

BETWEEN HOMES:

Displacement and Belonging for Second-Generation Filipino-Canadian Youths

GERALDINE PRATT

IN COLLABORATION WITH THE UGNAYAN NG
KABATAANG PILIPINO SA CANADA/FILIPINO-
CANADIAN YOUTH ALLIANCE

In the spring of 2000, the Ugnayan ng Kabataang Pilipino sa Canada/ Filipino-Canadian Youth Alliance (UKPC/FCYA) in Vancouver began to write a play in order to enact their community's experiences in Vancouver. The play begins in the Philippines, with Rosa graduating from university with a summa cum laude nursing degree. Her mother is a laundrywoman, and her father was recently laid off. Experiencing difficulties obtaining work in the Philippines, Rosa takes what she believes to be a promising nursing job in Canada. The recruitment agency has tricked her, and she soon finds herself working as a nanny in a White, middle-class Canadian home. Ashamed, Rosa continues to tell her family in the Philippines that she is working as a nurse in Canada. When Rosa sponsors the migration of her brother and sister to Canada three years later, her secret is soon revealed. Most of the rest of the play takes place in their Vancouver apartment, where Rosa speaks of the difficulties of being a Filipina migrant in Canada as well as her concerns about and frustrations with her younger siblings' efforts to succeed here. Her siblings are showing the effects of their own forced migration; her brother is "flipping hamburgers" at a fast food restaurant while he makes plans to attend a community college. Her younger sister is coping with the violent racism within her high school. When Rosa appeals to her younger brother and sister, citing her own sacrifices, her younger sister replies, "Nobody even asked me if I wanted to come. I had friends in the Philippines no matter who I was ... I want to go home."¹

¹ The young woman who first played this part has indeed returned to the Philippines. The play has been performed a number of times, including at the Kalayaan Centre in May 2000, in Winnipeg for the Filipino-Canadian National Consultative Forum in August 2000, at the Asian Connections conference at the University of British Columbia in November 2000, during Asian Heritage Month in May 2001, and at the National Forum for Filipino Nurses in December 2001.

The UKPC/FCYA is organized by second- and first-generation immigrant youths; within the core group of organizers, half were in fact born in Canada.² And yet they chose to narrate their community's experiences in Canada from the vantage point of the very recent immigrant, shown first bidding farewell to relatives and friends at the Manila airport and then struggling during their first years in Canada. Why does this place and moment loom so large within the imaginations of these second-generation Filipino-Canadian youths? It is because those moments of departure and struggle still reverberate throughout their lives, and they continue to feel displaced – not quite at home – in their country of birth. The play is part of their struggle against a type of forgetfulness, “a corrosive forgetting, codified as assimilation” (Munoz 1995, 78), and an effort to recover a home in the Philippines in order to achieve a sense of belonging.

We have conducted focus groups with a small number (twenty-six) of first- and second-generation Filipino youths in order to hear their stories of dislocation and home-making.³ This paper documents this process and, thus, should not be looked at as standing apart from the play written and performed by the UKPC but, rather, as another example of UKPC's organising work.⁴ Given this, we rely heavily on direct quotation.

² In 1993 the Montreal Coalition of Filipino Students was organized. In that same year, the Canadian Youth Network for Asian Pacific Solidarity (CYNAPS) and the British Columbia Committee for Human Rights in the Philippines sponsored a national speaking tour featuring a member from the League of Filipino Students (LFS), a student organization based in the Philippines. During the tour, this representative of LFS met with MCFS and other politically conscious Filipino youths across Canada. In the summer of 1994, Filipino youths from Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver met in St-Hilaire, Quebec, for a national consultation, where they passed a resolution to begin local youth organizations in their respective cities. One woman attending from Vancouver was involved with the Philippine Women Centre (PWC), and she and several other young women involved with the PWC already felt that they needed a separate group in which to address their distinctive issues. With the help of the PWC, they organized the UKPC/FCYA in the summer of 1995. The first issues with which they dealt were those of identity (e.g., Who are we? Are we Filipino or Canadian?), racism, and their own unfamiliarity with Filipino history. In 1996 UKPC/FCYA organized a province-wide consultation (entitled “As We Begin to Understand Our Roots”) attended by forty to fifty youths, during which they began to explore the history of the Philippines and their families' histories of migration.

³ We conducted ten focus groups from spring to fall 2001. The focus groups varied in size, from four to six people, and there was some overlap as some individuals participated more than once. A total of twenty-six youths, between the ages of fourteen and twenty-eight, participated. Since the sample was assembled through social networks, we cannot claim any representativeness for the views expressed. For a project similar in intent and methodology, see Strobel (1997).

⁴ As a middle-aged, White Canadian academic, in a number of ways Pratt has an ambiguous relationship to this group. This project is framed within her collaboration with the UKPC's parent organization, the Philippine Women Centre (see Pratt in collaboration with the Philippine Women Centre 1998, 1999). For the present study, Pratt was present at only two of the focus groups, and in all cases the groups were facilitated by UKPC members. Pratt drafted her first analysis on the basis of transcribed records. This became a point of discussion with the UKPC and ultimately led to the mutually agreed upon final draft.

If it is important for Filipino-Canadian youths to tell these stories, then it is also important for all Canadians to hear them. The Filipino community in Vancouver is large; excluding those born in the United Kingdom, in 1996 it was the third largest immigrant community (Hiebert 1999a). Echoing a similar academic silence about the Filipino community in the United States, there is very little known about this community in Vancouver.⁵ In the US, some have speculated that this is because assimilation into the American mainstream has been fast and successful, prepared by a history of American colonialism in the Philippines: “the Filipino ... sets foot on the US continent – she, her body, and sensibility – has been prepared by the thoroughly Americanized culture of the homeland” (San Juan 1991, 118, qtd. in Espiritu and Wolf 2001).⁶ And yet studies of second-generation youths in the United States suggest a more complex process that shows a strong resistance to both assimilation and the costs of their parents’ migration; in particular, high levels of educational success are matched by a rejection of an American identity, relatively low rates of self-esteem, high rates of depression, and persistent thoughts of suicide, particularly among young women.⁷

San Juan (2000) argues that the assimilationist explanation for Americans’ scholarly neglect of Filipinos is not only wrong but that it also betrays a reluctance to examine a peculiarly American brand of empire that was first worked out in the Philippines during the 1898 to 1946 occupation. He insists that the “Americanization” of Filipino culture(s) – including the lives of Filipinos living in the United States – must be

⁵ A number of US scholars note the oddity of this silence given that Filipinos constitute the largest Asian-origin immigrant group in the United States (Bonus 2000; Espiritu 1994; Espiritu and Wolf 2001; Okamura 1998; San Juan 2000). In the Canadian case, Anita Beltran Chen’s (1998) socio-demographic work is the most comprehensive nation-wide study of Filipino-Canadians, but, being based on research conducted in the 1970s and 1980s, it is now quite dated. In Canada, there is a vast literature on the Live-in Caregiver Program (e.g., Arat-Koc 1989, 1990, 1992; Bakan and Stasiulis 1994, 1995, 1997; Daenzer 1993; Pratt 1997, 1999; Schecter 1998; Stasiulis and Bakan 2001; Stiell and England 1997) but very little on the broader community, including Canadian-born Filipinos.

