraged grandchildren to speak up; an 'appalling' behaviour to Filipino grandparents (Juanta 2005, 18). On the other hand, grandparents who live in inter-racial households admitted to practicing a 'healthy mix' of liberal and conservative practices, careful not to offend 'Australian' child-rearing values.

This idealisation of grandparents in the home in Filipino-Australian scholarship (Soriano 1995; Boer 1988; Channell 1986; D'Mello and Esmaque 1990; Juanta 2005) invoking 'Asian' ancestor-worship, however, does not question gender and economic intersections of three-generational migrant families in Australian homes. Far from being relics who make wooden toys and sing folk songs in Philippine languages to amuse the young ones, migrant grandparents work: at times in casual employment, sometimes for the community, but most times in the home. Their 'hidden' presence, the unpaid domestic labour they perform and the empowerment that comes with ethnic elderly structural support are the focus of this chapter. There are anthologies written, compiled and printed by organisations by and for the elderly immigrants: publications that give voice to the elderly people's predicament far from

the romanticised wise grandfather and nurturing grandmother who remain as a bulwark of virtues in the 'corrupting', 'rat race' that is Australia.¹⁰⁴

The materials to be analysed in this chapter, *Ani (Harvest): Selected Writings of Filipino-Australian Elderly in Victoria* (1997) and *Age of Wisdom: A Collection of Essays, Poems and Recipes* (2002) from the ACT, including works by Norma Humphreys (2008) and Adelina Hursey (1994), reveal that the valorisation of elderly Filipinos is not necessarily corroborated by the narratives of the valorised. These works are milestones in the community's print culture because of the spaces they opened for contention. I will read and then situate this almost hidden aspect of Filipino migration within sexualised citizenship and discuss how their gendered and classified position in the family extends to their parents' absorption into Australian household economy. In one section, I call attention to the unexpected but rather interesting excursion of some elderly Filipino women who find love the second (or third) time around with Australian men. Without articulating their marriages in economic terms—their market value as wives or their bodies as surplus—stories of inter-racial elderly marriages are informed by the labour of the female racial other and how it is vulnerable to exploitation. Finally, it explores how Australian migration has given some of the elderly opportunities to be 'self-sufficient' through welfare and the elderly 'ethnic' organisations that soften the blow of their alienation.

¹⁰⁴ The wise elderly is almost always the male grandparent and not the female grandparent. In Juanta's *Filipino Legacy in Australia* (2005), three illustrations feature the grandfather. In Soriano (1995), one mother pulled out her child from a nursery because she felt it was violating her love for her child.

Migrant bodies and feminised domestic labour

'A household appliance with sex organ' is an image of the 'mail-order bride' popularised in the United States, but the mental portrait is that of a woman in marriage. I raise this because any discussion of unpaid domestic labour is that of a general archetype of a woman appropriated and then '[reduced] to the state of a tool' (Guillaumin 1995, 187). Any study of women's unpaid domestic work points to Christine Delphy's pioneering work, *The Main Enemy*, where she claims that women's labour appropriation is primarily situated in the family as it is where her labour is exploited by the husband who, in turn, sells his labour power in the market ([1977] 1980, 4-7). The woman's labour—for it cannot be quantified and exchanged—is thus rendered invisible. Constitutive of patriarchy's 'super-exploitation' of women is the naturalisation of women's reproductive capacity and the subsequent child-care and domestic chores attendant to it (Delphy 1980, 16). Naturalisation of this biological function and its conflation with household duties puts women in the category of the producing class while their husbands are the expropriating class). More so, their labour is unpaid not simply because they are women but as a 'result of the specific social relations within which it is performed' (Jackson 1996, 61). Women's oppression is rooted in their inability to sell their own labour for exchange because they are women who are excluded as economic agents. One cannot sell what one does not own: one's labour power.

The centrality that Delphy gives to the domestic sphere has met resistance from Marxist feminists such as Barrett and McIntosh (1982) who wrote in *The Anti-Social Family* about women's oppression in the home as a symptom of capitalism

over the social relations within the family. The family as an institution—the woman as part of it but not the centre—is 'absolutely necessary to sustain the conservative economic fantasy' (Barrett and McIntosh 1982, 48). They question Delphy's use of the term 'domestic mode of production' as imprecise and lacking the sophistication Marxism attributes to the term; moreover, her conflation of bourgeois women and proletarian women performing housework and childcare merits further analysis (Barrett and McIntosh 1979, 100). Sylvia Walby, taking the middleground, argues that the dual-system of capitalist-patriarchy perpetuates exploitation of women in the home under capitalist mode of production where her labour reproduces the man's labour power (Walby 1990; 1986). A materialist analysis of women's gendered role points to capitalism as the ultimate beneficiary of this division of labour where men perform paid work while women stay at home to manage the site that reproduces human labour sources of the husband and the children as future proletarians under the capitalist system. The dual-system of capitalist patriarchy ensures the cyclical mode of keeping women in the home, or if they participated in waged labour, they remain in low-paid and low-status jobs such as clerical and service work, unfit in highly paid jobs. However, according to Delphy, the oppression of women predates or sits outside capitalism itself; French families' agricultural production (1980, 12-13) and women in socialist countries illustrate this point well.

Women's naturalised sexual and gendered roles of childbirth, child-care and domestic chores defer the acquisition of qualifications and structurally militate against their education and gain of work experiences. Although in recent times, women have slowly gained greater presence in paid work, this does not reduce the workload that they continue to undertake in the home. Since women are still the

primary carers of the children, they opt to take part in part-time jobs to fulfil both roles as household managers and contributor to the family income; a situation often seen in working class families. The term 'first shift' has been used to refer to women's paid work while 'second shift' is what a wife/mother does for her family for 'love'. But the 'second shift' is a labour that necessitates 'monotony', 'loneliness', long hours and low status, wrote Ann Oakley (1974, 182-83) in her groundbreaking sociology of housework; a study implicating how social science itself 'spread[s] the view that modern marriage is an egalitarian relationship' (136). The affective labour, intimacy and 'sex work' that a wife is expected to do—the 'third shift'—leaves the woman spent where her life is lived for others.

This is further explained by Colette Guillamin as 'sexage'—a term she coined and conflated from *esclavage* (slavery) and *servage* (serfdom)—which means sexual slavery: there is no limit to the appropriation of her time, the products of her body, her sexual usage and her responsibility to the disabled and the young (1995, 181). The oppression based on one's sex especially when one enters a heterosexual marriage contract is dispossession of one's subjectivity: mentally and bodily. Mary Wollstonecraft (1960, 45), in 1790, called marriage 'legal prostitution' while centuries later, Simone de Beauvoir ([1949] 2010, 456) saw the wife is an 'object to be purchased'. Today, sex for a married woman is a kind of work, according to Sheila Jeffreys, a 'skill' that she must possess and willingly give (in Maushart 2001, 169). Carole Pateman argues that marriage is a contract, too, a 'sexual contract' that may easily 'take the form of universal prostitution' (1988, 187). The 'mail-order bride' is, however, cheaper. One Australian man told his friend, 'it's cheaper to get [a

Filipina] on a visitor's visa for six months than to see prostitutes' (Barrowclough 1995, 53).¹⁰⁵

When factories downsize in times of recession, it is women who first lose jobs. In disadvantaged economies like the Philippines where state support and welfare are deficient, paid income is mostly earned from informal economic activities such as street-vending, laundry service and other commodified domestic labour. Such difficult work with very little compensation is made more difficult by the need to bring along small children while doing work. When global capital and neoliberalism introduce new economic schemes, it is the women who migrate to take up the lowest forms of work overseas (Enloe [1989] 2000, 184-85). This is why it is women who leave to marry Australian men and not the other way, given the sexualisation specifically of 'Asian' women. This is why Grace Soriano (1995), Catharina Boer (1988) and Celia Camara (1996) miss the whole point of why 'wifework' and 'sex work' are women's work by suggesting a sanitised (and racialised) reading of Filipino women's migration. They all hint at women as status-conscious—being better educated and professionals—who would not marry below their standard, thus, marry overseas. In a similar work, the place of women under appropriative patriarchal conditions is interpreted as the Philippine society's "'matrifocal'" tradition where women 'occupy an important and prestigious role' (Pertierra and Wall 1988, 469). Such valorisation, according to this logic, naturally leads to their 'extra-familial roles' in the economic sphere, thus, the unsurprising high participation of women in skilled work as one of the highest in the world. Hence, they go overseas to marry white

¹⁰⁵ A conversation with an Australian male revealed the same mental calculations; it is much economical to fly to the Philippines for sex tourism than other options. His friends have three-week sex rampage in Subic, Zambales and then remain celibate for the rest of the year in Australia.

males to continue fulfilling the "'matrifocal'" custom. What this woman-centred, nativist interpretation of 'traditional' societies is the very embeddedness of such anthropologising in patriarchy. Not only that such reading elides the division of gender, it also neutralises the imbalance in the social relations (which, again, following the nativist logic, is just as fine as it has always been *that way*). The four works I discuss here are all by Filipino-Australians who tried to apply 'social science' to justify why the 'mail-order brides' are Filipinos.

Women migrants—the 'mail-order bride' in particular—face the same challenges that a 'local' woman experiences in finding the equilibrium to fulfil both paid and unpaid labour, but have the more pressing problem of racial discriminatory practices. Many find it difficult to get new qualifications in Australia but they still have the burden to contribute financially especially as they generally fall under the working class.¹⁰⁶ The FAWAA narratives discussed in Chapter 4 point to many instances when Filipino women struggled to enter the labour market despite its objective to showcase the professionals amongst them. Ho (2004) and Lee's (2005) studies on Chinese and Korean women migrants respectively reveal the 'deskilling' they undergo in establishing themselves in Australia.

Moreover, the need to work to augment family income is complicated by childcare duties. Now, while working class Australian households struggle to pay for childcare, all-Filipino and interracial households skirt around this situation by bringing

¹⁰⁶ A Rooty Hill housewife I met during my fieldwork, who has a degree in Chemistry from the University of Santo Tomas, has found work in the factory of 3M. She said that she is satisfied with her current job and has no plans to pursue a job related to her university training. She thought that pursuing a professional career in Australia would 'complicate' her life.

in grandparents to Australia, first on a tourist visa and then later as permanent residents. Elderly labour is more common in all-Filipino households than in interracial marriages, claims Charito Ungson in her 1982 study (in Soriano 1995, 109). Many Filipino women in inter-racial marriages stay at home fulltime to do housework and childcare (D'Mello and Esmaque 1990). This strategy in delegating unpaid domestic work could be interpreted in two ways: [1] migrant women's way of fighting back; a mechanism to subvert a flawed system that perpetuates women's oppression but also an inventiveness to overcome the challenges of migration; and [2] grandparents who come over as 'hidden' immigrants to replace overburdened migrant women, constitute another re-routing of capitalist-patriarchy's expropriating measures where labour power is appropriated from those under 'patronage'. It is a kind of hierarchical procession of feminised labour where the racial other takes up the obligation of women who, in turn, have inherited unpaid domestic labour to free the man: a handing down of unpaid domestic work in order to create surplus value for the man and his employers. Parreñas' (2001) work on domestic helpers in Europe and Suzuki's (2005) study on wives in Japan both suggest that the transnational expansion of Filipino familial relations and expectations have reconfigured the traditional family arrangement and gave forms to new relations of power within.

Following the logic of appropriation in the hierarchies of gender and generation (men over women; parents over children; young over elderly), migration to Australia and its implications of economic power are giving way to the creation of an underclass that, out of filial 'love', performs labour. I do not have figures on unpaid domestic work done by aged Filipino migrants (this is one area which the

census does not racialise), but the Australia-wide figures below show the huge disparity between elderly males and females, under which Filipinos are subsumed:

Ages/Sex	Unpaid domestic work by count of persons (30 hrs & up)		Unpaid child care by count of persons		Unpaid assistance to a person with disability by count of persons	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
65 and above	78,117	179,877	80,815	119,230	62,899	88,164
75 and above	47,360	86,756	19,947	25,174	36,796	43,400
85 and above	6,821	12,440	1,701	2,789	7,604	6,732

Table 8 Comparative figures between elderly male and female persons performing unpaid domestic work in Australia, 2006

Women outperform men in all categories except in unpaid assistance to disabled person among 85 years and above.

Philippine-born migrants are not a young population. In 2006, the median age of the group was 40.3 years, older than Australia-wide average of 37.1 years but younger than the average 46.8 years for overseas-born ('Community Information Summary: Philippines-born' 2006). Below is the distribution of Filipinos by age where women outnumber the men at any age:

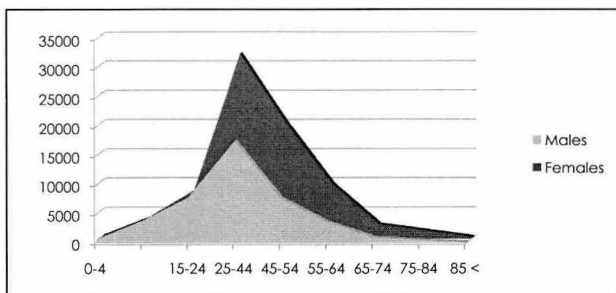


Figure 8 Population of Philippine-born Australians by age by sex, 2006

While it is rather difficult to ascertain how many among them arrived as young people or as senior citizens, what the narratives tell is that family relations are used for sponsored migration to perform childcare and domestic chores.

To love is to labour: The *Ani* anthology

Ani (Harvest), a project of The Filipino Australian Senior Citizens Advisory Council in Australia Inc. in Victoria, is a 'pioneering project' not for the achievement in gathering together literature by a recognisable sector but for what it revealed; a feat that *Salu-salo* (Capili and Cheeseman 2008) did not achieve for its near-sighted goal. I agree with Connie San Jose, a broker for the project, in that 'it is essential that their stories be recorded' for it is through their stories that lives will be told (Zubiri 1997, x). Contrary to the valorised portrayal of the elderly, Rolando Zubiri, *Ani*'s editor, sees the value in giving a platform to their 'illusions, disappointments and longings...tears and their laughter, their wisdom and their tireless patience' (Zubiri 1997, v). The overarching thematic of the narratives is the widespread and accepted practice of elderly Filipinos performing unpaid domestic labour for their children's families. Before, during and after fieldwork that brought me to the homes of informants and acquaintances, I can claim this to a certain extent. But the anthology *Ani* further reinforced this. Ethnographically, this is a critical consequence of life negotiated in diaspora that merits recognition of the community and Australia at large for the unpaid domestic labour rendered maximises productivity of those in the workforce.

For while the Filipino elderly in general do acknowledge Australia as 'a kind, multicultural country, specially gentle to the elderly', the Filipino community itself had not accurately portrayed what old people do in exchange for the 'opportunity' to

be in Australia until this print production came along in 1997 (Zubiri 1997, xi). It is common to encounter literature stressing the importance of a *lolo* (grandfather) and a *lola* (grandmother) as the family's efforts to maintain 'Filipino' values and culture essentialised as antithetical to Australian.¹⁰⁷ But *Ani* challenges this as it reveals the struggles that senior citizens' face on a domestic and social level. The anthology also shows how elderly institutional support encourages solidarity saving them from the hard labour and monotony of domestic work. The *Ani* anthology is literally a 'harvesting' of the solidarity efforts of the elderly to adapt to an Australian way of life. The production of this book as an element of this solidarity was a serious undertaking often attempted by ethnic organisations and literary editors but not achieved.

'*Empleyado tayo, wala namang suweldo,*' [We are workers yet without wages], Aniceta Esmacuel overheard this during one freezing night when Filipino elderly from Victoria met (in Zubiri 1997, 78). Responding to one suggestion that since winter had been causing pain to arthritic members, they might as well cancel the meetings. Some vehemently disagreed; Sundays are their only 'day off'—a term associated with servants' break—and they would not miss a meeting at whatever cost. The meeting is their only excuse to get out of the house after one whole week of '*pag-aalaga ng apo*' ['minding the grandchildren']. Esmacuel's narrative is then followed by an account of the dancing, singing and dining shared by the elderly; all of which was made possible by their two-dollar contribution (in Zubiri 1997, 78-79). Amidst the laughter, they have temporarily forgotten being 'unpaid employees' ('*empleyadong walang suweldo*'). Remedios Sarmiento has been momentarily 'freed from her prison' ('*nakawala sa kulungan*') where at times she wanted to

¹⁰⁷ *Lolo* is a contraction of the Spanish *abuelo* and *lola* is for *abuela*—these terms are commonly used in the Tagalog-speaking regions of the country.

'shout at the top of her voice in her room' (*'magsisigaw sa kuwarta'*) because she was 'bored out of her wits' (*'aburidong-aburido ako sa buhay'*) (in Zubiri 1997, 76-77). She would then stare outside the window of the suburban house she 'serves' and envy the freedom of the Australian children in their own backyards; after which, she would 'remember her own family in the Philippines' (*'naaalala ko ang aking pamilya sa Pilipinas'*) (76).

The isolation and loneliness depicted in Esmaque's narrative is a common thread that runs in *Ani*. Even among those whose narratives are pronouncedly about their professional achievements, feelings of desolation and immobility are placed in opposition with life's former glory. The absence of the normal ways of living, working and moving around makes migration difficult. Some of the elderly expressed their lament over the demotion of their status from being productive adults who commandeer their own worlds to dependents whose mobility has been taken away by their new social position as domestic managers and child carers. The difficulty of creating a new life in Australia for the elderly was expressed by most of the writers: 'the first few years were hard', '[we] were lonely and homesick', as billiard-playing Adriano Mayor confessed (in Zubiri 1997, 33-34). The difficulty of migration takes the greater toll on the elderly because of their inability to become productive in the outside world; to even participate in the hustle and bustle in town centres is deemed insurmountable. Silveria Mallari narrates her years of adjustment:

Cry and cry. That's what I used to do every night when I was new in Australia. I was homesick. I was used to having people around me, talking to them. Here, there was no one to talk to, except for the members of the family who are usually out working or studying (in Zubiri 1997, 35).

Felimon Labios expressed the same kind of frustration in his and his wife, Julita's, situation as their paralysis is not only an issue of immobility and homesickness but also of childcaring duties that seemed 'naturally' left to them. 'We used to sit and stare at each other, cried and asked ourselves if we made the right decision. Julita now would not even want to recall how miserable our life was before,' Labios wrote (in Zubiri 1997, 37).

'Nag-aaposina' is one sarcastic pun the elderly coined to refer to themselves. 'Nag-oopisina', the root word of which is 'office', means to habitually go to one's work; this is substituted by 'apo' which means 'grandchildren'. Indeed, for the elderly who used to have careers in the Philippines, to be corralled in the four corners of the house with small children to mind and the chores that accompany that, is a sacrifice endured in the name of filial 'love'. 'Nag-aaposina' is a witticism that strikes at the heart of the issue; a linguistic creativity that is both criticism and self-depreciation. In a similar vein but inflected with humour is the narrative by Pedro Sarmiento Snr. entitled '*Akala ko ay bakasyon grande*' ('I thought a long vacation'). The old man narrates how his trips to St. Kilda beach and the parks were so delightful that he wished he could stay permanently in Australia. But after two weeks of 'vacation', his child and the spouse returned to work and he was left looking after two younger children and an older one. He learned how to fix their milk and change nappies for the young children, and when it was napttime for them, the old man had to clean up the mess they made. His touristic-turned-unpaid domestic labour 'vacation' was so insufferable that he enthusiastically anticipated his return home. He was at the end of his wits when his child announced that the grandmother was finally granted a visa to visit: '*Ay, salamat at may makatutulong na ako sa pag-*

aalaga ng dalawang bata' ('Thank God, there's someone to help me in minding the two children') (in Zubiri 1997, 58). When he was offered permanent residency, Sarmiento replied with an emphatic 'No way, I want to go home.' However, he had to return because he missed his wife, now cooped up and held 'hostage' in Australia. The old man had to follow his wife and continue their new way of life: 'buy one, take one', another witticism from the elderly.