⁶ Rosaldo has argued that this disinterest on the part of American academics extends to the Philippines because it is considered “too Westernized,” with “no culture” of its own (Rosaldo 1988, 78, qtd. in Espiritu 1994).

⁷ The figures are startling. Drawing upon interviews with 808 Filipino youths in San Diego, conducted as part of a longitudinal study (Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study), Espiritu and Wolf (2001) report that, in 1992, 59 per cent of the sample identified as Filipino-American and 31 per cent as Filipino. Only 5 per cent identified as American. Only three years later, drawing upon essentially the same sample of youths, 55 per cent now identified as Filipino and 37 per cent as Filipino-American. Half of those who identified as Filipino-American in 1992 now identified as Filipino. Resistance to assimilation is also noted by Bonus (2000) and Okamura (1998). Surveys of teens in San Diego high schools indicate that Filipina female students report high levels of suicidal ideation (46 per cent) and alarming rates of reported actual suicide attempts (23 per cent) – the highest of any ethnic group surveyed (cited in Espiritu and Wolf 2001, 178).

read within a history of American imperial expansion: “Filipinos [living in the United States] cannot concentrate solely on what is happening within the physical borders of this nation-state; this border has tentacles extending to the Philippines, even though the [military] bases are gone” (12). Canada is not equivalent to the United States, of course, but the forced migration of Filipinos living in Canada must be read within the same history of dislocation, uneven economic development, and political struggle. An itinerary for such an exploration was traced in a phrase that reoccurred during the focus groups: “Made in the Philippines, born in Canada.” It is a phrase literally and jokingly used to refer to children who were conceived in the Philippines before their parents immigrated and were then born in Canada, but it carries other meanings as well. It is a phrase that stakes geographical claims and points to how Canadian birth and citizenship are persistently renegotiated in relation to the Philippines. Filipino youths are negotiating multiple homelands in an effort to belong.

This paper, then, sits awkwardly within discussions of domestic space precisely because it is a provocation, a refusal and reversal of conventional understandings of home as a bounded, protective space. Filipino-Canadian youths certainly express a yearning to be at home. But home is an ideal – a desire that leads them away from Vancouver to the Philippines. Home-making is a process of venturing out and gathering together loose threads of biography scattered in Canada and the Philippines in order to unify one’s life story and to find the resources to rebel against alienating experiences of racialization. This is a process that is important to all Canadians, and it is something that has the potential to change Canada, as a multicultural home, profoundly.

HAUNTINGS OF DISLOCATION

Most Filipino migration to Canada has occurred since the late 1960s, after Canadian immigration practices were shifted from explicitly racial criteria to a point system geared to employment needs. Through the late 1960s and 1970s, many nurses were recruited to Canada (almost one in four nurses admitted to Canada during this period came from the Philippines [Chen 1998]). They were followed in the mid-1970s by large numbers of garment workers and by family members who could now enter through new family reunification policies. From the mid-1980s, onward nurses were no longer sought, and increasing numbers of women were admitted to Canada as live-in domestic workers. Between 1990 and 1994, for instance, almost 42 per cent of Filipinos who became landed

immigrants entered Canada through what is now called the Live-in Caregiver Program (McKay and Philippine Women Centre 2002). Even this sketchy history suggests that a considerable amount of migration to Canada from the Philippines has been initiated by women. In metropolitan Vancouver in 1991, for instance, there were 15,315 employed Filipinas and just 5,525 employed Filipino men (Hiebert 1999b). This is a very different pattern of settlement from that displayed not only by other Asian immigrants to Canada but also by Filipino immigrants to the United States.

Other patterns are more familiar. Filipinos are sometimes represented by the Canadian state as “model minorities”: hardworking and economically productive. In a Statistics Canada (2001, 5) profile on “Visible Minorities in Canada,” for instance, Filipinos are distinguished for their relatively low rates of unemployment and poverty. With “just ... 24% of Filipinos ... living with low incomes,” Filipinos are represented as being “[a]t the other end of the scale” from “Blacks, Koreans and Southeast Asians,” roughly half of whom have low incomes. That one-quarter of Filipinos have low incomes (surely a high percentage on some other scale!) tells another familiar immigrant story – one of deskilling and poor income returns on educational investments. Though the proportion of Filipinos with a university degree exceeds that for the Canadian-born population, average individual incomes for Filipinos are lower (McKay and Philippine Women Centre 2002). In 1991, in the Vancouver Census Metropolitan Area, the return on “educational capital” was less for Filipinas than for women of British origin or even for the female labour force as a whole (Hiebert 1999b). Compared to all other groups of women in the Vancouver CMA, Filipinas were clustered in the narrowest range of occupations, including nursing, lower-level “medical other,” clerical, housekeeping, and childcare. Compared to all other men in Vancouver, Filipino men experienced the third highest rate of occupational segregation and were clustered in some of the same occupations as were Filipina women, including clerical, janitorial, and factory work (Hiebert 1999b).⁸

These broad statistics begin to describe some of the labour market experiences of Filipino immigrants to Canada – those of the parents of the Filipino youths who participated in our study. It is important to recognize that parents’ experiences of dislocation and relocation touch the lives of their children. Hirsch (1999) coins the term “postmemory” to describe the impact of parents’ memories of trauma on their children’s

⁸ For comparable analyses of Toronto, see Lo et al. (2000) and Ornstein (2000).

lives. Postmemories are “experiences that they ‘remember’ only as the stories and images with which they grew up, but that are so powerful, so monumental, as to constitute memories in their own right” (8). “Postmemory is a powerful and very particular form of memory precisely because its connection to its object or source is mediated not through recollection but through an imaginative investment and creation” (Hirsch 1997, 22). Sugg (2003) extends this argument to the children of exiles from Cuba, conceiving postmemories of the wounds of exile as a “generational legacy” that causes children to identify intensely with both these wounds and with Cuba as a homeland.