During fieldwork when I lived in Blacktown, I came across Philippine-born couples who sponsored the trip of a parent for the next six months to look after their grandchildren day in and day out. This is not an isolated practice. A migrant couple with two children in Melbourne invited not their parents but the grandmother of the wife for six months to take care of the children and perform household chores. The grandmother never returned to Australia because the cold weather could seriously affect her health. Also, in Sydney, a young couple working as accountants had their first child. They sponsored the travel expenses of the woman's sister to mind the newborn baby. With the exorbitant costs of private childcare in Australia, even with the help of Centrelink's Child Care Benefit, most Filipino immigrants would choose to sponsor a relative and exhaust the assistance of the visitor.¹⁰⁸ The sum of visa application, airfare, food and some compensation still do not amount to the cost of childcare, according to a Melbourne father. (This reminds us of the same logic of the Australian man who calculated that getting a Filipino woman for six months is

¹⁰⁸ In Sydney in 2010, childcare in the suburb of Marrickville costs \$86 per day for a child aged zero to six years. This pricing is based on Lee's Learning Centre's fees posted on its website www.leeslearning.com. On the other hand, the 'cheaper' suburb of Blacktown in western Sydney pegs at \$74 for the same service; this figure is based on the 2010-2011 Blacktown City Council's 'Goods & Services Prices Schedule'.

cheaper than a hiring a local prostitute.) In the period of six months to one year, the husband and wife could take fulltime jobs uninterruptedly.

The exploitation and feminisation of labour power of the elderly takes a more complicated reading when it is also racialised. The pain of the elderly woman, Remedios Sarmiento, stands out in all of the narratives that made it in to *Ani*. She recounts the challenges, difficulties and negotiations she experienced living in an interracial household. Hers is the only story that openly discussed the sensitivity of dealing with class, gender and racist discourses of the 'mail-order bride' in Australia. Without insinuating that Sarmiento's daughter is a marriage migrant, this elderly woman is caught up within the difficult web of issues that surround her role as an elderly 'Filipina' full-time child carer. She concludes that her daughter's marriage to a 'banyaga' ('foreigner') is a classic case of '*tubig at langis*' ('water and oil') which would never coalesce into one. Sarmiento hints at the (white) superiority of her son-in-law who thought he was smarter than the mother-in-law in most instances. His attitude towards her, Sarmiento, subscribes to his 'foreignness' ('*ibang kultura*') which includes being disrespectful towards one's parents (or the elderly in general). The Filipino grandmother's cultural essentialisms are her responses to racist assertions of her son-in-law who, according to her, thought that Filipino women are all 'users' and prostitutes ('*galing sa Olongapo at Ermita*')¹⁰⁹ (in Zubiri 1997, 77). Sarmiento fires back at her son-in-law with another cultural essentialism that 'in the West, parents are

¹⁰⁹ Olongapo and Subic are known areas in the Philippines for the American bases' military prostitution especially in the 1970s and the 1980s. Clark Airbase and the Subic Naval Base in the provinces of Pampanga and Zambales, respectively, had been known to lay the grounds for the prostitution of thousands of Filipino women. Ermita, on the other hand, is situated in the heart of Manila and known for the sex tourism it offered in the past decades. See Enloe (2000) and Winter (2011) for insightful feminist analyses of military prostitution. The infamy of Ermita is something I experienced firsthand. While at a conference, I had started to talk with a male Australian academic. He tried to guess where I was from. When I said I am from Manila, he happily blurted 'Oh Shirilita Ermita!'

self-reliant because their children do not care about them' (*'Sa kanilang kultura ay nagsasarili ang magulang at walang pakialam ang mga anak.'*) (in Zubiri 1997, 76).

This is the case when unpaid domestic labour of a grandparent is weighed and the weight is considerable. The Filipino grandmother knows the value of her serviceability to her daughter's family; she knows her contribution is economically significant to this dual-income family. Despite not being paid for her childcare duties, she contributes to the family's food budget because her son-in-law is eyeing her consumption in the house. Sarmiento, however, did not evaluate her unpaid domestic labour in overt economic terms; instead, she uses the emotive effects of being tired after a day of childminding. She even articulated her decision to stay put in such an oppressive environment as her only way of leaving a legacy to her grandchildren as she is not materially rich to bequeath wealth. The elderly woman mentally measured that the amount of physical exertion of her unpaid domestic labour is equivalent—if rather inferior (feminised)—to (masculine) marketable inheritance. Unpaid domestic work, for Sarmiento, is the intangible and yet somehow quantifiable amount of wealth that she is in a position to give: as a grandmother, as a mother, as an immigrant, as working class and as a Filipino, all rolled into one.

While the sponsorship of an elderly/carer occurs more in all-Filipino than inter-racial couples, the parent of a Filipino wife who joins the family adds a new dimension in the racialised and sexualised roles that the daughter has to fulfil. Her foreigner parent becomes an extension of her otherness as a 'bride' of a white male which she must carry out as a performance of the immigrant woman's role. The hierarchy between the man and the woman in an inter-racial marriage is stretched

out as to offer within her capacity to serve her domestic duties the warm bodies of her own family: the emasculation of the father and further feminisation of the mother. As it is often the case, the first-migrant in the family, the 'benefactor', so to speak, inherits the top end of the hierarchy bestowed upon her by her interracial marriage: the economic and social power to make things happen. Whether this power is more imagined than real, as migrant wives' access to money and mobility in the new country could be limited, the Filipino is no longer just another member of the family; her body is infused with new capital. Under capitalism where husbands expropriate, the newly accessible foreigners are available for appropriation. The sexualised subject is no longer the wife alone but also the mother, the father, and the whole family, by extension, all that is under her in the hierarchy. In other words, the feminised Filipino nation.

'Hidden' migration for the appropriation of feminised labour power is a term I use that suitably describes this practice. The thin line that differentiates Sarmiento from a servant is her kinship with the wife. Guillaumin's (1995) 'sexage' would not see any separation between a mother-in-law and a servant: because both are women, their labours are limitless. This condition of invisibility of unpaid work renders the elderly woman to do the 'second shift' but somehow she also performs the 'third shift' as her affective labour is necessary to maintain equilibrium in the house. While the very act of their migration is not necessarily unrecorded—for they either fall into the temporary visa or as permanent residents—the 'hidden' labour power comes with real and considerable economic value. It is 'hidden' for it is uncategorisable, unclassifiable, unseen and uncompensated.

Finding love and domesticity amongst the elderly

'Happiest days' is the way Adelina Hursey describes her life in Tasmania with Frank, her 73 year-old husband, and Sam, Frank's 'retarded son' (1994, 2). In a narrative published under 'new literates' writing', Hursey, in clear and simple English, tells of her contentment in looking after both of them especially Sam who needs to be washed, shaved, combed, fed, to mention a few of her daily chores. She said 'Frank was very happy with how I worked with his son' (1994, 2). Hursey's life in rural Tasmania, however, is different from Norma Humphreys' experience of Australia as a nurse, mother and wife. She and John moved between Sydney and Canberra as they raised their growing middle class family. John had a stroke in 1996 which left him permanently disabled; in the next eight and a half years, Norma took care of her husband fulltime before finally filing for divorce. In an autobiography self-published in 2008, Humphreys outlines the 'shifts' in a migrant woman's life. Both of these women exemplify—borrowing Pateman's (1988) 'sexual contract'—the '*mail-order bride*' contract: the labour power of the able-bodied woman is in the service of the (disabled) white male.¹¹⁰

While the examples of Hursey and Humphreys tell the stories of women who married young and then later cared for their husbands or stepsons, the *Ani* anthology documents another form of 'bride' migration: the 'elderly Filipino brides'. Not the exoticised girl in her 20s, older women who arrived with or without sponsorship seek Australian men with the intention of staying permanently. These women are

¹¹⁰ I do not insinuate here that either Hursey or Humphreys is a 'mail-order bride'. Humphreys made it clear that she was a student of nursing in Australia from a landowning family. This was emphasised when I met her in person (Norman Humphreys, interview, October 2, 2010).

confronted by the difficult task of caring for the disabled husbands for many years ahead. Obligated by the moral imperative of gratitude and indebtedness, some of these women are of an age and physical strength that still allow them to care for the husbands for a long time. What is interesting in this aspect of Filipino migration is not only the significant unpaid domestic labour that women render as grandparents or as wives to ageing or ill husbands, but also how the discourse of the 'mail-order bride' is much intertwined with unpaid domestic labour that extends to elderly participation. Migration, unpaid work in the home, hierarchisation of migrants within family reunion, and of course, the gendered and class intersections of all these show how one wave of migration ('mail-order brides') has given birth to another ('elderly Filipino brides').¹¹¹ This interesting aspect, moreover, reveals the much-needed analysis of the link between women migrants (and their sponsored family members) and unpaid domestic labour that benefits the masculine capitalist order. Although the term 'elderly Filipina brides' will predictably rouse opposition from the Filipino community—especially from a fellow Filipino researcher like me who is expected to process this 'hidden' immigration sympathetically—I wish to discuss this and relate it to the 'mail-order bride' using a feminist perspective to look closely at the relationship between feminisation and migration, and a class-based analysis to unpack the links between feminised migration and unpaid domestic labour.

In the *Ani* anthology, Sonia Tine's '*Naniniwala ako sa Karma*' ('I Believe in Karma') is an honest tale of an 'elderly Filipino bride' who dreamt to stay in Australia.

¹¹¹ The notion of elderly in Australia means post-retirement, 65 years and above, which implies that a fifty-five year old Filipina is not exactly an 'elderly' bride. To label them 'elderly' is ageist but I recognise that using the term 'elderly bride' is effective for the strength of the imagery it invokes and discursive continuity with 'mail-order bride'. However, I also face up to criticism that this coinage could be hazardous to the aged, the ethnic Filipino, and the woman.

Tine visited Australia in 1986 to accompany her aged father; both were tourists who stayed with her sister married to a local. Tine, too, has two non-permanent resident children in Sydney. Her desire to remain was so great that she would do anything not to return to the Philippines. Tine's sister insinuated that her one chance to stay was to wed an Australian, thus, she married Concetto Tine: divorced, sixty-four years old, overseas-born Australian. Tine then was fifty-one, not exactly a senior citizen. The marriage-for-comfort for Tine turned out to be *karmic* because two years later, Concetto got very ill and had to be looked after constantly. Tine was trapped in the home for the next eleven years (at the time of the publication). What is curious in Tine's narrative is her invocation of the notion of *karma* in articulating her fate as fulltime unpaid carer after bagging *permanent residency*—the pun capturing her immobility. Tine had been married to Romeo Villanueva, a Filipino tradesman.¹¹² *Karma* is Concetto's need for Tine to be available; however, to avoid another *karmic* return, she refused to divorce Concetto. She fully recognises and yet, at the same time, refuses to acknowledge that she used the man. Once is enough, according to her. What is apparent in this narrative and in others is the avoidance to call unpaid domestic labour by its name. Tine does not articulate her desperation against unpaid work as carer for the husband who made her stay in Australia possible. Instead, she navigates her story along the theme of cause-and-effect; true enough, in her many years away from the Philippines, she returned home only twice: an effect of the cause of abandoning her first husband. '*Hiyang hiya ako sa ginawa ko sa kanya*' ('I am so ashamed with what I did to him [Romeo]') (in Zubiri 1997, 52).

¹¹² The Philippines has no divorce law. Marriages are dissolved only through annulment by the court characterised by bureaucratic red tape and corruption making it an avenue only for the middle class. The only possibility for the woman to marry in Australia is to file for divorce in Australia, which the other party has to sign. At the time of writing, Gabriela Party List is lobbying for a divorce law 'Filipino-style' that still guarantees the 'sanctity' of marriage.

The difficulty of unpaid carer's work is comfortably framed by Tine's nostalgia for the life back 'home'. Life in Manila was difficult for she had to perform paid work (a small corner store, a beauty salon, a curtain-installing business), 'wifework' and sexual and affective labour. But unpaid domestic and carer's work is *karma* for the 'elderly bride': a result of her repudiation of being a Filipino while staying married to a Filipino. What is insightful in this case of 'hidden' migration of an elderly person is Tine's consciousness as someone who labours, someone whose many hours in the house are the uncompensated responsibility of a wife 'bound' to the white man. I refer to Concetto not as a 'husband' but a 'white man' because the Filipino woman implicitly racialises her unpaid carer's labour. It is as if a white man *cannot* be loved—contrary to Constable's (2003) reading of brides who went to the U.S. to marry for love, self-actualisation, amongst other reasons—in this case, love is equated with the Filipino man, a coupling congruent with nationality.

This racialisation of unpaid work is rather unique as I have not read this discussed, for example, by Delphy or Maushart whose works dealt with French, Australian and 'American' women but not in interracial marriages. Tine quantifies the amount of work she does for the Australian husband but she assigns this to her being an elderly bride (Filipino, poor, opportunistic), not as a woman in a patriarchal world. Contrary to feminist articulation, Tine also grounds her migration within the discourse of the ethical: the rightfulness of her marriage to the Filipino ('love') and the dishonourable one with the Australian (use). What is apparent is that both are marital contracts, thus, 'sexual contracts' complicated by racist and colonialist imagination. Despite unpaid domestic work being the universal *karma* of the woman under patriarchy, a woman who enters a marriage for 'economic' reasons

like a visa (or is it the man who enters it for economic reasons? asks Delphy) tacitly racialises this transaction. The 'white' visa is attributed greater surplus value than the 'brown' body of a woman. The guilt of being *gifted* with a 'permission' to stay is so overwhelming that it overrides gender and class ramifications that permit and perpetuate racialised migration, which at the same instance, is sexualised and class-stratified. What seems to be a simple confessional narrative by Tine's self-articulation is illuminating for the new social relations engendered within an already sexualised migration such as the 'elderly Filipino bride'.

Consistent with Varoe Legge's (1987) study of the elderly from non-English speaking backgrounds in Australia, it is Filipino women who find themselves without a partner in old age and that it is the men who are in a better financial position than women. An elderly woman has two options: to stay dependent and perform childcare duties or to stay dependent and look after a disabled Australian husband. These observations on elderly marital prospects highlight two readings: [1] the appropriation of the woman, her body and labour power, does not end; and [2] the male ethnic other does not appropriate the labour power of a white woman. The term 'elderly Filipino bride' is the unmitigated progression of the female body as 'mail-order bride' where male appropriation continues. However, Filipino males are either structurally restricted from appropriating white women's bodies or they need not to for the availability of women from their own background. The imbalance between sexual classes is clear: it is women like Teresita Komberec, Rosita Jansen, Emerita Verzantvoort, Josie Schwarze and Herminia Kienig, among others, who have

all expressed contentment in sharing and serving their Australian husbands.¹¹³ Moreover, in both Ani and Legge's study, it is men who are most forceful and articulate, even witty, in articulating their 'enslavement', their feminisation in the homes of their children. The resistance against unpaid domestic work is clearly male-centred, a symptom of the denigration of domestic work under patriarchy. Furthermore, while it seems that it is females who can take charge of their lives better and have more space to maneuver within the new environment than the male elderly, it remains a symptom of the gender divide that privileges the male.

Interpreting domestic violence in domestic work

Unpaid domestic labour, however, does not singularly relate to the picture of a sacrificing woman in the stillness of suburban life. Often, the imagery of a subservient, eroticised wife is congruous with a weeping woman with bloodshot eyes and swollen lips. Constable's (2003, 9-10) work warns of the simplistic conflation of the 'mail-order bride' and violence that gets played up in xenophobic talk shows; she implies her internet ethnography proves that such violence is rather the exception. By 'present[ing] the tamer and more conservative side of the picture'—the success stories, so to speak—'a side that is far more common and prevalent', she hopes to dispel the negativity that eroticised and battered foreign 'brides' present (2003, 220). For Constable, 'mail-order brides' are neither passive victims with no agency at all nor hyperagents whose will is outside the political economy of

¹¹³ There is no attempt here to summarily generalise the life stories of all these women who experienced migration differently. In fact, the women mentioned have varying social and personal contexts upon arrival and then marriage; some mentioned they are grandmothers, some did not (although most of these elderly have come to Australia through the family reunion scheme and have married children living in Australia).

gendered migration. So, does the 'mail-order bride' simply straddle the middle space of the spectrum? I raise this question because claims that 'third-world brides' have considerable options and wield power in transnational couplings—such as Filipino women handle the budget, are aggressive household managers, are pushy without being loud and other valorising attributes Constable highlighted from her interviews—are, I believe, undermined every time a woman gets bashed for all the 'right' reasons: weak, poor, ethnic. Interpreting domestic violence as the 'exception' that gives interracial marriages a bad name is to miss the continuity between physical aggression and domesticity; that hetero-patriarchal regime governing cross-border movement of brides in the first place. The view that domestic violence involving 'Asian' brides gets too much exposure that jeopardises good relationships is, to put it simply, an evasion of the fact that the very coupling engenders inequality and violence. Feminists and community leaders shaking their heads on the negative publicity are, to a certain degree, in danger of tacitly denying that women dependent on males for their immigration status are more susceptible to battering (Narayan 1995, 104).

A survey of literature on 'mail-order bride' taps a minefield of cases of domestic violence, yet, a survey of literature on violence and unpaid domestic labour yields a lot less. A quick look reveals a plethora of topics to analyse the universality and particularities of domestic abuse: on national policies (Phillips 2008), the elderly (Turner, Sprangler and Brandl 2008), ethnicity (West 2005) and poverty (Hart 2008; Josephson 2005), to mention a few. There seems to be a discursive gap that separates domestic violence as a topic and unpaid domestic labour. For instance, Susan Maushart's (2001) *Wifework* tackles the many faces of domestic work

but did not mention domestic violence at all. But then again, these two discourses are very much tied to the power-relations between men and women as sexual classes. I argue that the 'disappearance', or at least, the subsumption of one to the other is an effect of unpaid work in the home as normative. It is almost already assumed that women who are battered are also exploited for their domestic labour power. However, bourgeois women who do little domestic work—but nonetheless perform affective and sexual labour—do suffer intimate partner violence as well: 'physical assaults on women occur at all social and economic levels' (Menjívar and Salcido 2002, 901). Equally, despite men who do physically taxing and dangerous jobs—occupations often associated with the working class—are more likely to commit intimate violence, this does not spare women whose partners have white-collar jobs (Melzer 2002, 830). The very thin line that separates the woman who mops the floor, the one who gets hit for not mopping the floor properly, and the one who oversees the mopping of the floor, is easily blurred. For while physical abuse borders on criminality and invites intervention by the authorities, the appropriation of unpaid domestic labour of wives and partners is conceptually violent in itself without the danger of being criminalised. It is everyday discipline so regimented into the natural groove of patriarchal life that its practice does not merit interrogation.

The continuity between the performance of unpaid domestic work and gendered violence becomes conspicuous when narratives with vivid images of abuse show this. Saroca's (2002) thesis is an excellent study of the operations of domestic violence against migrant women. It deals with the deaths and murders of Filipino women married to Australians. She points out that it is often that Filipino women who are portrayed as parasitical by making their (and their natal families')

lives better; Australian men never seemed to have improved their lives by marriage. This is despite the 'common' knowledge that these women are unpaid domestic labourers and full-time carers. Although Saroca rightly anchors domestic violence against women to inequalities of gender, race and class, she did not link unpaid domestic labour as a base infrastructure that props up domestic violence. Nixon and Humphreys' raised the point that although ethnicity and poverty have always been associated with domestic violence, they are 'neither clear nor uncontested' (2010, 146). Although it is easy to follow the formula of foreign 'brides' being both 'ethnic' and poor, thus, more likely to be burdened by domestic chores, and their vulnerability to violence, the deduction leaves more questions on the connection between unpaid domestic labour and violence. While the 'intersectional turn' in approaching domestic violence has exposed its intimate relations with inequalities in class, gender and ethnicity, one wonders how border-crossing subjects are positioned in the intricacies of the crowded 'intersections'.

Age of Wisdom (2002) is an anthology from the ACT and published by the Philippine-Australian Senior Citizens' Organisation of Canberra Inc. (PASCOC). Although the contributions are not exclusively by the elderly, women's writing on inter-racial marriages amongst the middle age and older are common yet they surprisingly veer away from revealing domestic situations, unlike *Ani*; most are narratives of economic satisfaction and marital success. However, one narrative stands out for it is about neither satisfaction nor success. The story of 'Adelia Netty', a pseudonym, shows the tight connection between violence and housework. Hers is an extreme case of domestic violence that she endured for twelve years from husband 'John'. I will not dwell on the mental and physical torture she had in

common with many other Filipino women in Australia but concentrate on the unpaid domestic labour that, I argue, gives initial form to violence and subsequently emboldened her torturer.

An Australian man wanted to find a Filipino wife 'who could sew and cook', 'Adelia' thought to herself: 'bingo'; it would be her destiny to marry this man because she was a tailor with her own small dress shop and also a good cook as she learned to specialise in Japanese cuisine. In 1986, she came to Australia and thereafter started full-time housework as a carer for their son and a keeper of the house. After fifteen years of marriage which included the intervention years when 'Adelia' sought the help of community support groups, she narrates: 'John was using me as his domestic servant...a legally employed maid was luckier than I was because a maid, at least was being paid and could enjoy a day-off. I was not being paid for my services and there was no respite from slavery' (Agmata-Tucker and Pattugalan 2002, 46). During the day, '[she] slaved in the house', at night, he would verbally abuse her then hit her (2002, 45). The 'maid'/wife was not allowed to sit on the chair because it was 'John's'; she could only watch on TV what 'John' watched while she sat on the floor. Later, 'John' was convicted for domestic assault and ordered to share the property with 'Adelia', the mother and son finally found some peace and moved on with their lives.

With 'Adelia's' case in mind, I suggest that the first base of domestic violence is unpaid domestic work. The unbridled power of 'John' over 'Adelia' in 'cooking [his] meals, cleaning his garbage, washing and ironing clothes' is the opening of the possibility for the man to think that the woman is inexhaustible in her capacity to

receive mistreatment, that 'Adelia' who puts up with so much labour (*servage*) would also put up with sitting on the floor (*esclavage*). Like the tools and appliances that 'Adelia' used everyday to fulfil her domestic obligations, she had become one and the same tool for the abusive husband: she was not a partner, not even a human being. She was reducible to an abstract provider of domestic services: unpaid and unrecognised. The slave/wife has no space to maneuver so that when domestic violence happens, the dependent annexes the attack as part of her bottomless pit of responsibility in the domestic sphere. Being hit is just another type of test for physical endurance and hitting is one way for her man to relax. The appropriation and abuse are inexhaustible because in 'sexage' the woman's body is open to anything including pain (Guillaumin 1995, 181-86). The discourse of 'home as haven'—the ruling social ideology where the well-being of everyone is dependent on how a woman sets up an ideal home—is a regime not unrelated to the abuse of women who 'fail' to provide this. Warrington argues that domestic violence itself is rooted in the geographies of home; how domestic 'spatial constraints' must be considered in analysing violence when it occurs (2001, 366). At this point, I would argue that 'sexage' that is deeply inscribed in the valuation of a migrant woman's body finds expression in—and is equally shaped by—the very physicality of a 'home' that is built on a daily basis by the labour of a 'homemaker'.

The inability of immigrant women to sell their labour power intensifies their economic and emotional dependence on the male. This is even more pronounced in the case of women in interracial marriages where third-world labour is marketed in exchange for the opportunity to migrate. In Tasmania, Australia, there was a prevalent public opinion that Filipino women deserve to be enslaved and be

subjected to violence because they are 'jumping the immigration queue' (Cunneen and Stubbs 1997, 42). This logic of xenophobia and sexism also means that Filipino women are *doubly* 'unrapable', or worse, *inviolable* than 'ordinary' women because she is beyond violation. Because for the ethnic other described as 'docile, domesticated, disposable, [and] sexually submissive' (Barrowclough 1995, 48), Filipino women *cannot* be raped. The 'correctness' of the quote from Barrowclough and the sequencing of descriptors in portraying Filipino women underline the continuum between housework, sex work and violence: a spectrum of man's 'physical sexual usage' of the woman (Guillaumin 1995, 184). It is not difficult to see how the usage and violence engendered by domestic labour is reified in 'softer' forms, such as unpaid elderly carers for grandchildren and husbands.

Michel Foucault's (1980) concept of *bio-power* is instructive in making sense why 'mail-order brides' like 'Adelia' are placed in a position where her body is susceptible to abuse and her labour to appropriation, while the 'ethnic' elderly person is only slightly less exploited. The control of the body of the 'bride' stems from the institutional disciplining where techniques to utilise, maximise and fit an employable body, in its integration to the larger relations of economy in the interest of power. The techniques of discipline, moreover, are governed by a broader governmentality (power) of life (bio) that arranges and determines how human beings live and how *not* to live (1980, 138-140). Bio-power is intricately woven in the fabric of social relations, often imperceptible because the body in the world has taken a 'natural' bearing, that bio-power is 'common-sense' inscribed in our every action. Techniques in constructing a 'docile' body—in particular, the twice-docile 'mail-order bride'—permit a conceptual violation of this body as domesticated,

pleasurable and encroachable and also the body as material trace of this violation. As docile bodies, the Filipino 'mail-order bride'—whose migration meant not only consensual but also transactive engagement in the eyes of those who participate in her disciplining—is integrated into the larger practice of expropriating reproductive labour which in turn contribute to economic and bio-power processes in managing life. As I see it, the bodily abuse that 'Adelia' suffered was a literal application of a disciplining that exposes the underlying structure that governs the extraction of her labour power. Although Foucault did not dwell on racist aspects of discipline and power, in the context of an alien 'bride' in white Australia, bio-power is also largely couched in 'difference' attributed as 'racial' for it is this 'difference' that expedites and excites the control of an alien body. Because the individual body is disciplined within the confines of one's privacy, the social control exercised on alien women's bodies—that she cannot prostitute herself or choose not to breed or not to do domestic work outside the marital contract—is easily directed.

The regime that disciplines the body of a migrant woman that naturalises her embodiment in *sexage* and her body as target with which to inflict pain is also locatable in established 'social' institutions that *take care* of the elderly migrants. The 'care of the migrant' through collective formations is illustrative of the subtle forms of control often interpreted as affirmative action. As I shall make clearer later, bio-power management of elderly migrants is very much in the hands of ethnic organisations.

**Institutional support:
Who is taking care of the elderly?**

The two anthologies I discuss in this chapter are a proof of institutionalised support which migrant communities lend to the elderly. More so, the narratives are testaments to the contribution of organisations in softening the blow not only of migration but of the stresses of doing fulltime domestic work and childcare duties. Thus, it is not surprising that studies on the ethnic aged have emphasised the need for gatherings and organised activity groups that are within their linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Legge 1987; Dolk 1985). The elderly are rendered useless to the economic system because their labour power is no longer exchangeable in the market. This ageism denies 'participation, power, status, rights and self-respect' to the elderly, and this is worse if one is a non-English speaking elderly person in Australia (Dolk 1985, 17). While there is a perception that the 'ethnics' take care of their own, this has been an overstatement for ethnic elderly people do not receive the adequate care they need.¹¹⁴

The two organisations responsible for the publication of the anthologies featured in this chapter are, to a certain extent, examples of how the 'ethnics take care of their own'. The Philippine-Australian Senior Citizens' Organisation of Canberra Inc (PASCOC) is a 'non-profit, non-political organisation' that provides a strong social network for the Filipino aged living in the ACT (Agmata-Tucker and Pattugalan 2002). It also works towards the mainstreaming of the ethnic aged into multicultural Australia, hence, the inclusion of a few Anglo-Australian elderly in the

¹¹⁴ In my visits to the suburbs of Cabramatta and Auburn in Sydney where there are bustling market centres, I have seen elderly people still engaged in business activities; some are vending on the sidewalks. While this does not necessarily constitute neglect, one wonders if the system that treats ethnic aged as self-regulatory merely perpetuates a system of selective clientism.

same collection. In Victoria, the Filipino Australian Senior Citizens Advisory Council in Australia Inc (FASCACAI), formed in 1985, is one of the 'most active' and 'most organised' groups in Victoria and it oversees member organisations specialising in the Filipino elderly in the state (Zubiri 1997, 112).¹¹⁵ As the population of Filipino senior citizens grows all over Australia, so does the number of organisations that provide services for socialisation, health services and educative programs. In Victoria, Filipinos fifty-five years and above residing in the southeast, a region composed of Greater Dandenong, Kingston, Casey and Cardinia Shire, number up to 609 out of the total of 4,399 Filipino migrants (BACNI 2010). These 609 senior citizens can seek help from seven existing organisations, foundations or resource centres within the southeast region.¹¹⁶ In the listing prepared by the Bayanihan Australia Community Network Inc. (BACNI) in 2010, thirteen out of forty-nine associations in Victoria focus solely on a 'seniors program'.¹¹⁷ Pe-Pua (1998) essentialises this tendency of Filipino migrants to form organisations as collective expressions that replicate social arrangements and rituals harnessed in the Philippines. '[T]he development of new fictive relationships', such as those forged by 'mail-order brides' 'lived activism', is necessary as it ensures the social psyche of peoples in permanent diaspora; something that 'mail-order brides' nurtured to ensure survival but also to practice citizenship (Tibe-Bonifacio 2009, 151). At the end of this chapter, I contest these

¹¹⁵ As at 1997, there were five member organisations under (FASCACAI): Filipino-Australian Senior Citizens of Victoria Inc. (FASCOV), Filipino Elderly Get-together Association Inc. (FEGTA), Filipino Elderly of Broadmeadows and District INC (FELBROD), Philippine Cultural Society for Elders Inc. (PCSEI), St. Francis of Assisi Filipino Senior Citizens Club (SFAFSCC).

¹¹⁶ The seven support groups listed in the South Eastern Region Migrant Resource Centre's profile of Filipino elderly are Centre for Philippine Concerns Australia (CPCA), South Eastern Region Migrant Resource Centre, New Hope Foundation, Filipino Elderly Association for the South Eastern Region (PEASER), Young Generation Filipino Senior Citizens Club of the South East, Salaginto, and United Filipino Elderly Group, Inc. Accessed www.sermrc.org.au January 20, 2011.

¹¹⁷ In the report's disclaimer, the listing is made 'in good faith' to assist planning and programs among Filipino migrants but BACNI is 'not responsible for its ongoing accuracy'. Accessed www.bayanihanaustralia.org, January 20, 2011.

articulations of a rosy picture of organisations as entirely reconstructive and beneficial. Tracing collective formations as intuitive, psychic compulsion undermines their more cynical political and economic uses.

There are three ways by which institutional support helps the elderly based on the cultural productions discussed so far: [1] belonging and socialisation; [2] preparation for independence; [3] finding a partner or a spouse [4] giving the elderly a platform for cultural expressions. In the *Ani* anthology, almost all narratives point to the usefulness of elderly groups to the old folks which they openly acknowledge. Sarmiento, the grandmother whose clashes with her Australian son-in-law have brought her depression, has St. Albans senior citizens to thank for 'recharging' her for another week's childcare duties. '*Lumalakas ako, nangingiti, humahalakhak at nagsasayaw. Ayaw ko halos bumalik sa bahay at masarap ang buhay ng malaya*' ['I get stronger, I smile, I laugh and I dance. I do not want to return home because it felt good to live life with freedom'] (in Zubiri 1997, 76). The elderly group in Footscray, Victoria made it possible for Vertzanvoort to visit many places but also gave her the chance to perform in the Victoria Arts Centre, an experience that has given her a measure of self-worth and confidence. A certain Mrs. Roque has the same positive evaluation of her group:

Ewan ko ba. Dito sa grupo natin siguro ako nagkakaroon ng buhay. Isipin mo na lang yong karanasan kong sumayaw sa napakaganda at napakalawak na bulwagan. Hanggang ngayon eh parang nadidingin ko pa ang palakpakan ng mga nanonood, lalo na yong mga puti. Naku, napapaluha na naman tuloy ako pag naaalala ko. (in Zubiri 1997, 80)

[I don't know. It is only here with the group that I have a life. Just imagine the experience to dance in a very beautiful and grand auditorium. Until now I could still hear the applause of the audience, in particular the white people. Oh well, I get teary-eyed again when I reminisce on that.]

More so, Esmaque's third-person narrative is a good demonstration of what happens during excursions, picnics, hikes and meetings of the elderly. The avenue provided by the meetings to express what they feel about their lives is invaluable and offsets the physical and emotional strain of the unpaid carer's work they do. Every one joins the 'chicken dance' as a way to exercise before sharing the Filipino dinner prepared by the members. Once dinner is over, the members would again share stories and exchange opinions, this forum also provides the opportunity to make known government updates and migrant community announcements that may affect the elderly.

Labios and his wife—they who used to cry over fulltime childcare duties—have been active as board members of seniors' organisations. Through the Filipino Community Welfare Services which educated and helped them regarding the benefits for which they can apply, the couple had the courage and the means to live separately from their children. Through the woman's paid labour as seamstress and the man's vegetable patch, they were able to live independently which also meant no more minding duties and housework in the home of their children. Without that burden, the elderly now spend their weekends attending meetings, activities and trips arranged by their organisation and religious worship. The Sarmiento couple mentioned above is a good example of elderly migrants who have successfully settled in their own flats and managed their own finances. However, if the elderly person is widowed, it is not very easy to decide to live independently with no income but a mere pension. This is most especially the case within the context of the Filipino family system of values, where infantilisation of the elderly is a form of valorisation.

This system in which they cannot and should not live alone reduces any inclination to live independently.

One way towards independence is for some widows to marry Australian men. Emerita Verrzantvoort's marriage is made possible by the collection of photographs made available via the seniors' club that she belongs to. She was widowed in 1957 and remarried in 1991. It was in 1986 that she visited Australia on account of her own children as permanent residents. Her own children wanted her to marry an Australian so she could stay but she dismissed the idea; another visit to the country and her '*pangalawang gloria*' ['second glory'] was actualised. One of her children had a friend who was looking for a partner and asked if Verrzantvoort could introduce an elderly woman from the organisation to which she belongs (in Zubiri 1997, 72-73). Pictures of 'available' women were sent to the Australian; Verrzantvoort (jokingly) hoped that luck might be hers. This practice of 'matchmaking'—a term used by Hennessy (2005) to identify the system introduction that replaced catalogues which invited much intrigue—was indirectly bridged by the elderly association in facilitating the process. Verrzantvoort managed to marry the Australian man; this is without insinuating that it is the elderly organisation which initiated such introduction.

Ani and Age of Wisdom as collaborative works by and for the elderly people are important touchstones of their efforts to make sense of their migration, an exhilarating yet painful step for anyone who has lived all her life in another country. The books are a meaningful documentation of the successes gained despite the challenges of cultural alienation, physical difficulties and last, of unpaid domestic

labour they have to render in exchange for reuniting with family members. In giving voice to the elderly, these writings have permitted the surfacing of the 'hidden' migration and more importantly, the tacit recognition of the unpaid domestic and childcare labour they do for the economy of the family and by extension, of the nation. While their contribution to the growing migrant literature of Filipino-Australians signals greater participation, the two anthologies, however, are symptomatic of the gendered and classed stratifications operating within the community as discussed in Chapters 5 and 6. In both anthologies, almost all elderly people hold the opinion that migration is a *gift* given and with great gratitude, received. Federico Mungcal, in his essay 'Pursuing a Dream', for instance, said that he and wife plus twelve children have all migrated to Australia: 'what more could we ask for?' (in Zubiri 1997, 42) Adriano Mayor describes his gratitude not only for the government assistance he receives but also because six out of nine children are all in Australia. Remembering the difficult early years in pre-war Philippines, the brutal occupation during the second world war, the sacrifices made in the name of marriage and family, many narratives end with a sense of fulfilment that Australia has been good to them, often citing multiculturalism as the apparatus of their acceptance.

This kind of indebtedness, however, is absent in the essays by Pura Santillan-Castrence (writer, diplomat, educator), Manuel Lacuesta (Colombo scholar), and Edith Dizon-Fitzsimmons (pilot, pianist, teacher). Migration as gift is an articulation of and attribution of class belonging specific to working class elderly people. On the other hand, professions, education, social experiences and circumstances of migration, among others, are markers of a few elderly people's social and cultural capital. Those whose essays are outside the discourse of elderly migration as filial

love are those who proudly articulated their past in the Philippines and the continuation of success in Australia. They did not talk about changing diapers or preparing milk for their grandchildren, nor did they detail how many of their family members have been reunited in the new country. In fact, Santillan-Castrenc, whose collection of essays is published by Perdon's *The Manila Prints*, wrote essays on topics outside her personal life. The privileging of profession (class-based and public) over filial discourse (class-based and private) is betrayed by the positioning of career-oriented elderly people's essays in the anthology as 'headliners' versus those whose contributions zero in on their domestication and the alienation of migration. For the 'professionals', migration is neither disruption nor retirement but rather a continuation, a challenge to prove themselves again.

The separation between classes amongst the elderly is also manifested on the part of the editorial team of *Ani* to place all contributions written in English before the essays and poems and other forms of literature written in Filipino and in other Philippine languages. While this observation does not entirely undermine the admirable effort to include Philippine languages in the anthology, English is nonetheless privileged. The privileging of English is not something that had to be done because they are in Australia; rather, it is a throwback to the hierarchised positioning of languages in postcolonial Philippines. The politics of language is further evident in the way Filipino-Australians inform the state about who they are and what language they speak, particularly the anti-Tagalog sentiment. This point was discussed Chapter 1.

These two instances—first, the positioning of the career-oriented and professional elderly people's essays in the anthology; and second, the placing of Philippine-language essays after the all-English language essays—indicate that the elderly who participate in the public sphere are favoured over those who stayed at home, the faceless and ordinary not paid for their labour power. While not all essays in English are about careers and professions, in the Philippines, the official medium of communication used in public discourses is English as opposed to Filipino and other vernacular spoken in the home, the latter is also the language code-switched by the upper and middle-class to relay messages to their unfairly waged servants. In short, despite the overriding thematic of filial love and divine obligation as the elderly people's most prized function and primary motivation for migration, some editorial decisions have ironically revealed that the unpaid domestic labour of the elderly comes second (and inferior) to those who can write about their professions, about a world outside the domestic, about experiences beyond their marriages and parenting years, and write about them in English. The privileging of the public and the paid (masculine) over the private and the unpaid (feminine) continues to operate in the sector of elderly Filipino migrants.