In keeping with Sugg’s notion of postmemory, Filipino youths heard stories of their parents’ struggles with racism and deskilling in Canada. Charlene recounts: “I think I heard more from my dad that he didn’t like it very much ... He [said] that he experienced a little bit of depression, or maybe a lot, for the first year ... [He] said it was really cold, not just weather-wise but, you know, nobody talks to you, nobody really helps you out ... it was hard for him to adjust to that.” Clara remembers: “I think that it was easier for me than for my parents.” Her mother “would come home and she would say something about what a co-worker said to her. She was really offended ... So I remember things like that. It was easier for me at school” (Focus Group 6, 4 April 2001). Even though these youths are “second-generation” immigrants, they lived their parents’ adjustments first-hand – their stories of their first years of arrival as well as their stories of daily experiences and frustrations at work. Clara assesses her own experiences in relation to those of her parents. We might ask what it means for a child to weigh her parents’ difficulties against her own. It is a burden of sorts.

The “cascade” of trauma from one generation to the next may also work through silences and evasions. Rather than being affected by stories “so powerful, so monumental,” sometimes it is the absence of such stories that generates a search for family memories, a search whose purpose is to piece together a coherent family narrative and to reclaim lost status. May tells of her parents and aunts, who immigrated in the 1970s:

I didn’t care too much about my parents’ experience until much later in my life, about six or seven years ago ... [My parents and aunts] were mostly professionals when they came. I think that this is a common experience for many of us who [were born here or] came over at a young age. You go through twenty years from the ‘70s to ‘90s. Integration. Growing up here. Hearing very little about your parents’ experiences unless you really probe ... I didn’t know where my parents were from until I started asking. (Focus Group 10, 26 August 2001)

Charlene spoke of scrutinizing family pictures as a way of assessing and collecting concrete evidence of her parents' experience of migration: "[My mother] said that it was okay, that at least she had a big support system [when she first arrived in the 1970s]. Because I do look at pictures of her [when she first arrived in Canada] and ... [she is] always with a bunch of other nurses." Monica commented, "I know my mom worked in an office [in the Philippines] because there's pictures. Like really old pictures, with her answering the phone and things like this. And I know that she went to business college because she has this business college ring." Of her father, she said, "he didn't really tell me what his jobs were [in the Philippines]." Indeed, she was continuously frustrated by his reluctance to elaborate on his reasons for leaving the Philippines (Focus Group 4, 31 March 2001). Hirsch (1997, 22) argues that photographs are a particularly potent source of postmemory because they are "perched on the edge between memory and postmemory": they both bring back the past and provide visual evidence of its irretrievability, teetering poignantly between memory and forgetting. As childrens' eyes wander across photographs, and as they listen to stories relating to a time before they were born, they learn things about their parents and the Philippines that allow them to reassess their own (and their parents') worth. They work with these images and stories in creative ways to forge a new sense of self in the present out of the resources of the past. For example, they learn that the father they know as a school maintenance worker was also a mechanical engineer; a Zamboni driver was a teacher; and a security guard a civil engineer. They thus get a concrete measure of their parents' deskilling.⁹ Recovering their parents' lives in the Philippines can be one way of seeing both their parents and themselves in a new light.

HOMELESSNESS

Photographs entered into the focus group narratives in another way: as documentary evidence that these youths can never belong in White Canadian society. Reflecting on her eight years of ice skating, Melissa

⁹ These examples are drawn directly from the focus groups. The sample of second-generation youths is too small to draw meaningful generalizations, but there are some suggestive patterns. All of the mothers had paid employment and experienced relatively little downward occupational mobility, principally because six of the twelve could practise their profession of nursing when they immigrated to Canada. (The situation has now changed, and many professional nurses from the Philippines now enter Canada through the Live-in Caregiver Program. The process of deskilling is thus now a greater problem.) The situation was a little different for their fathers, half of whom experienced downward occupational mobility (of the type already described) or retired after immigrating to Canada.

said, “It’s funny, because you had these group pictures of who is in your class. Da, da, da, da, who’s chocolate sprinkle? And we’re just looking back. And, it’s like, alriiiiighty then.” Of her twelve years of ballet, Ethel said, “Who do you see in ballet? Not Filipinos. Try to fit in there. White tights and everything” (Focus Group 2, 15 March 2001). Youths spoke of the many ways in which they are haunted by this sense of exclusion in their daily lives, this sense of never really belonging. These stories move around what is now a common argument in cultural studies: legal citizenship is not equivalent to cultural citizenship, and racialized immigrants are perpetually produced as cultural outsiders. In Lowe’s (1996a, 6) words, “the Asian immigrant – at odds with the cultural, racial, and linguistic forms of the [American] nation – emerges in a site that defers and displaces the temporality of assimilation.” Many of the youths’ stories have a familiar ring, and it is this very familiarity – even banality – that demands that they be repeated.¹⁰

Youths spoke of the many ways that white Canadians insist upon their perpetually immigrant status. Teachers treat grade-school children born in Canada as small ambassadors of “their” nation, which is assumed to be the Philippines. As May told it:

I remember growing up, [when I was] in elementary school. This is when Aquino went through People Power. Or when the people ousted Marcos and Aquino came into power. It was big international news. I remember sitting at my desk and my teacher asking me about it. I was eight years old then. I don’t really care. Why would she expect that I would have an opinion about it? Even in university, one of my TAs told me that I understood and spoke English really well. You are the authority on people of colour issues. (Focus Group 10, 26 August 2001)

Another common experience involves having their Canadian birthright explicitly denied by White Canadians. The following is representative of a conversation that came up again and again in at least five of the focus groups.

Monica: “Where are you from?” “Vancouver, Winnipeg, okay.” Like you know, it’s still not the answer they are looking for.

Charlene: Like, [I answer:] “Montreal.” “No really.” “What do you want, like [I’m from] Maple Ridge?” [Laughter]

¹⁰ These stories strike a chord with those of other diasporic communities. Catherine Sugg (2003), for example, writes of the “suspended migration” of second-generation Cuban-Americans who are caught between cultural memories of a Cuban homeland and life in the United States.