Conclusion

Filipino multiple-family households today have bypassed 'Australian' norms of independent elderly people and a nuclear family. Elderly emigrants, while exploited for their unpaid domestic work, have somehow found a way out of the system which valorises them while appropriating their labour, either by setting up their own home, finding new partners or participating in community organisations. Despite the public

perception that elderly migrants are a burden to state welfare, they nonetheless cumulatively contribute to Australia's growing economy through their labour.

The anthologies discussed in this chapter, including the availability of resource centres, pensioner's allowances, health care, socio-cultural gatherings, to mention some, are a proof of the possibilities for elderly migrants in Australia. The vicissitudes of Australian life to a migrant and the good things migration has brought have taken the elderly to another direction other than bodies foddered for unpaid childcare and housework. However, the positive results of elderly support that organisations bring, I argue, come from the system that perpetuates the domestication of aged bodies. The groups that forge solidarity, create networks and publish anthologies even are—in a *perverse way*—an encouragement for the continued practice of unpaid domestic labour. Elderly organisations are there *not* to challenge the exploitative practice but only to mitigate its effects. Parents will continue to sponsor the elderly and their relatives for a six-month period each time, appropriate their labour on weekdays and drop them off in meetings on Saturday nights.

Migrant organisations, as seen in this case, are decisive in shaping the direction of community life: what to keep, what to endorse, what perpetuate. These groups, together with solidarity formations that rally behind the categories of 'ethnic' or 'immigrant' in Australia, make and unmake new social relations forged by the Filipino in diaspora. The last chapter of the thesis elaborates on the evolution of Philippine and Australian solidarity into migrant activism, which reveals facets about the community's past and hints at its future.

Chapter 8

Filipino-Australian activism: Decolonising solidarity, searching for a migrant identity

While the agenda must come from the Philippines and Filipinos, Australians have much to offer in terms of how that agenda can be productively promoted in our respective sectors.

Andrew Tiver, CPCA Newsletter (1992, 11)

...because privilege nurtures blindness to those without the same privilege.

Mohanty (2003, 231)

This chapter will trace the early days of Filipino-Australian activism in the form of anti-dictatorship solidarity in the 1970s up to its contemporary forms of Filipino-Australian organised efforts in fighting for migrant and workers rights. As in the previous chapters, I illustrate here the importance print culture has taken in forging an emergent migrant community as part of a larger international proletarianism. The historicising of solidarity action groups that was constitutive of the community's activism will be discussed along with the growth of bulletins and newsletters that accompany the birth of these political formations. Propaganda—as it is called, wrongly, by liberal conservatives—newsletters and bulletins run in small circulation by an even smaller group of people are themselves a history of those who publish them: the narrative of Filipino-Australian migrant activism as it unfolds. While the chapter's point of convergence is activism and political action—a tiny, often unpopular sector in the migrant community—it nonetheless unpacks a significant area of history that defines Filipino-Australians today. While newsletters and bulletins often accompany the birthing of any organisation in the community, I am excluding the many

newsletter titles that do not inform activism; their contribution to community building merits a separate discussion, but one for which I do not have the space here.

I frame this chapter using postcolonial theorising on the politics of solidarity and the fragile relationship between first-world and third-world activists, in particular, a decolonised anti-capitalist critique. Chandra Talpade Mohanty's (2003, 19-21) critical reading of Western feminism's construction of 'Third World women' (read: dirty, ignorant, helpless, domesticated, religious, submissive, sacrificial, rural, illiterate) as an effect of its paternalistic practice of 'solidarity' is informative of the unequal male-dominated colonial relations that describe early Philippine-Australian activism. What happens when third-world objects of solidarity are positioned as first-world activists? The subjective ambivalence of being in the position of migrants in the first-world—'becoming' the privileged activist subject and yet the object of solidarity action at once—is, I argue, the driving force of Filipinos towards self-determination from an Australian-dominated international solidarity. The 'in-betweenness' of their subjectivity and the need to confront pressing 'migrant problems' such as the 'mail-order bride' cleaved the paths between 'white' activism and those who sought autonomy from it. The political opportunities that came with the splits are too precious not to seize for the young community. These opportunities, however, may be interpreted as effects of a more globalised public sphere and transnational activism that accompanied neoliberal commodification of culture, the borderless consumption of goods and services, and labour migration: transnational as 'site of political engagement' (Vertovec 2009, 10). Filipino-Australian activism today is shaped by its past and will definitely navigate a future that is not only border-crossing but also continue to nurture profound ties with the activist landscape in the

Philippines. Yet, it is an activism forged and emplaced in an Australia-specific context of a sexualised migration.

I begin the chapter by foregrounding a review of the history of socialist struggle in the Philippines, the challenges it faced in the last two decades and the links between Australian solidarity and progressive elements in the Philippines. I will take a closer look at how the internal split within the Communist Party of the Philippines' (CPP) ranks has affected political action in the Philippines and overseas. Subsequently, I take the readers into the bitter intra-organisational struggle fought between white Australians and 'Filipino' Australians, a significant historical perspective that I do not think has been provided before except for exchanges between elements involved in the conflict documented in newsletters. I call the former, the 'Second Split' and the latter, the 'First Split' based on the chronology of events. While the 'First Split' was unequivocally tied to the critical moment of visibility of a migrant group, the 'Second Split' was traceable to the broader weakening of socialism elsewhere. Does the 'Second Split' sit on top of the 'First Split'? What do these fractures entail for the future of migrant activism of Filipinos in Australia? Are they symptomatic of the larger transnationalising of social movements all over the globe in the 1990s? In each section, I discuss the contributions of solidarity formations to print culture of Filipinos in diaspora and how these publications bore the specificities by which they were created.

The preparation for and writing of this chapter is also reflective of its subject. In Chapter 1, I explained how I initiated my experience of doing migrant ethnography through my socialisation with Filipino-Australians and my place among

them. The fieldwork done for the research is not merely reflective of the dynamics that define social groupings or 'blocks'—social, economic and political—among Filipino-Australians, but also constitutive of what I can include here. While I describe the data gathering for the earlier chapters as rather noisy for the bickering and personality clashes (*palengke* politics) within the community, this chapter is tempered by silence, avoidance, maybe even paranoia. What will be clearer later on is the culture of suspicion at work among some Filipino-Australian activists towards productive encounters. The chronological scheduling of interviews with people I approached on this topic appeared to have consequences for the way I was perceived: an enemy or a potential ally. Suffice it to say, this research has not escaped the ripple effect of the CPP split that happened twenty years ago in the Philippines. This kind of mentality will impact on activist strategies and their implementation conducted by Filipino migrants.

Pacific intersections:

Philippine communism and 'Trotskyite' Australians

The Philippine left has undergone dramatic changes since the early 1990s from the dominant rule of the Community Party of the Philippines (CPP) under Jose Maria Sison who took over in 1969. The National Democratic Front's (NDF), the peak body of leftist formations sympathetic to CPP, decision to boycott the middle class *People Power* revolution in February 1986¹¹⁸—which it has since regretted—resulted in

¹¹⁸ Epifanio de los Santos (EDSA) is one of Manila's major highways that connect Manila, Quezon City, Pasig, Mandaluyong San Juan and other sections. The EDSA section in Cubao is where Camp Aguinaldo (military) and Camp Crame (police) are located. During the 1986 call to mobilize against Marcos, the people congregated along EDSA where nuns, priests, students, lay people corralled tanks and Marcos's soldiers. Today, a gigantic, golden statue of the Virgin Mary, known as Our Lady of EDSA, stands at the corner of EDSA and Ortigas Avenue where a mall frames the

the emergence of smaller but not lesser organisations that may not necessarily espouse the direction of socialist national democracy but nonetheless eschew dictatorial and oppressive systems of governance (Hedman 1996, 103-8). Moreover, the purges that victimised cadres in many guerrilla fronts in the late 1980s still haunt the Philippine left which has since then have fractured the rigid hierarchy, often reduced into an 'RA'/'RJ' binary which I will later explain. Today, the Philippine left can be described in many ways, but what it is *not* today is the centralist, homogenous block of opposition it once was (Quimpo 2008; Rosales 2006). The CPP, according to its critics, is no longer the 'democratising force' to liberate the Filipino people from an ineffectual Philippine state and its cohorts of elites from oligarchic families (Quimpo 2008; Ruiz 2001). It has been replaced by a plethora of people's organisations, nongovernmental organisations, party lists, grassroots formations, peasant and trade union groups, civic organisations and other 'civil society' components. These are peopled by national democratic (ND) elements before the split in the early 1990s (Bocar 2001).

Many years after the fall of the Soviet Union and Eastern European socialist blocks, the economic shift in the People's Republic of China, and the unification of Germany, the CPP continues in its struggle to turn the Philippines into a socialist nation ruled by a democratic nationalist ideology by the people under the leadership of the party. In 2011, the CPP together with its armed group, New People's Army, celebrated its forty-three years of struggle. Apart from its misrecognition of the *People Power* as a political opportunity, another significant setback faced by the party was the split between the 'reaffirmists' (RA) and the

shrine. The ousting of the actor/President Joseph Estrada in 2001, called EDSA 2, was also held here.

'rejectionists' (RJ) in the 1990s. In Benedict Kerkvliet's analysis, the split had 'earlier manifestations' in the manner Sison initiated the change of strategy of the socialist struggle within Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (PKP), an early incarnation of the CPP (1996, 14). After the Pacific war, the PKP's politburo announced its strategy in the seizure of state power through military tactics for a 'relatively short and speedily victorious' struggle which Sison opposed following a Maoist strategy.¹¹⁹ Furthermore, Armando Liwanag's (1992)—commonly known to be Sison—language-use in 'Reaffirm Our Basic Principles and Rectify Errors', the official 'break away' manifesto of the 'second rectification campaign' is a clear reference to tract from PKP (Weekley 1996, 28-31).¹²⁰

The second rectification campaign was the consequence anti-military infiltration strategies by the CPP, variously called *Kampanyang Ahos* in Mindanao, Operation Missing Link in southern Tagalog, Olympia in the national capital region, *Kadena de Amor* in the Quezon-Bicol provinces and *Takip Silim* in southern Quezon (Ilagan 2003).¹²¹ Estimates on the number of deaths in these operations that captured only five military agents vary: Rodolfo Salas, former chair of the CPP, claimed a death toll of 1,800 in total (in Mercado 2006) while Walden Bello (1992)

¹¹⁹ The quote is lifted from Kerkvliet (1996, 17) which he quotes from PKP Politburo documents 'Additional political-military strategic conceptions: Clarifications of the enlarged PB conference resolution' and 'Military strategy and tactics', both circa 1950.

¹²⁰ Armando Liwanag and Amado Guerrero (1979) are the pseudonyms of Jose Maria Sison, founder of the CPP. This essay is a summing up of the Party's direction since it was founded. Those who did not agree with Sison's direction to still pursue the old line were labeled as 'rejectionist'. According to Weekley (1996), the paper was released six months before it was approved by the Central Committee. She claims that party members thought it was only a 'discussion paper' and were surprised at its distribution as CPP's stand that finalised the split.

¹²¹ *Kampanyang Ahos* can be roughly translated as 'Operation Garlic'. 'Ahos' is a Visayan term for garlic which is a reference to folk belief that garlic can dispel *aswang*, the Filipino version of the zombie, half-bodied, blood-sucking creatures (Abinales 1996, 154). The name chosen for the Mindanao purge is clearly about cleansing. *Kadena de amor* or 'chain of love' is Antigonon leptopus commonly applied by people to heal wounds. Last, *Takip Silim* means dusk in Filipino.

estimates 900 to a low-estimate of 700 deaths in Mindanao alone. Patricio Abinales posits that scholars of communism in Southeast Asia 'could not recall episodes analogous to the Mindanao tragedy', not even the Khmer Rouge had performed this kind of bloody extermination of comrades before seizing power (1996, 178). Mindanao, the 'Philippines' last large island frontier', the centre of the purges has a specific social history of economic insecurity, internal displacement and colonial and state intervention that made it vulnerable to the tragedy that struck its cadres (1996, 164). He believes that the quick growth of communist insurgency and the ease with which ND elements infiltrated urban slums to do mass work is also its downfall.

The publication of *To Suffer Thy Comrades* by Robert Francis Garcia (2001) coincided with the convening of NGOs, human rights groups, academics, families and supporters of Peace Advocates for Truth, Justice and Healing (PATH) to investigate the grave violations and murders committed. Garcia detailed the torture methods of comrades which made the physical torment even more painful. Even Ka Roger Rosal, NPA commander who died recently, admitted his culpability for the crimes.¹²² Since then, diggings initiated by the government revealed hundreds of corpses in mass graves in Cebu, Leyte, Davao del Sur, amongst others (Mercado 2006; Santos 2007). This is the spectre that haunts communism in the Philippines. Moreover, this haunting is reciprocated by the undeserved silence perceived by the

¹²² In a transcription of Ka Roger's interview, he interestingly recounted what happened in southern Tagalog where Oplan Missing Link was approved to find the infiltrators. Curiously, his narration has a gender angle where the madness and hysteria, the effect of which were murders and torture of hundreds, were singularly given a face and a name in the person of Ka Amanda. She was portrayed by Ka Roger with the archetypal mad woman characterisation that she was capable of anything. The document was from an interviewee (copy in file).

party's critics as unfair and unworthy of the victims' families' forgiveness.¹²³ The reticence of CPP in discussing the events and then later its demonisation of the enemies—called 'rejectionists', connoting a recalcitrant outsider position—is influential in the way the Philippine left would cleave, even in Australia and other countries.

Australia, on the other hand, despite a strong working class history and possessing some similarities with 'banana republic' economies—an area of rich potential for radicalisation—did not have to confront a socialist insurgency. What it did have was a historically assertive (white) working class tradition of labour unionism, a class-based fight for equality that seriously sidelined indigenous struggle, among other legitimate concerns in Australia. John Percy (2005) historicises the radical past of Australia with its 'contradictory' line of pro-labour causes yet at the same time a legacy of racist proletarian empowerment. The Communist Party of Australia (CPA), founded in 1920, was a vigorous movement with 23,000 members just before World War II. It would suffer a split in 1971 where other members formed the Socialist Party of Australia (SPA). Social movements overseas, from the 1968 student protests in Europe to the Vietnam war in the same decade, helped to mobilise militants in the major cities. Sydney, where Percy (2005) was active with the group Resistance and then later Socialist Workers Party (SWP), had been Trotskyist, while Melbourne was Maoist. The group, later known as the Democratic Socialist Party (DSP), had contacts with a 'small group' from the Philippine left in the 1970s (Percy 2005, 280).

¹²³ The party's efforts to find the victims' families and offer repatriation were outlined by Ka Roger in the same interview.

Peter Boyle, former Secretary General of the DSP, corroborates the stories of collaboration between the CPP and the Australian left. Sison has been sponsored by the SWP for speaking engagements in Australia as shown in the illustration below. Moreover, SWP's publication *Direct Action*, and then later *Green Left Weekly* of the DSP (see Figure 10), covered the Philippines not insignificantly based on a national socialist ideology that both parties believe in. According to Boyle, who wrote articles under the name 'Michael Peterson' for *Direct Action*, DSP was in solidarity with the 'n.d. elements' (National Democratic) as they participated in tours, demonstrations, activities, even Sison's tour in Australia (see Figure 11) (Peter Boyle, interview online, March 29, 2011). But the split within the CPP took over what previously had been good solidarity. In *Ang Bayan* (The People), official organ of the CPP, the DSP was denigrated as a group of 'Trotskyites' and 'social democrats' ('Links of Counterrevolutionary Groups with Trotskyites and Social Democrats' 2004). The 'diagram in question'—according to CPP founder Sison (2004)—of 'pseudo-revolutionary petty bourgeois grouplets' prompted a reaction from party list Akbayan's Loreta Ann Rosales and Walden Bello, known critics of Sison. They wrote an open letter about the diagram because some personalities in the diagram like Felimon 'Popoy' Lagman, Romulo Kintanar and Arturo Tabara were all dead, two at the hands of the New People's Army (Bello and Rosales 2004). Rosales and Bello are in the diagram, a cause to be alarmed. The 'hit list' included 'DSP Australia'.



Figure 10 Announcement of Jose Maria Sison's speaking tour, *Direct Action*
(Photo courtesy of Peter Boyle)



Figure 11 *Direct Action*, Australia's Democratic Socialist Party's newspaper
(Photo courtesy of Peter Boyle)

Before the split, SWP/DSP had already formed relationships with CPP leaders from the Manila-Rizal, Visayas and Mindanao commissions, considered outlawed by Sison. The Australians decided to go the 'rejectionist' (RJ) way because for them the CPP 'acted in a sectarian and abstentionist way in the broader anti-Marcos movement in the critical final period of the dictatorship' (Peter Boyle, interview online, March 29, 2011). Boyle remained in close contact with the 'enemies' of CPP;

he attended the founding conference of *Partido Lakas ng Masa* (Power of the Masses Party) in Manila in 2009. Ten years before the diagram was published, a letter was sent to John Percy, National Secretary of DSP Australia, signed by Emilio Villa, Asia-Pacific Region, CPP, Utrecht, Netherlands. Part of it reads:

I condemn your unwarranted interference in the internal affairs of the Philippine revolutionary movement...Without much investigation and in utter disregard of the facts, you have taken the side of the former members of the Manila-Rizal Regional Party Committee...Now, like a Great White Father, you wish to escalate your interventionist activities...And you continue to peddle lies and half-truths about

developments in the Philippine revolutionary movement. The least the CPP expects of the DSP is to be faithful to the truth and to desist from interfering in the internal affairs of liberation movements...You should have the courage to correct your mistakes.¹²⁴

Three points in this document are important: [1] DSP Australia that previously supported the Party had now openly expressed solidarity with RJ elements; [2] ten years later, the CPP still considers DSP an enemy; and [3] the CPP used the discourse of the racist 'white man's burden' against their former 'Trotskyite' comrades. Paradoxically, the letter came from the same person who defended 'Australian nationals' to exercise full autonomy in their solidarity work discussed later. DSP is the 'Great White Father' whose 'interventionist' maneuver was condemned as colonialist and corruptive of solidarity. The privileging of whiteness by Villa in one occasion and its denunciation in another is contradictory but comprehensible within the context of the split. Today, direct liaisons with the Australian left is no longer necessary; the party is unofficially represented by Migrante Australia and Gabriela Australia, two transnational organisations that originated from the Philippines.

¹²⁴ Letter to John Percy from Emilio Villa, January 28, 1994. I have a copy of this letter.

While a 'big' leftist party such as the DSP was certainly involved with the Philippine left, I cannot ascertain for sure if the founders of Philippine-Australia Support Group (PASG) were SWP or DSP members or were acting on behalf of the parties. I have reasons to believe, based on the typewritten documents of PASG's establishment, they were not, at least, not directly because of the absence of any links that would lead me to any Australian leftist party. Nonetheless, solidarity links between Australia and the Philippines *outside* the growing Filipino migrant community were present *before* the divisive CPP split. The following issues of *Direct Action* proved there was an attempt to introduce Philippine concerns to the Australian public.

From international solidarity to migrant activism

Before there was any Filipino-Australian *migrant* activist group, for many years there had only been solidarity formations in Sydney and Melbourne. Remembering her early days in Sydney, Deborah Wall narrated how as a young wife she responded to an ad in a newspaper that called for volunteers to form the Philippine Action Support Group (PASG) (Deborah Wall, interview, November 7, 2009). Started in Melbourne in 1977 by the Student Christian Movement, PASG was composed mostly of Australian church people. Wall remembers that in its early days, representatives from the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP), the Asian Bureau Australia (ABA), Columban priests working in Mindanao such as Peter Jennings and Jack Ryan, Geoff Turnbull from Action for World Development, Michael Beale of Uniting Church, Mandy Tibby who would later 'immerse' herself amongst Manila's poorest, subsequently learning Filipino, to mention a few, were all enthusiastic core

members of PASG. Later on, a few more Philippine-born such as Sister Charito Ungson, Linda Swords (married to another member Ian Swords) and Robert Nery joined Wall (Deborah Wall, email message to author, March 17, 2011). The extent of the formative influence and involvement of church people in bringing Philippine concerns to the Australian public would a decade later haunt them as Catholic bishops, Australian media and the government were later embroiled in the question: 'Is the Catholic Church in Australia Supporting Communism?' (Duncan 1986) This is actually the title of an article that defended CCJP against right wing commentators from the Australian print media such as *News Weekly* accusing CCJP of diverting funds to communists in Manila ('Filipino Communist Links with Australia Revealed' 1988.)

Meanwhile, PASG did not waste much time and launched the very first *Philippine News* on October 1978. The stated aims of this sixteen-page, twenty-cent per copy newsletter displaying a map of the Philippines on the first page with a corresponding elaboration on this newly-born 'information and action bulletin', were:

[1] to create public awareness of, and response to, oppression and human rights violations in the Philippines; [2] to publicise Australia's participation in economic and political oppression of Filipinos; and [3] to reflect the hopes and aspirations of the Filipino people – that their struggle will challenge us to recognise our own oppressions and to stretch for the attainment of our own freedom. (PN 1978, 1)

The articles from *Philippines News's* first issue range from the 'Detainees Situation' that lists the names and details of the arrested, to releases and reports of police brutality, among others. Many issues in the newsletter cover Australia's impending uranium sale to the Philippines after the construction of the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant, the opening of which was never actualised, and an elaboration of Australia's interests in

this through its continued support of Marcos's regime via militarisation of the countryside. Australian 'development aid' in Northern Samar is one example of this accountability. *Philippine News* published in its issues sample correspondence of Bataan's concerned citizens to then Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser while inviting ordinary Australians to get involved in positive action.

The production of this newsletter represents the fledgling attempts to contribute to the international solidarity links against military rule in the Philippines. The lack of funds and the limited availability of self-publishing technology in the late 1970s were apparent in the newsletter's amateurish layout, cartoons and general format. I personally saw the attempts of Wall to draw its cartoons for the issues on which she collaborated with other members, the many 'proofs' she had to type again and again to fit in an A4-sized paper, and the cut-and-paste lay-outing. The yellowing original documents that were lent to me for this research are a proof that *Philippine News* was a labour of love. As Marcos intensified his militarisation of the Philippines, PASG also heightened its drive to disseminate information as it increased the number of pages of its newsletter. At one point, *Philippine News* reached twenty-six pages of news solicited from Ibon Foundation, the known progressive organisation, 'Philippine Detainees', newsheets run by nuns and *Solidaridad II* from the Hong Kong-based Resource Centre of Philippine Concerns (RCPC): all of which were resistance publications against Marcos. Within three years, PASG had expanded to thirty-plus, four-state (Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Adelaide) membership, run exposure trips in the Philippines, formed solidarity coalitions with overseas Filipino activists, sponsored a speaking tour of opposition Senator Jose

Diokno, and held a national meeting in Randwick, New South Wales in February 1980, to mention a few of its accomplishments.¹²⁵

Is PASG then a national democratic international solidarity organisation? I raise this question because the answer to it clarifies, or rather, smoothes, issues and differences that would come up later in the history of Filipino-Australian activism. According to Wall, the newsletter's articles were drawn from a broad left-leaning politics in the Philippines at that time. Scholarship on the CPP especially after the 1992 split would rather avoid the term 'broad' to describe oppositional politics in the Philippines. Instead, it was rather a very narrow upper hand of the national democratic movement associated with the leadership of Sison. The dominance of CPP-NPA and its aboveground alliances in challenging the dictatorship is evident in the articles. To mention only a few examples: 'The NPA may lose the battle but win the war' (PN, nd), 'More than 71 peasants taken in Pampanga raids' (PN Dec 1979) and '8 years of Martial Law—an inside perspective' (PN Sept 1980). However, like all forms of culture after transculturation, *Philippine News* evolved its own sense of resistance that is embedded in its local conditions, producers and consumers/readers. In its September 1980 issue, a 'Philippino'—the spelling a hint that a white Australian prepared this particular issue—sent a prayer and hopes it would be used during liturgies on Sunday mass as 'an expression of our Christian solidarity'. Below the prayer is a graphic of 'One World Week', a Christian advocacy of 'living responsibly'; a thematic of social justice that drove these church people to forge solidarity with their Asia-Pacific neighbours.

¹²⁵ In a handwritten document from the personal papers of Deborah Wall, I found a list of 'international contacts' from Hawaii, California, Utrecht, London, Dublin and Florence, not to mention a very close contact with Hong Kong political exiles under the leadership of Carmencita Karagdag.

This is what differentiates PASG from an ordinary socialist, national democratic-guided organisation: what Wall describes as 'an open group', 'no constitution or membership check or ideological filtering' (Deborah Wall, email message to author, March 17, 2011). The hybridity of PASG—its streak of liberationist theology—informs me that its Australian founders are not with any major leftist party, SWP or DSP. While PASG would continue to exist for many more years to come, as it would form state-based formations each with its own unique character, *Philippine News* with its guerrilla-style production and no-nonsense content, would fold as PASG Melbourne campaigned for the formation of the Philippine Resource Centre in 1982. The latest issue I laid my hands on was dated April 1980. While it is possible that *Philippine News* continued to be published after 1980—something I could not verify from the people I spoke with because they do not remember—its three-year run was already an accomplishment relative to the length of time 'ordinary' newsletters are printed in the Filipino-Australian community. The reformist streak of *Philippine News* was continued later on by *Church Watch*, first published in 1990 by the Philippines-Australia Christian Forum.

**The 'First Split':
Decolonising white solidarity**

In 1982, the Philippine Resource Centre (PRC) was born through the strong lobbying of PASG Melbourne. A document dated October 17, 1980 outlines the project description of PRC: included are the people behind the project, objectives,

organizational links, and cost and expenses, among other details.¹²⁶ The centre aimed to 'promote understanding of the issues of development and human rights as they are reflected in the Philippines situation' through the leadership of a 'National PASG'. It would have to house books and periodicals about and from the Philippines; audio-visuals, films videos, posters; and publications for sale. A 'Filipino resource person' and an 'Australian worker' were expected to be hired as paid employees to oversee PRC. In its first three years of operation, expenditure was pegged at AU\$76,200. Finances were expected to come from 'W.C.A.', Community Aid Abroad, Uniting Church and other donors.¹²⁷

Since its formation and then the more intensified involvement in the Philippine resistance movement, church people were at the forefront of PASG and PRC. Years later, in 1988, a newly-installed Aquino government started 'total war' against the insurgency and truckloads of documents from raided safe houses revealed solid links between the communists and Australian groups. These church people would be in the centre of the maelstrom. From the outside, the PASG and PRC looked like smooth centralised political entities. However, what was not evident at that time was the white, patriarchal, heterosexual and middle class composition of the 'founding fathers' of PRC.¹²⁸ As I will elaborate on later in this chapter, the accusation of 'racism' in what I would call the 'First Split' was given central attention by Filipino

¹²⁶ Private papers, 'Philippines Resource Centre Force 10 Submission' and 'Project Description: Philippine Resource Centre'. The PRC deposited its documents in the State Library of Victoria for archiving.

¹²⁷ 'W.C.A.', one of the major sponsors of the soon-to-be-built PRC, was not spelled out and I do not wish to speculate as I did not find its full name in the founding papers.

¹²⁸ There was one woman out of seven original committee members. My speculation that these individuals are white Australians come from references in other documents and was confirmed by Melba Marginson during an interview. The 'founders' are a mixture of academics, church leaders, and unionists.

activists, but not the masculine and classist tangents of the fracture. Australia's history of the working class and unionism being grounded on a racist identity, discussed in Chapter 6, solidarity with the Filipinos would encounter the same problem of paternalism and colonising, class-based 'conscience'.

The successful launch of PRC coincided with the escalating violence of the military rule but also the growth of the mass base and armed operations of the NPA all over the Philippines. The need for an institution to consolidate the flourishing solidarity work in Australia is, I argue, the response of PASG to the question: *where are we headed?* Two discussion papers and one letter accessible to 'core people only' at that time reveal the debates the National PASG had to engage with. First, an unattributed, undated document entitled 'Ideologies and pressure groups against the Martial Law government in the Philippines' asserts it is 'essential that we here in Australia, who wish to register our support for the oppressed in the Philippines have some idea of the kind of social and political change we are helping to bring about'? This document's articulation of where PASG was headed is further expressed but with greater clarity in a letter to PASG's 'core people'. Differentiating the need to sort 'n.d. elements', 'n.d. sympathizers' and 'broad solidarity group', the letter writer communicated, 'it became increasingly felt that we should be more sophisticated in developing different levels of solidarity groups'. The letter says that 'to be more precise and systematic in our work, we have to be very clear on who are the leading elements—n.d. elements': those who are 'committed to the Philippine struggle as their principal political work'. It also explained how groups based in Europe were led by openly 'n.d.' people and that 'Asia-Pacific has its own specificities'. An important observation on the unevenness of international solidarity work where Asia-Pacific was

perceived as an emerging hotbed of communism vis-à-vis old Europe's socialist tradition.

The final document I wish to discuss is a three-page, unattributed and undated 'A proposed discussion outline towards [sic] developing a course of action for Philippine support groups in Z.'¹²⁹ The clandestine nature of this document hints at PASG's role to lead the intensification of its involvement to a more radical line, far greater than what 'solidarity' implies.¹³⁰ It implies 'financial mobilization and packaging work', a call for PASG to send funds to the Philippines, what the mainstream journalists would call 'Manila Marxists' (Barnard 1988) 'silent offensive' (Harbutt 1988) into Australia. PRC was the answer of Australian activists to the demands of the increasingly exacting political work. PASG was, without doubt, a national democratic front in the Asia-Pacific.

One sign of 'trouble' is almost always the push to change one's name. While keeping the old acronym, PASG (Philippine Action Support Group) then became Philippines Australia Solidarity Group, hereafter referred to as 'PASG 2'. This renaming was made official around November 1986 to September 1987—conspicuously the same period as the EDSA revolution that took the widow Aquino to Presidency. 'A discussion was raised...as to the words "Action Support" in the title—questioning what Support for which Action was being/would be taken,' recalls Dee Hunt, a Filipino-American activist who at that time had just arrived from London (Dee Hunt,

¹²⁹ This document was definitely prepared before 1982 since it alluded to the future move to establish PRC. (Copy in file.)

¹³⁰ I still entertain the idea that maybe the person who prepared this document is simply economising on having to type 'Australia' thereby substituting it with 'Z' which could be a further shortcut for 'Oz'.

interview, February 6, 2010). While it may be unlikely that the change of name of PASG was a direct consequence of the Philippine communist party's search for what direction to take post-1986 when it boycotted the 'revolution' it thought it could claim for itself, it is also not entirely improbable. *Philippine Issues'* first outing, published around the same time, is nevertheless about the 'prospects and realities' of the ceasefire negotiation offered by Aquino to NDF (PN 1987, 1-4).

Philippine Issues (1987-1992) was a far cry from the A4 format of PASG's *Philippine News*. A professionally done, well-designed offset litho-printed newsletter sold for \$1, it is another sign of the group's expanding network of supporters. Melba Marginson, its second Filipino media officer, estimated that the circulation reached at least 700 copies that were sent to most cities in Australia and some places overseas (Melba Marginson, interview, March 26, 2011). She also estimated that around 80 per cent of its subscribers were 'white Australians' and the remaining 20 per cent were Filipinos. Most of its articles are original contributions by either Australian 'n.d. sympathizers' visiting the Philippines for social immersion, Filipino activists touring Australia for speaking engagements, or regular members of PASG 2. Before it, however, were two publications that bridged the two: the first is *Philippines Newswatch* published at least after April 1983 and then *Philippine Bulletin*, that started in 1986 and ran until at least January/February 1988, a monthly effort that collates short news from the Philippines. In January 1987, the same year *Philippine Issues* was introduced, PASG Queensland also released its own *Newsletter* which later became *Kasama* (Dee Hunt, interview, February 6, 2010).

The great improvement in PASG 2's newsletter is reflective of the growing presence of ex-cadres from the Philippines who found political asylum in Australia. The Filipino-Australian population was increasing at an unprecedented rate with its marriage migrants and family members reuniting. Towards the late 1980s, this expansion is seen in the composition of PASG 2, previously dominated by white Australians. I had no access to a list of Philippine-born members that joined the group but all of the interviewees agree that the influx of migrants had changed the membership, thus, the dynamics of the group's way of conducting its affairs and the forging of new friendships and loyalties within it. Wall remembers that when Filipino activists arrived in Sydney and joined the then-solid-white PASG, they were 'uncomfortable with the Aussie dominance and Western cultural bend...and did not quite fit in' (Deborah Wall, email message to author, March 17, 2011). These 'n.d. elements' who were young, angry and spirited, 'had their own ways of doing activism' (Deborah Wall, email message to author, March 17, 2011). I could appreciate Wall's interpretation as I noticed, right after my first rally in Sydney, how 'doing activism' in Australia is laid back, devoid of the thrill and danger that characterise Manila activism.

Some of the initiatives these new members started were cultural productions that were generally not part of PASG. Christian 'Bong' Ramilo was affiliated with *Dulaang Bayan* (People's Theatre) and Philippines-Australia Cultural Interaction Network (PACIN), both of which endorsed 'people's cultural action' for the empowerment of communities (Saldaña 1990). Cultural artists from BUGKOS and Philippine Educational Theatre Association (PETA) and the academe were brought to Sydney to show Australian sympathisers how cultural and political work go hand in

hand. In Melbourne, Melba Marginson settled after marrying Simon whom she met during a speaking tour in 1988 with the Australian Teachers Union (now Australian Education Union) (Melba Marginson, interview, March 26, 2011). Her experiences as Secretary General of Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT), a militant teachers union in the Philippines, made her the best candidate to become the next Filipino resource person in the PRC after former nun/activist Joy Balazo.

In 1988, more than two years before the 'First Split', NSW PASG 2 drew its own constitution without formally separating from the National PASG 2. Although it mirrored many of the objectives of PASG's constitution (Unpublished document 1985), the Filipino-dominated Sydney group put emphasis on Filipino women in Australia. Reflecting the challenges that the community faced around this time, the document:

calls for a cessation of the portrayal of Filipino women as sex objects and servile human beings and calls for the implementation of genuine education and social support programs for women who embark on mixed marriages in Australia; and for an end to Australian sex tours to the Philippines and like practices which denigrate Filipinos and their culture (PASG NSW 1988).

The 'mail-order bride' problem, although it had existed as long as PASG, had not previously figured significantly in its advocacy. This debate would be in the centre of the divide that questions whether 'solidarity work' (international in nature) encompasses 'local' affairs. The transnational nature of migration and solidarity work complicates and makes impossible an easy answer to this question.

The 'First Split' in the ranks of PASG 2 was an alleged case of racism by the 'Australian caucus' against the 'Filipino caucus'. This is according to two out of the

three Filipino women I interviewed who had all been involved in the solidarity movement at different stages.¹³¹ But I am basing my detailed account of the battle for hegemony on a private collection of documents: letters, committee reports, circular notices, position papers, drafts of essays and those open to the public through the newsletter. As the story unravels, it becomes apparent how newsletters as print material culture have a very intimate relationship with their stakeholders and it also underlines how the materiality of newsletters is writing history. It was in 1991 that the tension became an irreversible collision, although the previous year was spent strategising between the caucuses.

The 'Australian caucus'—also known as the 'the group of 15'—suspended some members after the mass resignations of Filipinos. The PRC, PASG Melbourne and the Australia Asia Worker Links (AAWL) composed this 'Australian caucus' that battled to protect its dominance on the issue of 'who represents the interests of the NDF and the various Philippine people's organizations in Australia' (Robie, unpublished paper, 1992). The 'Filipino caucus', some of whom were schooled in hardcore socialism—aboveground and underground—had 'rarely been encouraged or allowed to become spokespeople on Filipino issues' (Robie, unpublished paper, 1992). A national PASG assembly in January 1991 declared that Filipinos had the right to the leadership of the group but this was not honoured by the 'Australian-caucus'. According to the position paper 'The Situation in the Solidarity Movement' dated November 1990 and signed by eight Philippine-born, 'the role of

¹³¹ Melba Marginson boldly accused the Australian-dominated PASG being 'racists' (Melba Marginson, interview, March 26, 2011). Dee Hunt mildly hinted at how 'whites have taken over' and that they are 'not so nice to Filipinos' (Dee Hunt, interview, February 6, 2010). Deborah Wall, on the other hand, does not see the racism but instead attributed this to the Filipinos' inability to fit in within the ways things are under 'Aussie dominance' (Deborah Wall, email message to author, March 17, 2011).

Anglo-Australians in the solidarity movement is a support role'.¹³² This is because 'it is a *Philippine* solidarity movement' (emphasis original). The document asserts that 'Filipino-Australians...have the leading role in Philippine solidarity work in Australia' because they have [1] 'strong patriotic sentiments', [2] provide 'a primary source of activists', [3] because 'Filipino faces are the most credible in lobbying campaigns and in gaining public support, [4] they are 'trained to lead solidarity work'.

On the other hand, members of the 'Australian-caucus' in a statement released in *Philippine Issues*, argued in their own defense that while they admired the people's revolution in the Philippines as an example in the Asia-Pacific, the solidarity was primarily about 'assist[ing] the Australian Left in its work', and not about the Philippine movement itself, for 'such support cannot be given at the expense of further developing and supporting the Australian Left' ('Towards an Understanding of Philippine-Australia Solidarity' 1991, 2). It is further claimed that PASG 2 was also about 'practical activity based on an international perspective', consistent with the Comintern tradition that solidarity work is to be led by the 'locals' for the political education of their 'own' people. Robie (unpublished paper, 1992) posits that 'Filipinos have rarely been encouraged or allowed to become spokespeople on Filipino issues'. This summation is backed by the position paper allegedly made by the 'Australian-caucus'. Some of these are:

- [1] Filipinos do not know how to run organisations;
 - [2] Anglo-Australians know more about working in Australia than Filipino-Australians;
 - [3] Filipinos are difficult to work with;
 - [4] Filipinos do not consult;
 - [4] Positive discrimination for Filipinos is racist.
- ('Towards an Understanding of Philippine-Australia Solidarity' 1991)

¹³² The eight signatories of the position paper are: Bert Dellosa, May Kotsakis, Malou Logan, Melba Marginson, Al Noveloso, Gabby Ocampo, Raffy Saldana and Jose Vergara. Most of the names in this list are now members of Migrante Australia and/or Gabriela Australia.