Monica: Well, I got into almost an argument with one of my clients. This was like a few years back. She was born in Grace Hospital in Winnipeg, and I thought I was also born in Grace Hospital. But then I found out later when I told my mom this story that I'm not. But anyway, I go, "Oh, I was also born in that hospital." And she goes, "Oh, you mean the name, not Winnipeg." And I go, "Yeah, I was born in Winnipeg's Grace Hospital." She just assumed that I meant the hospital, like I was born in Grace Hospital Philippines or something. "No, you know, in that hospital in Winnipeg." We almost had an argument about it. I was more hot-tempered [then]. I'm like, "What are you talking about? I WAS BORN IN GRACE HOSPITAL!" [Laughter] (Focus Group 4, 31 March 2001)

This assumption was naturalized in an amusing but telling way when Vicki was doing her practicum as a student teacher:

What's funny is the school I am in is predominantly Caucasian or White ... We were talking about rocks. And where they come from and stuff. And all of a sudden, the hand goes up. "Well, where do you come from?" And automatically ... oh, okay, these are little kids. And usually if someone came up to me, say another White person, [I'd say] "Well, I was born here, so I am Canadian." And then they are, like, "Oh." And then they take offence to it. Then I say [to the kids], "Well, my parents are from the Philippines. But I was born here. I am Filipino." So the kids were amazed. "Oh, so you are Filipino." And they would say, "My mom went to the Philippines!" And all these hands go up. "My mom's nanny or my nanny is a Filipino." (Focus Group 6, 4 April 2001)

What these statements indicate is that identifying as Filipino or with the Philippines is not just a choice: it emerges out of a process of being continuously read as a recently arrived outsider.¹¹ As Ong (1997) notes, immigrants do not arrive as "ready-made ethnics." Ethnic identification involves a sense of belonging that emerges in relation to a complex weave of state and non-state, institutionalized and everyday, cultural practices and is imposed by everyday experiences of racial exclusion. This is captured in a vivid way in Maricel's account of eating lunch at

¹¹ Espiritu (1994) also notes the primary significance of experiences of racism for second-generation Filipino American youths' identification as Filipino. In the Canadian context, Elaine Chang (1994), writing about her experiences growing up as a Korean-Canadian, makes the explicit and eloquent argument that her capacity to construct her identity has always been conditioned by how she was read. The persistent construction of Asians as outsiders within the nation has been conceived of as part of the process through which the culturally dominant create the nation as home – in other words, as part of a home-making project on the part of White Canadians (Anderson 1991).

work. The conversation turns around her use of a knife (which plays on the “knife edge” of interest in cultural plurality and in casting Filipinos as primitive).

Maricel: Because it’s funny, I prepare my food at work. There’s this big guy at work. He’s lived in Vancouver all of his life. He says, “You just don’t use a knife, do you?” He goes, “Let me wash a knife.” I would say, “No, no, it’s okay.” And then someone else in the staff room who has known me for ages goes, “Oh, she doesn’t use a knife.” He said, “What do you mean? She is eating meat.” They said, “No, you don’t understand. It is not in her culture. She doesn’t know how to use a knife.” He said, “Are you serious?” I said, “Yeah, actually I don’t really know how to eat with a knife.” ... He said, “I want to see this.” So, he’s watching me eat my meat and rice with spoon and fork. He goes, “Incredible! I just don’t get it.” And then I have to explain this thing about knives and make up a story about how it’s in our culture how we are forbidden to have knives.

Monica: Great, you’re contributing to the mis-education of this man!
(Focus Group 6, 4 April 2001)

We thus witnessed the invention of a cultural story in an effort to save face.

Another type of seemingly multicultural inclusion can be extremely isolating: this is sexualization and exoticization. Young women were very familiar with being objectified as “Asian woman” and were particularly wary of men who had learned a few phrases of Tagalog. Youths had the impression that courses taught in Vancouver in Tagalog are used by White men who are involved (or wanting to be involved) with Filipina women. According to Charlene,

A lot of people assume that I am fifteen or sixteen. When the older White men start talking to me in a subtle, but sexual, way it’s really disgusting ... I think that what disturbs me also is when White men, or men from other nationalities, start talking to you, hitting on you, in Tagalog. They know that! They know how to do that to you in Tagalog ... When they walk down the street, and say, “Oh, maganda! [beautiful]” “How do you know that?! Get away from me!” ... Earlier this year, I went out to this store to pick up some lunch. This guy opened the door and let me out. I thanked him. He started to follow me. He said to me, “Oh, are you Filipino?” I thought: “Oh, here we go. Leave me alone.” [May interjects: “You know its bad when they ask that.”] I’m clutching

my lunch. I'm waiting for the light to turn. I just wanted to walk right then. Eventually he started to tell me that he stayed in Manila for a bit. "Oh, that's nice." He said, "You women are so beautiful." I started walking away really fast and said, "Okay, bye." I turned and walked the other direction from where my office was to get away from this guy. I walked for ten minutes just to make sure I lost him. (Focus Group 10, August 26, 2001)

Even a story on mail-order brides, written by one youth, Sean, as part of his coursework in a publishing program at Langara College, was reworked to sexualize Asian women (Parlan 2001). He intended his article to be a hard-hitting critique of the economic relations that lead women to market themselves as brides. It was, however, edited to reflect the perspectives of men who shop for mail-order brides. Much space is given to detailing the process of ordering a bride, and relatively little is given to accounts of women's experiences and their collective resistance. The cover really tells the whole story (see Figure 1): the article (which Sean had entitled "Mail-Order Brides") is billed as: "Veiled Propositions: The Story of Mail-Order Brides" and is situated alongside an image of a naked Filipina woman whose downcast and side-long gaze suggests nothing of the active opposition with which Sean was concerned.

Filipino men are not immune to this process of stereotypical sexualization. As Carlo and Charlene told it:

Carlo: In a lot of magazines [you see the question,] "Are Asian men sexy?" I guess they are becoming more visible.

Charlene: In the last few months, I've noticed a lot of Asian magazines directed toward the Asian community have been doing these articles about Asian men ... A funny thing happened where this reporter from the *Toronto Star* called me for an interview ... I thought she would have wanted to talk about our organizing work in Ugnayan. Then she says, "I'm doing this article on Asian men. I noticed that Asian men are not really noticed. Asian women are more in the forefront of articles on Asian people. I just wanted to know if you thought Asian men were attractive or sexy."

Carlo: The King and I, man ... It's a trendy thing ... Before it was trendy to have a gay friend, especially if you are living in the West End. Now, it's the multicultural.¹² (Focus Group 10, 26 August 2001)

¹² For a discussion of the exoticization of Black culture in mainstream popular culture (e.g., Nike, rap music), especially influential among White, middle-class male youths, see Sernhede (2000).