Allegations of racism—real or imagined—were rife. Marginson remembers that an ex-cadre stood up in a meeting and in exasperation shouted '*puro kayo mga racista*' [you're all racists] (Melba Marginson, interview, March 26, 2011). For the recent migrants, they thought they had the talent, experience and the sharp ideological positioning being 'n.d.' themselves to lead the solidarity movement that had been led by Australians for so long. The refusal to acknowledge this was inexplicable except for a reason that is "'fundamentally white supremacist'", according to Simon Marginson (quoted in Robie 1992). The 'undermining' of the Filipino paid workers and the subsequent 'harassment', 'intimidation' and 'smear campaign' from the Australians are all 'shameful' acts of his 'fellow Anglo-Australians' (quoted in Robie 1992). However, the leadership of PASG and PASG 2 by the 'Australian caucus'—the locals—was a pivotal aspect of international solidarity, which ran counter to what Filipinos demanded: 'Filipino control of the PRC' and '[a]mong Anglo-Australians a new willingness to learn from Filipinos' ('The Situation in the Solidarity Movement', unpublished document, 1990). As Marginson expressed it: 'Filipinos are no longer happy to answer the phone for them' (Melba Marginson, interview, March 26, 2011).

**Claiming epistemic privilege:
Who is the local now?**

The problem of representation is evident in the situation above. Recent migrants who have found themselves space to participate in activism traditionally ruled by Australians are confronted with the question of which subjectivity they possess. Are they 'locals' for having relocated in Australia, or are they 'Filipinos', aliens, non-Australians, the object of solidarity? One way to look at this is through the

resemblance PASG and PASG 2 and the old social movements in the tradition of class struggle underpinned by Marxism. But PASG 2 found itself in the middle of a maelstrom in cross-national activism where a 'reflective solidarity' necessitates a decolonisation of relationships (Jodi Dean in Mohanty 2003, 7). Filipinos sought recognition as 'citizens' on an equal footing and not as political exiles which in the context of the Marcos dictatorship, they also were. The accusation of racism helped galvanise Filipino migrants' claim of epistemic privilege: *we are the very people you are fighting for*. Narayan's (1997) concept of the 'authentic insider' applies here where the 'native' uses this subjectivity as leverage towards specific goals. This view, however, was not shared by the Australian caucus who thought that 'Filipinos' were 'out there', not 'in here': the *them* are those who have nothing to eat, who experience low-intensity conflict and militarisation, and who live in fear on a daily basis. 'Filipinos in Australia' are first-world citizens who do solidarity work.

Claiming 'third-worldliness' as the right to representation is problematic for its insistence on essentialist cultural designations. While positioning oneself as 'third world' in a white-dominated group is admittedly an initiative towards reflexivity, one does not ignore that one's political citizenship needs further reflection as well. Consistent with today's activism that white, first-world actors *cannot* possibly know what it is to be non-white in a third-world country, the messianic complex, the white man's (or woman's) burden, has no place in solidarity work. In a similar but not the same way, the 'third-world' migrants in the first-world are first-world nonetheless, and this shift has significant consequences. The ethical questions that come with transnational and cross-cultural activism are no longer an option but imperative in practising solidarity grounded on the ethical respect of those who are positioned as

the object of one's charity. During my interview with activist Marginson, she curiously used the term 'home grown' to refer to herself and other members of PASG 2 who bolted out to form an all-Filipino group (Melba Marginson, interview, March 26, 2011). 'Home grown' means born and bred in the Philippines: a clear advantage that white Australians cannot ever possess. 'Homegrown' is a curious tag for two reasons: one is its appropriation of the notion of 'homegrown' as 'indigenous' or 'organic' in relation to the political work and those who do it; second is its claim that Filipino-Australians are rooted in a geography more than a product of migration.

In a song written by Christian Ramilo, another 'home grown', entitled 'This is My Life (I Want Control)', a possible allusion to the process of decolonising PASG 2, he wrote: 'So stop telling me that you understand,/ That you know how it really feels...So stop telling me that we're really the same./ That your say is as good as mine./When it's my life that's on the line...So stop telling me that I need you./That I won't survive without you' (Ramilo 1991, 7). Reducing the epistemology of oppression to those who 'own' it, Ramilo redefines solidarity as primacy of position vis-à-vis 'others' oppression. The poem/song is an indictment of the 'Australian caucus' ownership of the issues but also a privileging of the 'home grown' as if no one else can lay claim to solidarity work. This is the basis of the founding of the Centre for Philippine Concerns—Australia (CPCA), a landmark organisation discussed later.

It is interesting to note that Filipino-Australians in their fight against 'white' racism used this 'natural' representational capacity of the 'native'. But what Marginson and Ramilo missed was that claim of indigeneity, the positionality of Filipinos back 'home' is no longer wholly theirs; they have, in fact, joined the ranks of

first-world activists. They may not be white but they have the material benefits of the first-world that may foster 'blindness to those without the same privilege' (Mohanty 2003, 231). What Diane Nelson calls 'the enjoyments of solidarity' is something Filipino-Australians could now exercise; having 'the privileges that make that benevolence possible' (1999, 70). They must balance the roles of the oppressed, play the 'Filipino difference' and do these convincingly, but also appropriate the tools of the first-world at their disposal. The egoism of replacing white activists as 'big brothers' is something that the concept of 'home grown' does not address. Ann Deslandes rightly frames the dilemma of a first-world activist within fetishism and friendship. Fetishism because solidarity work needs to 'manage the alliance', 'to calculate it'; but also friendship that is 'always asymmetrical' (2009, 23-24) even if this friendship is between 'Filipinos'. Therefore, the question does not end with the need to decolonise solidarity. *What to do with decolonised solidarity?* is, I argue, the more challenging concern. Furthermore, as Australia itself has a painfully significant pocket of 'third world' citizens in black Australians, would it not be a courageous political act to extend one's claim to indigeneity, to one's 'nativeness' by decentring the already decolonised solidarity? While I do not endorse relativism—a much-questioned stance in activism these days—political action that stands on the 'culturalisation' of subjectivity ('Filipinoness') alone is equally dangerous.

The decolonisation of solidarity within PASG 2 hints at the complexity of citizenship and ethnicity as well. While white, first-world activists agonise over developing new ways to unlearn their 'whiteness', Filipinos as migrants need to define their claim towards acquired citizenship: the ethical ramifications of aspiring to be an 'Australian' while decolonising white paternalism. 'Understanding Philippine

Australian solidarity: A guide to Philippines-Australian solidarity work from the point-of-view of Filipino cadres and activists in Australia', dated May 1994, is a letter by Emilio Villa (allegedly the *nom de guerre* of Fidel Agcaoili), acting officer of the NDF Asia Pacific Committee, which shows the ambiguity of 'citizenship'. This letter was a kind of directive from the central committee on the issue of the 'First Split':

Australian solidarity groups (ASGs) for the Philippine struggle are organizations of *Australian nationals*. As such, they belong to and, in varying degrees, participate in the Australian struggle. They are therefore *outside of the leadership and control* of the Philippine movement...the Philippine movement has *no right* to organise Australians for the Australian struggle, nor to intervene in the internal affairs of Australia or Australian groups. (my emphasis)

In this I read a counter-decolonisation: a very rigid sense of what constitutes nationality and citizenship. The text imagines 'Australian nationals' as a group of white people, not even Indigenous Australians. Are Philippine-born migrants who have acquired new citizenship considered 'nationals'? Villa, discussed earlier—interestingly against 'White Fathers' that Australian 'Trotskyites' are—apes the logic of discrimination where boundaries are fixed and borders are closed. He elaborates on the independence of 'Australians' from 'Filipino' control in solidarity work, thus upholding the Comintern tradition.

Villa's intervention was critiqued by a CPCA member in a letter. The letter questions the (mis)use of citizenship: 'Australian nationality has never been a requirement for membership of ASGs'. The status of citizenship was raised for many PASG members who held different citizenships, some carried dual citizenships while others are citizens of other nations who reside in Australia but are not Australian nationals, and there are members who are citizens of the indigenous nations of Australia. Second, the phrase 'Philippine movement' needed to be qualified

because it does not differentiate between those who are solidarist from overseas and those who actually practice activism in Australia. The letter writer punctuates her argument well by claiming:

I define myself as a Filipino 'activist in Australia' of national democratic sentiment who is not a representative of the Philippine movement. Nor do I agree with the inclusive 'we' who 'consider such initiatives as part of our contribution to the Australian struggle in the spirit of *proletarian internationalism*'. I believe such articulations are no longer adequate or appropriate for the global issues we face today. 'Proletarian internationalism' has been found sorely wanting as a stance of global solidarity when it comes to the issues of women and indigenous peoples.
(Emphasis original)

The letter writer, by the way, holds an American passport but is racially part Filipino. She, too, disputes the term 'Australian struggle' as merely the fight for class equality of the working class; the Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander peoples are equally if not more worthy of the term, she says. Finally, this case illustrates how the process of decolonisation in solidarity movements does not necessarily occur uniformly at all levels of the hierarchy. Moreover, the ambivalent position of migrants as neither here nor there, first-world and third-world and who vacillate from a position of privilege to that of being discriminated shows how paternalism shifts and calculatingly moves to keep solidarity from breaking new ground.

This was the 'First Split'; a groundbreaking attempt to decolonise early Philippine-Australian solidarity formation. But what is clear at this point is the inevitability of conflict as the white-Australian solidarity movement experienced being challenged by 'home grown' Filipino activists. I do not intend to dilute the accusation of racism by Filipinos, which some still feel strongly about today, by suggesting that decolonisation of solidarity may have been a wresting of leadership from one by the other. Nipping racist attitudes in the bud within a group can only be

a tacit expression of decolonisation. On the other hand, I do not discount the possibility that the *coup d'état* the Filipino caucus was aiming for was partly a consequence of the racism they experienced. As Wall recalled, 'Aussies have their way of doing their thing'—racist or not—it is as if one way is more 'natural' than another way, hence it is more legitimate (Deborah Wall, interview, November 7, 2010).

The solidarity movement in Australia for the Philippines in the 1970s was also a time of rapid changes in the social composition of the country. As a modern nation-state that slowly deregulated its borders to immigrants, Australia experienced a paradigm shift from its racist past. In the way that white Australia was being phased out, 'white solidarity' was facing confrontation by the unfamiliar: not unlike the way multiculturalism challenges the host society's old way of life. The once object of solidarity now desired to be the agents of solidarity. The comfortable zone and hold on political representation in the left as territorially 'white' was gone. In a manner of speaking, Philippine solidarity in Australia was itself tested by migration and multiculturalism: once the source of its strength, then its downfall.

**The 'Second Split':
To reject or to reaffirm**

In the wake of the fall of Marcos in 1986, the CPP's abrogation of the EDSA revolution, the purges in guerrilla fronts, and then the subsequent break-away of Manila-Rizal commission, the 'united front' was not only reduced in numbers but underwent a 'democratisation' in the hierarchy of cadres. Some like Felimon Lagman pursued urban-based operations as *vigilante* hit squads, some formed

NGOs, some joined the government as civil servants. A restructuring of this magnitude inevitably reorganised Australia's solidarity formations as well. PASG 2 broke up soon after the establishment of the Centre of Philippine Concerns – Australia (CPCA) in November 1991. It was also the time when Sison released the 'Reaffirm' manifesto that 'officially' divided the Party. Before this, Crispin Beltran of *Kilusang Mayo Uno* (May First Movement) spoke about the stance of the labour union supporting the Tiananmen Square massacre of students in 1989. This possibly did not sit well with white Australians whose government accepted Chinese students as residents as an act of solidarity and where public opinion was a condemnation of the violence.

On 10 April 1991, eight months before CPCA was formally launched, a letter to 'friends' signed by Joy Balazo, an activist for Uniting World, introduced the formation of an all-Filipino organisation 'to respond to the growing need for co-ordination and co-operation among Filipinos within the Philippine solidarity movement' (Joy Balazo, letter to friends of CPCA, April 10, 1991). This is the move of the 'Filipino caucus' towards self-determination in solidarity work. According to Hunt, 'the ultimate issue here is IDENTITY' (Dee Hunt, email message to author, April 19, 2011; emphasis original). The 'mutineers' from white PASG 2 were determined to put up an all-Filipino solidarity group. This, of course, attracted criticism: 'we were accused of racism by one stream of opposition and from another we were told that we could not "be in solidarity with ourselves"', remembers Hunt (Dee Hunt, email message to author, April 19, 2011). Nevertheless, despite hostility, CPCA was born with a great sense of success as Filipinos *but also* as Australians searching for autonomy, identity and political representation of the community. Again,

Marginson's invocation of 'home grown' to describe CPCA is her way of framing a new way of doing solidarity. What she has in mind is, I believe, 'grassrooting' migrant activism in diaspora, maximising the epistemic advantage to manage solidarity work and introduce a third space: migrant activism.

In its 'mission statement' printed in the *C.P.C.A. Newsletter's* pilot issue, the three aims of the group are:

[1] [t]o empower the Filipino migrant community by promoting its well-being and rights to a better economic, cultural and political life in Australia; [2] [t]o generate support among the Filipino and the broader Australian communities for justice, peace, national sovereignty and sustainable development in the Philippines; [3] [t]o lend support to struggles of other peoples for self-determination and social justice. (January-March 1992, 15; emphasis original)

CPCA, firstly, held itself responsible to its 70,000 (in the early 1990s) Filipino-Australian audience, an unambiguous departure from PASG's beginnings. What came second was solidarity work with Philippine issues and then third, local activist work, in particular with the Aboriginal and Islander nations of Australia.

The CPCA had expanded the social and political domains in its list of concerns; two areas that CPCA wanted to concentrate on were migrant issues and women's issues. As their successes and their exposure in mainstream media suggest, the 'mail-order bride' was the most urgent issue for them to take on. Indeed, one of its laurels was lobbying the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC), now Australian Human Rights Commission, to sponsor the study *Gender, 'Race' and International Relations: Violence Against Filipino Women in Australia* by Cunneen and Stubbs (1997). Grounded on a critical feminist framework from the data gathered by CPCA and the Filipino community, this work is an insightful foray into the 'social problem' of trafficked women and domestic violence. Another is the

approval of the legislation on Domestic Violence Provisions of the Migration Act in 1995, attributed to Filipino women's growing voice and presence in the public sphere. Irene Moss, then Race Discrimination Commissioner, acknowledged the 'lobbying work' of the CPCA under Marginson's leadership which legitimated the problem to enter Australia's legal concerns (Dee Hunt, email message to author, May 4, 2011). Further to this, in 1994, the CPCA held a multisectoral national conference/workshop in Melbourne, Victoria attended by government representatives, community service providers, organisers and workers, and more importantly, survivors of domestic violence.¹³³ This gathering of women was indeed a milestone in Filipino-Australian activism, in particular, of the community's intervention in gendered violence. It identified the much-needed strategies and recommendations that could translate into more efficient measures to decrease the number of deaths and abuses but also to educate Australian institutions such as the police as well as the general public on gendered migration. The year after, 1995, the CPCA spearheaded a study/exposure tour to the Philippines composed of Australian and New Zealand nationals, which later resulted in an important report, 'Confronting sexual exploitation: Campaign against sex tourism and trafficking in Filipino women' (1995). Earlier in 1993, CPCA Perth worked hard to campaign against Kenneth Morgan's (1992) *War of the Sexes*, giving advice to other Australians how to bring over 'female OR male virgins from the Philippines': first, to ban its release in the Philippines; second, for the Philippine Embassy to publicly condemn the book, a guide to buying 'brides' into Australia; and third, to neutralise the effect of an honorary consul's, a Filipino woman herself, *de facto* endorsement of the book by

¹³³ 'Questionnaire, Program, Guidelines and Results. Stopping Violence Against Filipino Women: A Government and Community Responsibility.' National conference organised by the Centre for Philippine Concerns-Australia (CPCA) and the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC), October 6-7, 1994. My gratitude to Dee Hunt for leading me to this source.

participating in its launch and accepting the proceeds for the victims of Mt. Pinatubo eruption.¹³⁴ The birth of Filipino-Australian migrant activism, without doubt, is midwifed by CPCA: there was autonomy, solidarity, direction and an audience.

The CPCA's vigorous campaigns on Filipino women's sexualisation in Australia however would soon be challenged, however, by the problems back 'home'; they would be asked either to 'reaffirm' or to 'reject'. The short-lived CPCA newsletter, I speculate, is the 'collateral damage' of the 'Second Split', apart from the usual logistical problems of small publications. 'There was confusion, uncertainty, suspicion and insecurity among solidarity activists, Filipinos & non-Filipinos, and this affected the level of trust amongst some individuals in all the groups' (Dee Hunt, email message to author, April 19, 2011). This was how Hunt remembers those days, reflective of the RA/RJ struggle in the Philippines that was bitter and destructive where 'antagonism is not only justified, it is obligatory' (Rocamora, unpublished paper, 2002). The ripple effect reached the shores of Australia. Marginson recalls how 'stressful' those times were. She was busy with CPCA when Fidel Agcaoilii, discussed earlier, visited Australia. Marginson recalls that his first stop in his 'loyalty check' was CPCA Sydney which he successfully oriented about the RA/RJ split, thus, obtaining the 'conversion' of most its members to RA politics.¹³⁵ Because she did not want CPCA Melbourne to suffer the same fate, '*ayaw kong mabiyak kami*' ['I do not want us to break apart'], Marginson said they all pretended to be loyal to the party when the knock on the

¹³⁴ Andrea Banaag Niblett defended her action by claiming that it was philanthropic (Letter to the Editor by Andrea Niblett, February 22, 1993). In the same letter, she claims that Morgan's book is about 'morality of decent honest, innocent Filipino men and women'. The Filipino community in Perth and elsewhere called for her replacement. CPCA Perth was insistent prodding Ambassador Rora Navarro-Tolentino to protest against the book 'to uphold the dignity of the Filipino' without 'interfer[ing] in the exercise of the civil liberties' of Morgan (Letter to Mel Gallagher by Rora Navarro-Tolentino, February 26, 1993). Many thanks to Dee Hunt for leading me to this information.

¹³⁵ The names Marginson enumerated are now affiliated with either *Migrante Australia* and/or *Gabriela*, both known RA camps. (Melba Marginson, interview, March 26, 2011).

door by Agcaoili finally came (Melba Marginson, interview, March 26, 2011). She believed that activism in Australia was beyond the scope of the Party, thus, the refusal to remain under the party's bureaucracy.

This 'Second Split' that divided Filipino activism later gave way to the formation of two new groups, Migrante Australia and Gabriela Australia. These two groups which share members, activities, and a website, among other resources, have little collaborative work with non-RA Filipino activist formations. According to Marginson, this split caused tension especially in the beginning when gossip and intrigue were spread and CPCA members were being hijacked by an emerging camp.¹³⁶

I attempted to reach as many sources as possible for this research; it was unfortunate that RA-affiliated activists thought it was not an opportune forum to participate in. Writing a migrant ethnography as an interruption and intervention in the 'ordinary' life of the Filipino community, I was caught in the ongoing 'war': the paranoia and distrust haunting the Philippine left found me; something that critics attribute to its lack of moral accountability and the delayed justice for the victims of the purges.

The animosity has not always been like this, remembers Hunt. There was a time when Gabriela (Manila) would have had a presence in PASG *Queensland* (later *Kasama*) such as articles on Atel Hijos' speaking tour in Brisbane (September-

¹³⁶ One claim made by Marginson was that two members of CPCA then were 'taken' by the RA, 'ginapang' (rootword: 'gapang', 'to crawl') was the word she used to describe the stealthy way they were 'courted' by the other camp. They are now active leaders of *Migrante Australia*. (Melba Marginson, interview, March 26, 2011).

December 1992) and Gabriela's WISAP conference (March-April 1991). However, in 1994, there was 'a push on the part of some CPCA women to commit [CPCA] to an exclusive partnership with Gabriela which would preclude any relationships with other women's groups in the Philippines without Gabriela's approval' (Dee Hunt, email message to author, April 19, 2011). For CPCA Brisbane and the Solidarity Philippines Australia Network (SPAN), this would hamper activism in the general sense. Hunt, of CPCA Brisbane and *Kasama* newsletter, declares that they are 'not part of a united front with either RA or RJ' but admitted that they have partnerships with some 'RJ non-party formations' (Dee Hunt, email message to author, April 19, 2011). These two groups associated with Hunt continue to be knowledge and cultural producers of Filipino-Australian activism and update the databank of information on gendered violence against Filipino women that 'national' CPCA started two decades ago. In the Bayanihan International Solidarity Conference in Manila in 2001, Australia was represented by Hunt who took on board 'divergent political perspectives' reflective of the shifting modes of transnational solidarity today. No longer controlled from the centre, social movements now are more inclusive and pluralist. Hunt explained how the sheer size of Australia makes it impossible to run a centralised operation from Sydney or Melbourne alone, thus, it is more practical for groups to localise in order to exercise greater autonomy (Bayanihan 2001). This is, of course, is the same tendency governing Filipino-Australian print culture in general and the publishing of ethnic newspapers of Filipinos in particular. Australia's spatial attributes and migrant distribution in its largest cities shape not only print activities but also the directions and limits of migrant activism.

Filipino-Australian activism today is very much under the influence of the 'RJ'/'RA' separation, and their differences are better illustrated by a comparison of two newsletters. *Kasama* is maintained by CPCA Brisbane and SPAN which despite the absence of advertisements has been publishing regularly for the past twenty-four years with well-maintained archives accessible online since 1998. The newsletter covered the 'mail-order bride' killings and the deportation of Solon-Alvarez with great attention not only because they are Filipinos but also because they are women. It is in this basic political groundedness that it writes about Indigenous women of Australia, of a prostituted woman who died in Villawood detention centre, of domestic servants languishing in jail overseas, among others. Other themes found in *Kasama* are poverty, conflict resolution, fair trade, North/South economies, indigenous rights, multiculturalism and race issues, labour migration with a focus on OFWs, human rights, death penalty, community development, suffrage, US aggression and others. *Kasama* has published features on Garcia's *To Suffer Thy Comrades* and essays by Nathan Quimpo; both are ex-CPP cadres. Publications based in Queensland, from the *PASG Newsletter* to *Kasama*, have exhibited a level of independence from the party politics and personality differences that plagued the centres: Sydney and Melbourne. The often-cited provincialism of the state is possibly the strength that enabled newsletters to continue for so long. Moreover, the openness of CPCA-Brisbane and SPAN to accommodate multi-ethnic families as members separates them from other Filipino migrant *barkada* (circle of friends). *Kasama* today is aligned with issues that involve Indigenous Australians, a development that is nurtured by the local conditions and peopling of Queensland but more by the decision of Hunt to remain political. CPCA Melbourne, previously

under Marginson's leadership, has become apolitical; it is now an 'ethnic' social group.

Batingaw [Bell, Herald]: *The New Voice of Filipino Migrants in Australia*, was born on March 2006 under the auspices of *Migrante Melbourne*. It features articles about *Kilusang Mayo Uno*, *Karapatan* (Rights), *BAYAN*, 'RA' leftist formations based in the Philippines; Philippine Australian Solidarity Association (PASA), Philippine Australian Union Link (PAUL), and Philippine-Australia Caucus for Peace (PACP), all organisations based in Australia; and Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) and Australian Manufacturing Workers Union (AMWU), both labour unions in Australia coordinating with *Migrante*. The newsletter also features campaigns for known personalities such as free-Crispin Beltran, drop Sison from the U.S. terrorist list; a call for Zero Remittance Day as a protest against the export of Filipino workers; Operation *Sagip Migrante* for Typhoon Ondoy's victims in the Philippines; among others. *Batingaw*, in all of its twenty-four issues I covered for this chapter, does not veer away from the same set of issues and personalities found in *bulatlat.com*, a known RA website, except for the specificity of Filipino-Australian migrant issues. Even Sison's condemnation of the reactionary politics of the Dalai Lama, a revered icon of peace for most Westerners, is reprinted in *Batingaw*. The 'RAness' of *Batingaw*, discussed below, can also be ascribed to *Kasama's* 'RJness'.

On a final note, Filipino activism in Australia today is necessarily configured by the demands of state multiculturalism to which its very existence is a reaction. Whenever *Kasama* publishes articles condemning the racism against Indigenous Australians, it is a response to a white multiculturalism that sublimates the question of

this third-world pocket. Whenever *Batingaw* indicts the Australian government for its complicity with TNCs and exploitation of Filipinos who are paid three-dollars per hour, it is also a reaction to a multicultural ideology that misrecognises their presence but benefits from their labour power. Multiculturalism, moreover, is apparent in the way Migrante Australia and Gabriela Australia conduct their activities, not just the content of their newsletter. Ethnic identification as 'Filipino' is exercised in both *Kasama* and *Batingaw* but it is with the latter that 'quartering' of the ethnic is more evident. These groups have picnics, Christmas parties, outings and other gatherings that are as 'Filipino' as any other *Pinoy* organisation in the 'enclave'. One aspect that separates them is their politically angled reason to gather and celebrate. Take, for instance, Migrante's celebration of International Human Rights Day with 'yummy food and drinks' and 'games and fun', or a 'road trip' from Melbourne to South Australia to organise a union. These are documented in pictures and published in *Batingaw*. '*Pasyel*' (*Pasyal sa Yelo*), where the activists and their families ride the snowmobile and toboggan, ski, build a snowman or snow castle, among others, is a social activity that straddles an 'ethnic' thing to do and activism. 'RA' Filipino-Australians have discovered how it is to be ethnically segregated, socialise within this 'ethnic' boundary, and pursue political activism. One may observe that in the early incarnation of Philippine solidarity, the 'ethnic' concerns of multi-racial Australia were not very evident. The minority position of Filipino migrants in the late 1970s had not yet configured Philippine-Australian activist newsletters as clearly 'multicultural'.

Conclusion

How does the history of solidarity work impact on migrant activism in Australia today? How did the 'First Split'—a quest for decolonisation of solidarity and self-determination—and the 'Second Split'—to reject or reaffirm, to centralise or pluralise politics—create the mechanism guiding political action among Filipino migrants? There is no one single direct answer to these questions. But I can offer a few observations. First, I argue that while the break up in the CPP hierarchy has shaken those who move in and out of its system and its international solidarity networks, the impact was softened by the 'First Split' that came before it. Second, this 'First Split': decolonising solidarity and self-determination, was a period of victory. The 'Second Split', however, was a time of losses from the successes that had just been won. Sowing the seeds of antagonism and suspicion, friendships ended and comradeship was split into two. Third, the 'First Split' concretised Filipino-Australian migrant activism through the birth of CPCA. The 'Second Split', however, pluralised this formation with both positive and negative effects. Both splits nonetheless invigorated newsletter production.

In writing the history of Philippine activism in Australia and documenting its print culture, this study stumbled upon a turbulent past that defined social relations among migrants today and their understanding of race, ethnicity, ideology, and political loyalty within solidarity. The struggles narrated in this chapter are telling of the complexities that impinge on the politicisation of a migrant community that is both distant but not quite removed from the 'object' of solidarity: from the 'Filipino' people to the 'Filipino-Australian'. The 'First Split' and the 'Second Split' are rare

events that define a people for a long period of time in the way they behave and conduct their affairs. The personalities involved in it—the church people, the early migrants, the 'Australian caucus', the 'n.d. elements', socialist-Australians-turned-RJ, party big bosses, and others—are all contributing forces in the inevitable unfolding of the narrative of activism between the Philippines and Australia. What remains to be seen, however, is the future of militancy of second-generation *Filoz*. Will it take shape in the same way as it did in the United States when 'Americanised' young Filipinos sought to find their roots and were eventually seduced by the left politics of the party? Whatever it may be, the current state of indifference, even antagonism, between one solid block of activists and the pluralist others will continue to define how young Filipino-Australians will receive activism in the name of a 'home' they imagine differently: the Philippines, but also an Australian 'home' where their belonging is conditional on their sexualised citizenship.

Conclusions

Of acts of remittance and the culturalisation of sexualised citizenship

Searching for Filipinos and for 'Filipinoness' through their print cultural production in Australia has taken this research to examine social relations of a group of people who themselves continue to struggle in finding meaningful ways to place 'Australia' in the Filipino. An ethnography of Filipino-Australians is a journey that takes one back to crucial times of migration history and to open and closed spaces of a neighbouring country with a history of colonisation as fraught as the migrants' experience of it. Failure to find connections between these two countries' encounter with the painful processes that accompany colonisation (both as coloniser and colonised) and the burst of postcolonial nationalism that follows could mean a superficial understanding of how Australia enabled and disabled Philippine-born migrations. The writing of this history is an ethnography of colonial relations: coloniality between men and women, white and coloured, the rich and the poor. The collective 'fate' that the migrant group has taken—their representations, their stereotypes, their place under the Australian sun—depends on the exertion of practices of coloniality and the resistant acts that counter them. While evaluating the production and consumption of print culture in a migrant setting yields very specific observations on the economic and social relations within the community, there are also broader implications that emerged regarding the global movement of Filipinos, the cultural imprints they make anew and the new cultures which human mobility and the making of the everyday forge. The material gain of this scattering,

in the form of transnational remittances, is one trace of mobility and the psychic (trans/national) consequences of diaspora, also read as the 'cultural', is another.

By way of concluding this study, I see Filipino-Australian print culture as a form of remittance, a term I split in two interpretive threads. It is a remittance that functions not like money and is thus less quantifiable but not necessarily intangible. 'The remittances are very crucial for the welfare and indeed survival of the family in the Philippines', writes Coulbourn, a rather ordinary use of the term (2002, 168). Yet the words 'remit' and 'remittance' which mean 'to send', the origin of which is the Latin *remittere*, also means 'to abstain from exacting (a payment or service of any kind); to allow to remain unpaid (or unperformed)' (OED 2011). To remit, in this sense, is to allow someone to remain off the hook while letting some debt or responsibility remain unfulfilled; it is also, more importantly, to acknowledge the 'unfulfillment'. I make an opposition between the two meanings—'to send something' and 'to abstain from exacting'—as an analogy that fittingly describes print culture and its capacity to read diaspora as phenomenon as *gift* and *guilt*, or gifting circumscribed in guilt.

The concept of remittances is also seen either as salvation from a sinking neoliberal economy or the trade-off for the breaking up of the nuclear family; a paradox where the family as private sphere is given up in the name of the public, national family. They are a source of conflict in interracial marriages but also a psychic bridge between two or more national boundaries. Thus, whenever the World Bank releases the yearly remittance figures from migrants, such as the Philippines in the fourth place in 2010 after India, China and Mexico, there is a sense of relief that

those who left have not forgotten the left behind. But this also provokes a kind of silent panic, a resignation to the hopelessness of being dependent on selling labour overseas, especially when the Philippines relied on \$23 billion in 2011 pumped into the economy from its transnational citizens (Mohapatra, Ratha and Silwal 2011). Yet urgency with which money transfers are received and diasporic philanthropy is valorised—both by senders and recipients—eclipse other forms of remittances. Print culture is a parallel phenomenon as I see it.

Filipino print culture in Australia is a remitting, a sending—a *gifting*—so to speak. It is an effort of many in imagining a common ground, thus, creating *not* one but many Filipino print culture(s) in Australia. Immersed in a social setting so diverse, so different from one's own cultural milieu, it is easy to believe that there is a unifying cultural environment essential and contingent on the survival of migrants. One almost always seeks the comfort of familiarity amidst the dizzying degrees and shades of 'differences' that one carries (and has bestowed upon one) in a nation that prides itself as multicultural despite a white majority. As an ethnographer who is also a temporary resident in Australia, I was equally enthralled by reactions and responses that my 'difference' commands, and by the reactions and responses that my self-conscious 'difference' elicits in me. Filipino-Australian print culture exhibits the same demands of self-consciousness that being 'different' makes. The compendium of writings gathered under a homogenising name—'Filipino-Australian print culture'—is an attempt to address the pains and enjoyment of migration, the sadness and riches of facing one's 'difference'. Because similarities and differences in a multicultural society are both relative and fixed, shifting yet persistent—the migrant can assume becoming 'Australian' but can never be 'Australian' at the same time—the very

materiality of print culture attests to the commonness of being 'Filipino' vis-à-vis *others* but also the differences of being 'Filipino' vis-à-vis *each other*.

Despite divisions along the lines of class, gender, sex, ethno-linguistic belonging, among others—thus, the lack of uniformity that would render it as one—Filipino-Australian print culture, on the whole, is the community's response to the feminisation and marginalisation as symbolised by the 'mail-order bride'. The production of novels, memoirs, anthologies and collections, are undertakings to resist the overpowering signification of the label 'mail-order bride' that has cast a long shadow on the community. Although some quasi-feminist projects end up valorising the 'middle class migrant'—the rhetoric of 'we too have professionals like white people'—instead of critiquing white dominance in inscribing Filipino women as the embodiment of 'sexage' (Guillamin 1995), these cultural productions are nonetheless intellectual labour of resistance, a protesting against their sexualised citizenship in Australia. While many texts exemplify such resistant framework, there are those expressing repressed hostility towards the 'mail-order bride'. This *ressentiment*—a disavowal yet an actualisation of a desire—takes the form in scapegoating the 'mail-order bride' as sublimation of the repressed aggression against white Australia that cannot be expressed. Nevertheless, even if this hostility engendered a theoretical failure, it had a constructive social effect in gathering members of the community to rally against domestic violence that in a broader way redefined the practices of activism in diaspora. These responses I read as inestimable acts of *gifting*; while strategic and self-centred in most cases, they nevertheless are remittances forged in a moment of kindness.

The idea of print culture as a remitting to the land and the people one has left behind 'for good' is all the more poignant given the singularity by which Filipino women are crucified. I would even argue that the Filipino community is *not* really part of multicultural Australia. Although this may seem a bold argument to pursue as it goes against established discursive formations in state multiculturalism, and bluntly, against commonsense, I put forward my argument on the ground of the unique place that the community occupies. The location of Filipinos in Australia is a consequence not simply of white Australia's techniques of governing a multicultural nation but is significant also in influencing how migrants respond to the mechanism. I raise the argument pointing to the racial and sexual category—the political uses of the gendered migration of Filipinos—against which Australia defines itself as a nation governed by consistency, democracy, justice, among other values of the 'free' world. One might conjure the vision of a female Christ naked on the cross—the narrative of Christian passion so embedded in the Filipino psyche—where feminised bodies are sacrificed for the multitude and the print culture carved out of this sacrificing a priceless remitting. 'To remit' is an intimation of a national grand narrative not dissimilar from the passion of the Christ in sacrificing life for the salvation of many.

If migrant print culture, in all its accomplishments and failures, is a transnational remittance sending, a gifting to one's home, it is also a ramification of abstention, a gifting for being away from home. The continuous printing of ethnic newspapers not for profit, of books and anthologies unsold and absent in libraries, of newsletters that are binned before being read, is a symptom of the need to keep sending 'home' signs of life; home as a place more symbolic than physical. Like a

relative remitting money out of *utang na loob* (literally 'debt of/from the inside') and *hiya/hiyain* (shame/ to embarrass someone), migrant writing might as well be expressions of self-imposed obligation to the national family. The acts of sending money and publishing in permanent diaspora are both about extending a connection that one does not wish to expire, a reaching out to a receiver because of an internalised guilt. Money and diasporic culture are abstractions that are remitted because one cannot sever the ties that bind.

Because ties are not dissolved by distance alone, transborder remittances operate on the notion of *utang na loob* which is a gifting given, more than a borrowing solicited, at crucial times when no amount of money or unscrupulous interest rate can cancel the debt. The very interiority of *loob* is what makes it different from the common debt. The idea of *loob* has weighty implications with the concept of *hiya/hiyain*. A person's capacity to feel and therefore acknowledge *utang na loob* depends on whether she could feel *hiya*; otherwise, she would be embarrassed by one whose patronage she owes. 'Hiya thus colors the entire spectrum of indebtedness, signalling both its operation and its failure' (Rafael 1988, 127). I believe that the presence of *hiya* implies the feeling of guilt. The very act of sending money or a *balikbayan* box has psychic and ethical demands similar to those demanded by guilt. A transaction of moving cash transnationally is contingent on the interiority of *hiya* that an immigrant harbours and then enacts as *utang na loob* to the larger family, the *bayan* (the nation).

On the other hand, because it is a gifting away from home, remitting *from* is also a deferring of punishment or sacrifice to someone who sinned or failed to

perform; an exceptionally strong interpretation if seen in the context of a suffering *bayan*: a nation as a family of sufferers inextricably bound by the passion of a colonial past, a troubled present and a bleak future. The migrant as a metaphorical figure of a son or daughter who left the family for greener pasture is a common reading of the Filipino; '*ang bagong bayani*', literally the 'modern-day heroes' rhetoric of the state. The valorisation of the nomadic labourer as a saviour of the national family is well entrenched in the continuing brokering of cheap Filipino labour in the world. But what is less articulated in public is to cast immigrants as defectors who absconded from the corral of the suffering family, a deserter of the *Inang-bayan* (Motherland). A child born into hardship has then remitted from the suffering of the family/nation, an escape from being Filipino. Yet, this abstention, the casting of immigrants as turncoats is possibly a result of an aggrandisement or self-dramatisation of the left behind as authentically 'Filipino'. The ones who left—especially the new 'citizens' of the first-world—can never recover what they have lost. The primacy given to this 'situatedness', the immobility of the 'unfortunate' others, the oppressiveness of geography, I would argue, is precisely the rationale behind the imagining and articulation of the immigrant as turncoat. In other words, the invalidation of the transnational citizen as 'Filipino' is also, painfully, a recognition of one's immobility. That without the categorical existence of the defector—the remitted Filipino—the rhetoric of the suffering masses, thus, the nomadic labourer as 'hero', is *not* conceivable. Forms of connective transactions like diaspora philanthropy, diaspora capitalism and diaspora nationalism, are faithfully practised to assuage the guilt and to pay for the *hiya* caused by remitting from being Filipinos.

Reading migrant print culture as a remittance to and a remitting from the 'Filipino' people, however, is possibly part of a larger movement. The shift from racialism to culturalism in new multicultural societies, which was coeval with the re-centring of 'culture' as relative and yet 'natural', possesses an almost universal acceptance today. Although the Filipino community and all the rest of non-Anglo migrants are, strictly speaking, under the regulative mandate of pluralism, each of these 'ethnic' groupings occupies a role in maintaining the logic of multiculturalism as a bastion of tolerance, equality and opportunity of the modern nation-state. The racism that multiculturalism hopes to overcome is reformulated into the more subtle understandings and applications of cultural otherness. Non-white immigrants know this only too well. Because 'scientific' racial differences—the basis of earlier colonialist expansion—have been replaced (but not necessarily diluted) by 'cultural' otherness, thus, somewhat applicable to everyone, even to the dominant white, Filipinos and other people of colour are 'different' because of *what they are* (culturally) not because they are racialised. Since anthropology disciplined us well to think that all cultures are equal and beautiful, racism in multicultural societies is not racism any longer but swept under the 'universality' of cultures being different from each other. Valentine Moghadam points to this return to culture since the late 1980s as a movement that 'has taken on a weight of its own, reified, even sacralized' (1994, 6). Culture as a kind of transcendental means that diasporic communities in global cities—having been ascribed an emancipatory capacity by cultural theorists as they are hybrid—are in a position to deliver change (Cheah 1997, 160).