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M A G A Z I N E

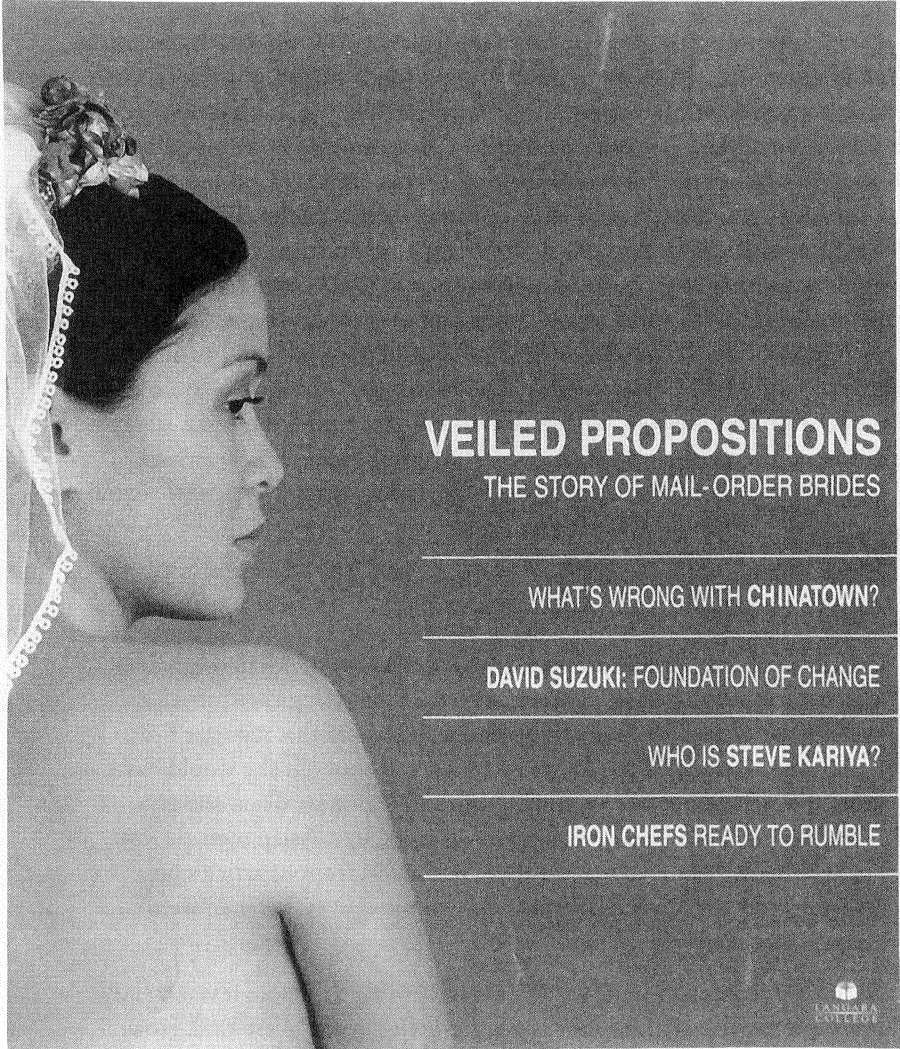


Figure 1: Sexualising Filipinas. Front cover of *Pacific Rim Magazine*, vol. 2, no. 3, 2001. Reproduced with permission of Pacific Rim and Tallulah Photography.

If seemingly more benign than sexism, exoticism breeds just as much isolation and alienation.

One way of fighting against this isolation/alienation is to identify strongly and positively with Filipino culture. At one of the focus groups, a participant who had moved to Vancouver in 1981, when she was two years old, asked two women who were born in Canada: “Do you think that not being born in the Philippines makes you look for those Filipino roots more? I’m thinking, because I was born in the Philippines, I don’t have the strong urge to actively search for those connections” (Focus Group 4, 31 March 2001). This is an interesting question, situating, as it does, an intense identification with Filipino culture in personal histories of exclusion *within* Canada. In May’s words: “[We identify as Filipinos] because we are forced to in our daily experience ... it was to defend ourselves ... emotionally and mentally. [We were] arming ourselves to go to school” (Focus Group 10, 26 August 2001).

Charlene also described how her experiences of racism within Canada led her to embrace a Filipino identity:

I see myself as more Filipino. Because at least I know myself, at least I have a better sense of who I am as a Filipino. No matter what, they’ll always assume that I was not born here anyway. I was born and raised here, I can speak both official languages. I can speak French better than I can speak Tagalog or Illongo. Which I wish it wasn’t that way all of the time. But, like, that’s how it is usually. Like once when I was in high school, there was this incident. This girl had just moved from the Philippines. I was in the tenth grade or eleventh grade, and she was in the eighth grade. She didn’t know anybody, so I talked to her right away. And my friends noticed and they said, “Why are you talking to her?” I was, like, “Well, she’s Filipino, and she just came here and she doesn’t know anybody. I don’t want her to feel alone in school.” “Oh, you’re so different from all of them.” “Well, what do you mean?” “You know, all of THEM.” And they were pointing to all of the Chinese students on the other side of the cafeteria. “Oh, you are not like all of the black-haired people.” Then I figure, what if I wasn’t born here or if I never, if I was not put in a group with them when I first came to Maple Ridge? I don’t think I would have known them. I’m the only person of colour that they frequently talk to. And if that is what Canadian means, if that’s the Canadian attitude, then I don’t like that. I’m more confident saying that I’m more Filipino. (Focus Group 4, 31 March 2001)

Ethel described a similar process of consciously self-identifying as Filipino:

That's how I used to think. I'm Canadian. Then I started changing my mind: "I'm Filipino." But anyway, right now I see myself as Filipino and I have absolutely no problem saying that. There was a time when I used to have that problem that I'm Filipino ... I feel a deeper connection to my roots that I did not have before. I still identify myself as Filipino-Canadian because I have been here all my life. But I connect more strongly with my Filipino identity than my Canadian identity. I don't know if I have ... Most of my friends are Filipino ... I don't really have ... or maybe at work ... actually I don't really have any friends at work. [Laughter] My friends where I used to work, they were ... well, my closest friend was Filipino. You know? That's how I identify myself the most. (Focus Group 2, 15 March 2001)

This is a process of identification that is both imposed and struggled for. In one focus group, Eda, a fifteen-year-old who immigrated to Canada in 1996 at the age of ten, denied the authenticity of this identification when he stated flatly that "100 per cent Filipino is made in the Philippines" (Focus Group 5). Eda's statement produced a strong reaction from the four Canadian-born Filipinos in the group, who argued that Filipino refers, in large part, to "where I choose to learn my heritage." This nicely states Grossberg's (2000, 154) claim that "belonging is a matter less of identity than of identification, of involvement and investment, of the line of connecting and binding different events together."

When Filipino youth assert that their identification emerges from "where they choose to learn their heritage," their spatial claim is more than metaphorical. Filipino youths are not only stitching together moments of past and present but also different places. To continue with Grossberg, "to belong – in a different mode – ... is also to belong to a different time-space" (*ibid.*).

GOING TO THE PHILIPPINES

Ong (1997) has criticized the ways in which the Latino Cultural Studies Working Group (Flores and Benmayor 1997) has deployed the concept of cultural citizenship; that is, as a set of cultural practices that demand both the right to a distinctive social space for Latino Americans in the United States and a sense of belonging within the nation. She argues that this notion of cultural citizenship gives the erroneous impression that cultural identification is self-made. For Ong, ideas of belonging

and not belonging are produced within complex fields of cultural and economic power. She compares the production of Hong Kong immigrants and Cambodian refugees in the United States: because of their different economic positions, the former, she argues, undergo a process of whitening, while the latter undergo a process of darkening. She details how both groups manipulate and negotiate these positions but are unable to stand outside the process of subjectification imposed by the dominant, White American society. Siu (2001) notes that both of these approaches (Ong's and the one she criticizes) are limited by the same presumption that subject formation takes place within the borders of a single nation-state. It may be that groups attain a capacity for self-production by literally moving outside the nation-state. This is one way of understanding the significance of the Philippines for Filipino-Canadian youths.

Wolf (2002) writes about the "emotional transnationalism" of second-generation Filipino-American youths in San Diego. While parents maintain relationships that directly link the United States and the Philippines, their children maintain the links "at the level of emotion, ideologies, and conflicting cultural codes" (350). The youths who participated in our focus groups certainly held these sentiments: "When I think of the Philippines or see the flag or see a Filipino sticker on their car, it brings this joy. I know it's a bit sappy" (Charlene, Focus Group 10, 26 August 2001). But they have also made actual trips to the Philippines, which functioned as what Sugg (2003) refers to – in reference to Cuban-Americans – as "therapeutic returns."¹³ Sugg notes that "the journey itself [to Cuba] does seem to be necessary to this process of working through ... [a] multiple (as opposed to [a] dual) sense of belonging." Filipino-Canadian youths describe the journey to the Philippines as a journey to a space of belonging. Anthony, a twenty-four-year-old born at Vancouver General Hospital, described his year studying at a college in the Philippines as "the happiest time of my life." Junior, a twenty-one-year-old born and raised in Montreal, said simply: "I loved the Philippines" (Focus Group 7, 5 April 2001). Melissa and Monica described in some detail the comfort of feeling at home in the

¹³ These therapeutic returns can work very differently, depending on the circumstances of the group in question. Studying Mexican-American teenaged girls living in Los Angeles, Melissa Hyams (2002) describes how visits to relatives in Mexico strengthen their identification with the United States. The visits confirm their national and personal superiority and modernity as measured against the "backwardness" of their Mexican relatives. As one young woman put it: "Same hair, different hairstyle." The Filipino youths with whom we spoke tended not to operate within such a polarized frame of modernity and underdevelopment, and visits to the Philippines were seen as rich opportunities for rethinking their own identities and political strategy.

Philippines:

Melissa: I went back to the Philippines throughout my life. When I was older I went to the Philippines ... it was the same thing: [the recognition] that everyone's Filipino. It was just weird ... So when you get a taste of that, and when you get back, it's like, "Hold up, I'm different" ... To hang out with my mom's side of the family, which of course is Filipino, it just feels like home. You get used to this spoon and fork, eating with your hands, whatever.

Monica: I have been back to the Philippines three times and it is totally different everywhere you look. It is true. It is all Filipinos. It is such a surreal experience because you are used to looking and seeing all Caucasians or whatever ... It's not even about superficial cultural things, but sometimes it is. If you are going to ask for Balut or if you are going to ask for Taho or something like that, they are not going to look at you and say, "What the hell is that?" (Focus Group 2, 15 March 2001)

In an anthology of writings by young Filipino-Canadians produced by the UKPC/FCYA (2000), Cherrie June Emnance writes:

If I could only have one wish come true, I would wish to be *home*.

I was born and raised here in Canada for 22 years now. Everything that I have learned, accomplished, and experienced revolves here. My usual group of friends I hang out with, the usual day of activities I'm used to, and even the stressful life I lead in school and work belongs here in Canada. But I've come to the realization that I'm missing one thing in my life ... the feeling of "home." I know, it sounds strange that I've lived here all my life and yet I still say that I'm missing the feeling of my "home," but it's true.

I miss the sound of jeepnies beeping for way, roosters crowing in the morning, and even the smell of the thick air. I miss being able to appreciate the simple gifts of life and knowing that when I am "home," who I really am is all that matters to the people I am surrounded by. I can go "home" for two weeks out of three whole years, and still feel like I've never left. It's the greatest feeling knowing that I have family who make me feel like they've never left my side, like we've never been apart. I miss the feeling of knowing I belong with my family at "home" and being able to express myself freely about how I really feel, rather than being somebody I'm not.

If I could only have one wish come true that would make me genuinely happy, I would wish to be "home" in the Philippines.

A parent of one of the focus group participants told me that Filipino parents like to send their youths back to the Philippines for an extended period of time so that they can develop a more realistic impression of this place called home. Listening to Filipino-Canadian youths, one can hear the efforts of parents to manage this return: "Like, [my parents] would tell us [about] life in the Philippines and how it's not easy ... I know it's a hard life in the Philippines. For the people there, they have to work all the time. And it's not easy to go to school even ... You have more options here (Carlo, Focus Group 3, 30 March 2001). Monica expressed the same feeling: "Especially the first time we went to the Philippines when I was nine [my parents said] 'The way your cousins live in the Philippines, that is how we would have lived. So you should be happy and thankful'" (Focus Group 2, 15 March 2001). Anthony, like all of his brothers, was sent back to the Philippines for one year of bible college, and he tells of his mother's efforts to control the length and long-term repercussions of this "therapeutic return." There is a struggle between Anthony and his mother about the meaning of the Philippines as a home – as a repository for cultural values as opposed to a place of domicile.

We planned it before, but it was a decision with my mom. But when I was in the Philippines, I really loved it there and didn't want to come back here. But my mom said no, I have to come back. What would I have done there? I would have tried to get a job. And it probably would have been really hard. She was afraid that I was going to settle down with a girl there or something. She sent my dad to the Philippines to pick me up. I was there for one month longer the first time, one month longer than my brother. My brother had gone to the States. I was travelling through the Philippines and [then] my dad came back [to the Philippines to retrieve me]. I remember having discussions with my mom. I never planned to stay there. But sometimes ... just to scare her ... Basically I felt like I was forced back by my mom. (Focus Group 7, 5 April 2001)

Anthony, who has a degree in information technology from the British Columbia Institute of Technology, continued to entertain fantasies of a permanent return to the Philippines but only at the age of retirement. He imagined returning as a fisher.

It would be wrong to simplify these youths' experiences of the Philippines to fantasies and desires for a home and for belonging or to Anthony's kind of nostalgic (future) return as rural fisher.¹⁴ Their im-

¹⁴ This should not imply that Filipino-Canadian youths' dreams of return are always nostalgic: two of the Canadian-born members of the Youth Alliance are living in the Philippines on a permanent basis.

pressions of the Philippines are seasoned by their parents' commentary, by a critique of the Philippines government's responsibility for their parents' forced migration, and by an understanding that life can be very hard there. Asked whether he could actually see himself living the life of a fisher, Anthony equivocated: "No, not really ... their life is probably not that simple."