The symbolic role given cultural production, in particular, as the main arena of struggle of a sexualised community, is symptomatic of the cultural turn in theory and

an effect of the dominant practices in multiculturalism's replacement of racialism with culturalism. This shift in 'culturalising' the other, such as the sexualised 'mail-order bride', ties neatly with the profiteering of a neoliberalist system in mobilising third-world populations. My reading of migrant print culture as remittance, and of migrant bodies as a remitting from being Filipino is consistent with the centrality of postcolonial nationalism. I argue that the usefulness of the discourse of remittance where stable national subjects are bound to read their immobility as loyalty, allows global capitalism the appropriation of the many by the few and is in keeping with the culturalisation of the 'ethnic' other.

The Filipino community suffers a cultural otherness—and I do not refer to *balut*, karaoke or beauty contests—that stands on the painful history of hyperfeminisation. Whereas 'old' racism reduces people into geneticist types, culture-based racism diffuses the social world of others into the tolerable yet still 'different' ways of organising and performing their everyday. So much so that a question whether *there might be something about the culture* of Filipinos that makes them more 'prostitutable' than others is conceivable; this question was, in fact, raised by a white female academic to a white male academic presenting on the widespread presence of Filipino women as live-sex performers online in a conference I attended. The reduction of racial, class and other forms of othering of 'ethnic' women as possibly 'cultural' dangerously tucks sexual subordination under the rubric of 'history' as well, so that Filipino women are like *that* because of their irreversible past: being a 'mistress' to three different masters (Spain, United States and Japan) as the clichéd imagery captures well. In turn, Filipino-Australian projects such as FAWAA anthologies and newspapers, amongst others, seeking to redress the injustices of this

sexualisation are developed mainly within the domain of the cultural. It is as if in cultural production alone—because nothing is outside culture—that the struggle for desexualisation of the other, or at least, mitigating the 'mail-order bride' effects, is played out.

The 'culturalisation' of the sexualised citizen and the attempt at desexualisation also occurs within mainstream culture, an indicator of Filipino-Australian successes as plugged into the larger multicultural body. They have their *fiestas*, they win 'model-minority' awards, their children join Australia's *So You Think You Can Dance*, win spelling bees and wear their national costume in multicultural parades. This, however, is not the participation that successfully embeds 'Filipinoness' to an acceptable degree in white society, nor the kind of contribution that could neutralise the role Filipino migration has played out and against which Australians define themselves: sexual enslavement, otherness, poverty. Multiculturalism, first of all, is a masculine affair; it thrives on the patriarchal operations of nationalism and heterosexual values. The migration of Filipino women, deemed as an irregular contract that violates racial and class boundaries, masculinises not only white Australia but also, by extension, the pluralist society that benefits from the stigmatising feminisation of a specific group over others. While I do not suggest that other 'minority' groups are not demonised, their migration is dependent on legitimate discourses that are often attached to the 'generosity' of multiculturalism. Although ostracised especially during the Howard regime, migrants as refugees and asylum seekers possess legitimacy that the Filipino as the 'embodiment of exchange' does not have. While colonial, class, racial and, yes, sexual relations define all these streams of migration to Australia, none stands on exceptionally gendered grounds.

None are called 'opportunistic whores', 'household appliance with sex organs', or 'sex slaves for a visa'.

In writing an ethnography of Filipinos in Australia, despite consistently holding on to the idea that sexism and racism are inseparable knowledge regimes that discipline the other, I, however, given the hostile xenophobia against the Filipino woman, see how a migrant is primarily 'sexed' and then secondarily, 'raced'. Due in part to the 'cultural turn' in the managing of multiculturalism, the sexualised migrant cannot escape the gaze of her sexualisation to which she is subjected. Her sexualised migration is read as a 'cultural' *thing*, something Filipinos *do* in the first place, a provocation to white masculinity or a desiring, given her 'natural' inclination. But one wonders what this culturalisation does to those who wield the power to 'culturalise'? The 'culturalisation' of the sexed Filipino woman—indeed, the very name 'Filipina' is almost synonymous with debased femininity—is not simply a working of culture. Rather, it coincides with the tangible benefits of keeping women as a subjugated class. In a world economic order that maximises feminised labour, whether situated in industrial free-trade zones or in the domestic confines of the first-world, the surfacing of sexualised subjects as new forms to which transnational and translational cultures give rise is, in no uncertain terms, profitable. Corraling the discourse on the level of culture is not simply productive in neoliberal capitalism but also convenient; it narrows the fields of struggle into the less rigorous, less dangerous 'cultural' arena. To a certain extent, my work is a testament to this 'culturalisation' of the feminised subject for I analyse migrant print culture as a further participation—a validation, perhaps—in the discursive elaboration of the 'mail-order bride' community and the challenges of migrant life as 'cultural'.

What Sara Ahmed (2010, 158) calls the 'melancholic migrant' for the unceasing unhappiness of an ethnic subject despite her official citizenship is instructive of the shroud of sadness of the Filipino-Australian community. The 'alien affects' engendered by everyday racism against sexualised citizens are attempted to be overcome by some gatekeepers of the community through a forgetting; that it is only through this disavowal and erasure that the unhappiness of being the sexual other can be lifted. Yet the unhappiness of being known as the 'mail-order bride' community, of *not* forgetting the injustices of racism, of fighting it and becoming 'affect aliens' in white Australia is what Filipino print culture is ambivalent about: to be happy in forgetting or to remain unhappy by deferring a forgetting. While cultural productions of migrants are attempts to overcome the unhappiness of 'difference', more specifically of the *unremittable* 'mail-order bride', this *overcoming* stands on the *coming over* of gendered bodies that does not seem to be letting up any time soon.

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"Aims and Constitution of Philippines Australia Solidarity Group (N.S.W.)." By the Philippines Australia Solidarity Group NSW. 1988.

"Constitution." By the Philippine Action Support Group Sydney. April 1, 1985.

"CPP not Terrorist." By Joel Rocamora. Institute for Popular Democracy. September 14, 2002.

"Guidelines for the Filipino-Australian Achievement Award Selection Panel. By the FAWAA ACT Task Force. 2001.

"Ideologies and Pressure Groups against the Martial Law Government in the Philippines." By the Philippine Action Support Group. No date.

Letter to Mr. John Percy, National Secretary, Democratic Socialist Party (Australia). From Emilio Villa, January 28, 1994.

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"Philippine Solidarity Upheaval – Lessons for Aotearoa." By David Robie, January 10, 1992.

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"Report to: Queensland PASG for Consideration at its monthly meeting." Prepared by Dee Hunt, CPCA Brisbane, March 13, 1991.

"Resolution on the National PASG." By the Philippine Action Support Group Queensland, March 28, 1992.

Stopping Violence Against Filipino Women: A Government and Community Responsibility.' National conference organized by the Centre for Philippine Concerns – Australia (CPCA) and the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC), 6-7 October 1994.

"The Enemy Within – Murder and Revolutionary Violence." By Joel Rocamora. January 30, 2004.

"The Situation in the Solidarity Movement." Signed by some members of the PASG. November 1990.

Transcript of an Interview with Ka Roger [Rosal] regarding the OPML ("Panayam kay Ka Roger hinggil sa OPML), January 5, 2003.

"Understanding Philippine Australian Solidarity: A Guide to Philippines-Australian Solidarity Work from the Point-of-View of Filipino Cadres and Activists in Australia', May 1994.

Appendix A Selected titles of periodicals (tabloids and newsletters) by
Filipinos in Australia

Newspapers

Bagumbayan. 1976-1978.
Bayanihan News. 1999-present.
Filipin-Oz Newspaper. 1994-1997.
Filipino Courier. 1992-1993.
Kalatas. 2010-present.
newsPinoy. 2009-present.
Pilipino Herald. 1994-1998.
Pinoy News. 2007-2008.
The Filipino Observer. 1992-1993.
The Philippine Balita. 1981-1983.
The Philippine Voice. 1990-1993.
The Philippine Community Herald News. 1994-present.
The Philippine Herald Newspaper/Magazine. 1993-1994.
The Philippine Community News. 1987-1994.
The Philippine Australian Balita. 1984-1986.
The Philippine Times. 1990-present.
The Philippine Mabuhay. 1982-1984.
Sandigan. 1987-1992.
The Philippine Tribune. (Formerly The Philippine Sentinel). 2009-present.
The Philippine Sentinel. 2005-2009.

Newsletters

Ang Pilipina. Filipino Women's Group, Inc. (Tasmania).
AFAGCI News. Australian-Filipino Association Gold Coast.
AFCF Newsletter by the Australian-Filipino Christian Fellowship.
Ang Bayanihan. Samahan ng mga Filipino sa Australia.
Ang Binhi (The Seed). Catholic Filipino-Australian Chaplaincy of Brisbane.
Australian-Filipino Christian Fellowship Newsletter.
Babae. Philippine Australian Solidarity Group Sydney.
Bagong Buhay. Philippine Cultural Society of Tasmania.
Barangay. Philippine Association of Australia.
Bayanihan. South Burnett Filipino-Australian Caring Group.
Bundaberg District Australian Filipino Association Newsletter.
Centre for Philippine Concerns-Australia Newsletter.
FICOQ Newsletter. Filipino International Christian Organisation of Qld.
Filipiniana: Filipino Community Newspaper in South Australia.
Filipino-Australian Community Club of Tasmania, Inc. Newsletter.
Filipino Bulletin - S.A. Filipino Community Council of South Australia.
Filipino School News. Filipino School (Queensland).
Kasama. Solidarity Philippines Australia Network.
Mabuhay. Filipino Australian Community Gold Coast.
Newsflash. (Queensland).

<i>Philippine Issues.</i> Philippine Resource Centre.
<i>Philippine Monthly Newsletter.</i> Philippine Embassy.
<i>Philippine News.</i> Philippine Resource Centre.
<i>Philippine Newsletter.</i> Philippine Embassy.
<i>Philippine News Watch.</i> Philippine Embassy.
<i>Philippine News Service.</i> Philippine Resource Centre.
<i>Pinoy-Oz Bulletin.</i> (Tasmania.)
<i>Tanglaw.</i> Filipino-Australian Teachers Association of Queensland.
<i>Tambuli.</i> Filipino-Australian Association of the Northern Territory, Inc.
<i>Sampaguita.</i> Filipino International Club.

Appendix B Listing of Published Titles by Filipino-Australians

Year	Author/s	Title	Genre	Publisher
2011	Perdon, Renato	<i>Understanding Jose Rizal</i>	Nonfiction	NSW: Manila Prints
2011	Perdon, Renato	<i>The life and times of the Perdon family</i>	Nonfiction	NSW: Manila Prints
2010	Zubiri, Rolly	<i>Filipinos in Victoria</i>	Nonfiction	Melbourne: Filipino Community Council of Victoria
2009	Opilas, Evelyn	<i>Akin views: Filipino proverbs and almost parallel quotes</i>	Nonfiction	NSW: Philippine Voice
2008	Bobis, Merinda	<i>The solemn lantern maker</i>	Fiction	Pier 9: Murdoch Books
2008	Cabucos, Erwin	<i>Green blood and other stories</i>	Fiction	NSW: Manila Prints
2008	Humphreys, Norma	<i>Musings on a life well-lived with late-life adventures in romance and sex and confessions of never before told secrets</i>	Nonfiction	NSW: Norma Humphreys
2008	Capili, Jose Wendell & John Cheeseman, eds.	<i>Salu-salo: In conversation with Filipinos: An anthology of Filipino-Australian writing</i>	Fiction & nonfiction	NSW: Casula Powerhouse & Blacktown Arts Centre
2008	Juanta, Reynaldo Dante & Norma Hennessy	<i>Of guts, grit and dreams: Early Filipino migration experiences in South Australia, 1950-1989</i>	Nonfiction	Adelaide: Ethnic Radyo Pilipino
2008	Perdon, Renato	<i>Footnotes to Philippine history</i>	Nonfiction	NSW: Manila Prints
2006	Santillan-Castrence, Pura	<i>As I see it: Filipinos and the Philippines</i>		NSW: Manila Prints
2006	Wall, Deborah Ruiz	<i>Reconciliation, love and other poems</i>	Poetry	NSW: Women's Reconciliation Network
2006	Alvarez, Ivy	<i>Mortal</i>	Poetry	Washington DC: Red Morning Press
2006	Concon, Ranulfo	<i>Joker</i>	Fiction	NSW: Joana Cotler Books (Harper Collins)
2005	Bobis, Merinda	<i>Banana heart summer</i>	Fiction	NSW: Pier 9
2005	Ho, Jose Sevilla	<i>Roses from San Gabriel</i>	Fiction	Melbourne: Text Publishing
2005	Juanta, Reynaldo D.	<i>Filipino legacy in Australia</i>	Nonfiction	Manila: PNU Press
2005	Doronila, Maria Lourdes, ed.	<i>Simbuyo (Passion)</i>	Poetry	ACT: Ginninderra Press
2005	De Castro, Myles & Heidi David Russo	<i>Synergy in action: PANIG's ten-year story</i>	Nonfiction	Qld: Philippine Australian Intercultural Group of Beenleigh and Districts
2004	Hennessy, Norma	<i>A journey in Antipodean land: The Filipino heritage in Australia</i>	Nonfiction	SA: Seaview Press

2004	Aguila, Cesar Leyco	<i>Between two worlds</i>	Fiction	Sydney: Millennium
2004	Alvarez, Ivy	<i>what's wrong</i>	Poetry	Wales: The Private Press
2004	Alvarez, Ivy	<i>catalogue: life as tableware</i>	Poetry	Wales: The Private Press
2004	Concon, Ranulfo	<i>Danika vs the Monster Slayer</i>	Fiction	Sydney: Pan Macmillan Australia
2004	Bobis, Merlinda	<i>Pag-uli, Pag-uwi, Homecoming: Poetry in three tongues</i>	Poetry	Manila: UST Press
2003	Torres-D' Mello, Arlene	<i>Brown outside, white inside: A study of identity development among children of Filipino immigrants in Australia</i>	Nonfiction	Quezon City: Giraffe Books
2003	Verde, Aida	<i>River with no name</i>	Fiction	NSW: Verde Publications
2003	Concon, Ranulfo	<i>Danika in the underworld</i>	Fiction	Sydney: Pan Macmillan Australia
2002	Doronila, Noonee	<i>Saglit (Moments)</i>	Poetry	ACT: Ginninderra Press
2002	Alvarez, Ivy	<i>Food for Humans</i>	Poetry	Port Melbourne: Slow Joe Crow Press
2001	Cabucos, Erwin	<i>The beach spirit and other stories</i>	Fiction	ACT: Ginninderra Press
2001	Bobis, Merlinda	<i>The Kissing</i>	Fiction	San Francisco: Aunt Lute
2001	Concon, Ranulfo	<i>Nirvana's Children</i>	Fiction	Qld: UQPress
2001, 2002	Agmata-Tucker, Marlene	<i>Crossing the barriers</i>	Nonfiction	Canberra: The Filipino-Australian Women Achievement Awards Task Force
2000	Echevarria de Gonzalez, Purita	<i>Manila: A memoir of love and loss</i>	Nonfiction	NSW: Hare & Iremonger
2000 (?)	Carter, Inez Cubillo	<i>Keeper of stories: The history of the Cubillo family, 1788-1996</i>	Nonfiction	Alice Springs: Cubillo-Carter Enterprises
2000	Cruzado, Patricia	<i>The song of Pete Cruzado: Poverty does not the door of opportunity</i>	Nonfiction	NSW: Espiritu Books
2000	Chai, Arlene	<i>Black Hearts</i>	Fiction	NSW: Random House
1999	Bobis, Merlinda	<i>White turtle</i>	Fiction	North Melbourne: Spinifex
1999	Whiten, Agnes	<i>History of the PASQ Inc: The Philippine-Australian Society of Queensland, the first Filipino Association in the State</i>	Nonfiction	Queensland: PASQ
1998	Naylor, Ross	<i>The poor banished children of Eve: Glimpses of Filipino street children</i>	Nonfiction	Victoria: Spectrum

1998	Perdon, Renato	<i>Brown Americans of Asia</i>	Nonfiction	Sydney: Manila Prints
1998	Bobis, Merlinda	<i>Summer was a Fast Train without Terminals</i>	Poetry	North Melbourne: Spinfex
1998	Chai, Arlene	<i>On the Goddess Rock</i>	Fiction	NSW: Random House
1998	Soliman, Neria	<i>Cooking with Neria: A love affair with food: East meets west, cookbook with a Filipino touch</i>	Nonfiction	NSW: Neria Soliman
1996	Camara, Celia	<i>An expose of Filipino culture: Spirituality and religiosity vs myth and fallacies</i>	Nonfiction	Brisbane: Pag-asa Christian Fellowship
1996		<i>Confronting sexual exploitation: Campaign against sex tourism and trafficking in Filipino women: Exposure /study tour to the Philippines June 19-July 4, 1995: Report of the participants from Australia and Aotearoa/NZ</i>	Nonfiction	Qld: Centre for Philippine Concerns-Australia
1996	Chai, Arlene	<i>Eating Fire and Drinking Water</i>	Fiction	NSW: Random House
1995	Chai, Arlene	<i>The Last Time I Saw Mother</i>	Fiction	London: Headline Book Publishing
1984	Gilbey, Fe	<i>Filipiniana: A collection of Filipino rhymes, games, beliefs and superstitions, poems, proverbs, folk tales, folk songs and recipes</i>		Salisbury: Teachers' Publishing Co.

Appendix C

List of Interviewees, Places and Dates

Marlene Agmata-Tucker	Kingston, ACT	April 18, 2010
Peter Boyle	Answers sent in written form	
Erwin Cabucos	Brisbane, Queensland	February 6, 2010
Jose Wendell Capili	Answers sent in written form	
Dino Crescini	Blacktown, NSW	February 16, 2010
Emma de Vera	Granville, NSW	March 18, 2010
Benjie de Ubago	Parramatta, NSW	March 8, 2010
María Lourdes Doronila	Canberra, ACT	October 1, 2010
Michael Estepa	Parramatta, NSW	August 15, 2010
Titus Filio	Doonside, NSW	September 2, 2009
Purita Echevarria de Gonzalez	Turrumurra, NSW	May 17, 2010
George Gregorio	Melbourne, Victoria	January 27, 2010
Norma Hennessy	Adelaide, South Australia	July 5, 2010
Norma Humphreys	Swinger Hill, ACT	October 2, 2010
Dee Hunt	Brisbane, Queensland	February 6, 2010
Dante Juanta	Adelaide, South Australia	July 5, 2010
Melba Marginson	Footscray, Victoria	March 26, 2011
Sennie Masian	Parramatta, NSW	March 8, 2010
Stephen Matthews	South Australia	July 1, 2010
Aida Morden	Ingleburn, NSW	February 23, 2010
Alice Nicolas	Hampton Park, Victoria	January 25, 2010
Renato Perdon	Kensington, NSW	September 7, 2009
Jaime Pimentel	Burwood, NSW	March 6, 2010
John Rivas	Darwin, Northern Territory	July 16, 2010
Larry Rivera	Hoxton Park, NSW	April 6, 2010
Eduardo Ugarte	Answers sent in written form	
Deborah Wall	Newtown, NSW	November 7, 2010
Agnes Whiten	Brisbane, Queensland	July 22, 2010
Evelyn Zaragoza	Parramatta, NSW	February 11, 2010

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