For many it is not the Philippine nation that is sought as home; rather, it is a concrete history of struggle that allows them to re-imagine themselves. This home is a community of resistance, and it is a type of home that can be brought back to Canada and used to reconfigure Vancouver as home. May expressed this notion of the Philippines as home:

It is a sentiment for the people. It is not a sentiment for the [nation-state]. It could be for the family who brought you here. Or for your grandmother who raised us. When we look back at our history, we try to look back at the people's history. When we learn about that, there is really a strong connection to the Filipino people that we never learn about in Canada. They hardly learn about that in their textbooks in the Philippines. So many years of being colonized and living in poverty. What we really appreciate when we go back is how people really struggle ... Collectively, you can really see how people resisted their oppression ... Especially for people who grew up not feeling proud about being Filipino. We found something to be proud of and it is incredible. Your self-identification also changes ... I don't think it is a romantic sentiment. We also know there are struggles within the Philippines. (Focus Group 10, 26 August 2001)

Uncovering this specific, material history of a real, not just an imaginary, place becomes an important means of establishing self-worth. In a poem published in the *Ugnayan ng Kabataang Pilipino sa Canada/Filipino-Canadian Youth Alliance* anthology (UKPC/FCYA 2000, 25), Christine Mangosing expresses not only a sense of plural identification but also the fact that a recovery of her Filipino "roots" strengthens her resistance to racism and daily feelings of dislocation in Canada.

I have dark almond shaped eyes
emphasized with a slant
I have naturally black hair
but chemically enhanced
I have a question in mind that I can't seem to decide
if I'm too light or too dark, or if my nose is too wide

I speak confidently in a voice strongly disguised
with words spoken by whom we were colonized
And this same voice that once fumbled with my native tongue
knows not the words of the anthem that should be rightfully sung.
Blood of the Spanish and the Chinese flow through my veins
and Western cultural influence dictates my ways
For I was raised beneath a North American sun
Lacking knowledge of the country where my life begun.

But now I find, as I strive to revive
the ROOTS I have once denied
Genuine pride in the Filipino that's me
and greater insight into my identity

So here I stand, reverberating my RHYMES
with the intention to share through my words
How I've struggled to reach the point where being
Filipino and Canadian merge

And in gaining knowledge of my Filipino peoples' past
and present reality
I strengthen my RESISTANCE
to oppressive racial persistence
and find my place in global society.

RETURNING TO CANADA

Christine's reference to global society may not be quite specific enough in that it misses the very concrete connections that are being forged between particular geographies and histories. The UKPC/FCYA now sees its struggle in Canada as part of the struggle in the Philippines. Crossing national boundaries has brought its struggle against racism in Canada into a larger history of resistance. This alters the geographical reach of the activities of the UKPC/FCYA to include struggles within the Philippines (e.g., an extended Oust Estrada campaign).¹⁵ On the face of

¹⁵ The UKPC's first campaign on the impacts of systemic racism on Filipino-Canadian youths was a response to the attack on sixteen youths of colour, mainly Filipino, in Squamish, BC, in 1998. This was followed by a conflict at Vancouver Technical Secondary School in Vancouver in 1999. At this time, the group also began to try to understand how multiculturalism mediates and displaces diagnoses of racism. A second campaign began in 1999 to commemorate the centennial of the Filipino-American War, and it has continued and intensified as the Philippines becomes the "second front" of the US-led war on terrorism. Aside from these initiatives, the organization has participated in other international campaigns, including the Oust Estrada campaign.

it, it may seem odd that Canadian-born citizens who have made a few periodic visits to the Philippines should work so hard on a campaign in another country. But such a campaign is seen to be part of their history in Canada. Feeling the effect of their parents' forced migration from the Philippines within their daily lives, they understand the political and economic relations within the Philippines to be part of not only their history but also their daily existence.¹⁶

And it is not simply that the geographical reach of the UKPC/FCYA has expanded: members learn directly from community, organizing traditions in the Philippines. Every year the UKPC/FCYA now sends youths to the Philippines to learn from organizations there. Representations to the Philippines from youth groups from North America have increased substantially in recent years and have attracted the interest of organizations in the Philippines.¹⁷ The theatre project with which we began is, in fact, an outgrowth of one such visit; the project was directly shaped through a guide to doing theatre among the masses – a guide that was brought to Canada from the Philippines. But, significantly, the theatre project was a synthesis of experiences undergone in both Canada and the Philippines. The play was partially centred around a confrontation between Filipino and White youths at Vancouver Technical Secondary School in 1999, a confrontation that led to a Filipino student being slashed. Despite documentation of the existence of graffiti such as “All Flips Must Die,” testimonies from girls that rocks had been thrown at them when trying to board the bus, the fact that twenty-five Filipino youths were refusing to go to school because they feared for their safety, and representations from Filipino parents, the UKPC/FCYA was frustrated by the reluctance

¹⁶ There are interesting parallels to an argument that Lisa Lowe makes regarding the way in which some Korean-Americans interpreted the Los Angeles uprising in April 1992, particularly the interpretation offered by the Korean-American documentary film *Sa-I-Gu*. The title, which means 4.29, or April 29, embeds the Los Angeles uprising firmly within Korean national history because it follows “after the manner of naming other events in Korean history – 3.1 (sam-il) for March 1, 1919, when massive protests against Japanese colonial rule began in Korea; 6.25 (yook-i-o) or June 25, 1950, when the Korean War began; and 4.19 (sa-il-ku), or April 19, 1960, when the first student movement in the world to overthrow a government began in South Korea. The ironic similarity between 4.19 and 4.29 does not escape most Korean Americans” (Kim 1993, 216). Lowe (1996b, 423) argues that this allusion to Korean nationalism through the naming of the film is “not a direct transference of Korean nationalism but a discontinuous rearticulation of it that includes the crucial consideration of the racialization of Korean immigrants in the United States as workers of color.” This subtle mapping of continuities and discontinuities, which involves a partial folding of one geography into another, is an act of translation and articulation that respects the particularities of history and geography.

¹⁷ This comment was made by the national vice-chair of ANAKBAYAN (the national comprehensive youth organization in the Philippines) when visiting Canada in July 2001 to attend the first national conference of Filipino-Canadian youths, which was held in Toronto. Roughly ninety youths attended from across Canada.

of the Vancouver School Board to publicly name the problems at the school as racist. The play is an application of a community-organizing technique learned in the Philippines, and its purpose is to give voice to the sense of despair and frustration felt by Filipino-Canadian youths in Canada. In other words, if the methodology is Filipino, the content is distinctly Canadian.

And how might such cultural practices enter into a process of re-visioning Canada as a home? In contrast to the Philippines as a repository of sentiment and a political space from which to draw strength and learn specific oppositional tactics, Canada was typically represented as a liberal state from which to claim rights – not a particularly “home-like” image. As Carlo, put it:

When you are saying you are Canadian, it is like a defence mechanism. [In reaction to] when people think you can't speak English, or whatever. “Where are you from?” “Well, I'm Canadian. I know as much about it as you do, of this country or whatever. I am just as smart as you are.” It is just someone assuming things about you and you want to prove them wrong.

Charlene continued:

That is how I use the fact I was born here ... I let them know I have just as much of a right to be here ... I was born here and I use that to assert myself as an individual here ... for our community, we use that [in the following way:] “because you brought us here because you want our labour. Give us what we deserve.” When I see Canadian people who are waving the Canadian flag, I feel detached on a certain level regarding patriotism. (Focus Group 10, 26 August 2001)

But the types of mappings that they are practising in their daily lives in Canada – as they fold the history of the Philippines into their mundane existence and insist on the continuities and connections (not just the discontinuities and ruptures) between Canada and the Philippines – also exceed this liberal reading of the state as a guarantor of rights. This has some implications for re-imagining multiculturalism.

RE-IMAGINING MULTICULTURAL CANADA

Multiculturalism is tied up with Canadian nationalism in important and complex ways. Mitchell (2001, 57) argues that it is “doubly inscribed: it is inherently nationalist in purpose and orientation, and it is also clearly based on a proceduralist model of liberalism that privileges British phi-

losophy and culture as the nationalist norm.”¹⁸ Multiculturalism is thus Canadian and Anglo. Following Taylor (1994), Mitchell argues that federal multiculturalism is based on a proceduralist model of liberalism, which is inherently individualist and which envisions encompassing an endlessly expanding number of groups through the type of rights discourse deployed by Carlo and Charlene. But Carlo and Charlene also understand that access to rights in Canada is unequal (Razack 1998), and UKPC/FCYA argues that, if ethnic groups are simply “tolerated” in relation to the cultural norm (Hage 1998), then multiculturalism reinforces the cultural hegemony of Anglo-Canadians.

As Mitchell argues, immigrant groups do not necessarily embrace the fundamental principle of individualism that underlies the federalist multicultural model. She develops this argument in relation to affluent Chinese immigrant parents who, in Richmond, British Columbia, have entered into a conversation with Canadian parents about the goals and ideals of their children’s education. Chinese immigrant parents have been strong supporters of “traditional” schools in Richmond, arguing that these schools teach an ethical code that will equip their children for a competitive global society. They see this as more important than focusing on creativity and the child’s rights to individuality. Mitchell argues that this debate throws the idea of “an implicitly ‘national’ education program in question” (68) as Chinese immigrant parents frame the needs of their children in terms of global rather than national citizenship. Assessing the progressive potential of these parents’ actions, Mitchell asks the following questions:

Rather than through the “generous” inclusion of outside groups into a hegemonic nation-state project, how can the project itself be reformulated from the “bottom up”? How can multiculturalism be given teeth through a reconstitution of the project “from below”? How can national responsibilities articulate with global ones and vice versa?

These are large questions, and they point towards a different model of multiculturalism than that which celebrates a pluralistic blending of the diversity of cultures *within* Canada. Mitchell notes that the political demands of the Richmond Chinese Canadian parents are not necessarily progressive because they have the potential to “leapfrog from [the nation-state] directly into the netherworld of global capitalism” (71). The political and cultural activities of Filipino-Canadian youths

¹⁸ Mitchell is drawing on the analysis of Charles Taylor (1994), which interprets the conflicts over the Meech Lake Accord as, in part, a clash between two different variants of liberalism.

suggest a different, mediating, geographical imagination in relation to multiculturalism – one that works between the nation-state and the “netherworld of global capitalism.” This entails tracing the specific histories of connection between Canada and other nations. This geography of connectivity poses multiculturalism as a process of articulation rather than of pluralism, and it ruptures the national boundedness of the multicultural project in Canada. To be fully multicultural, Canadians must appreciate the specificity of connections and the complexity of identifications and attachments held by many Canadian citizens. This offers a way of re-imagining Canada, not just Filipino youths.

An important irony to note in relation to Charlene’s and Carlo’s disavowal of attachment to Canada is that they nonetheless exercise their civic duty of public participation, likely more fully than do the majority of Canadians, through their activities at the UKPC/FCYA. Operating in what Holston (1995) has called “the spaces of insurgent citizenship,”¹⁹ the youth alliance introduces new ideas and new practices that potentially change the meaning of Canada as a home. By bringing organizing traditions from the Philippines to Canada, the UKPC/FCYA blurs some of the distinctiveness of national boundaries. In quite another context, Mike Davis (2000, 144) has argued that the large Mexican/Central American working class in Los Angeles “may yet reshape the American labor movement”; “new wave campaigns have overwhelmed employers with an innovative tactical repertoire that has included guerrilla theatre and film [and] public art” (147), some of which has been imported from other national contexts (Houston and Pulido 2002). “To be Latino in the United States,” argues Davis (2000, 15) “is ... to participate in a unique process of cultural syncretism that may become a transformative template for the whole society.” Without resorting to Davis’s hyperbole, we want to suggest that second-generation Filipino-Canadians’ efforts to find a home in Canada may also hold the promise of transforming it, not only by tracing ongoing histories of connection between the Philippines and Canada but also by transforming the practice of politics and contemporary claims to belonging within Canada.²⁰

¹⁹ It is important not to romanticize these spaces, especially when they are created through exclusion from formal politics. Bonus (2000) describes patterns of political activity in Southern California that seem familiar in the Vancouver context: low visibility of Filipino participation in legislative politics but high participation in community politics, and an insistence on rights to monocultural organizing (as opposed to pan-Asian-American or pluralist multiculturalism).

²⁰ Another aspect of this involves considering the specificity of Filipino-Canadian identification. In this sense, Stöbel’s (1996, 43) comment that there is an emerging theme among second-generation Filipino Americans – “We are all Filipinos, everywhere, anytime” – bears examination. Without explicit comparative work, our observations are speculative, but we note the large proportion of

A close study of the identification of Filipino-Canadian youths also suggests fresh ways of conceiving identity formation. Žizek (2002) has recently complained that postcolonial and multicultural studies share a tendency to conceive of identity formation among postcolonial subjects and racialized minorities strictly in the terms set by the dominant society. Minoritized subjects are granted the right to narrate stories of victimization, but, “at the end of the day, we learn that the root of postcolonial exploitation is [the dominant group’s] intolerance toward the Other, and, furthermore, that this intolerance itself is rooted in our intolerance toward the ‘Stranger in Ourselves,’ in our inability to confront what we repressed in and of ourselves” (Žizek 545). Academic stories about identification continuously circle around and back to the stories of the dominant.

Filipino youths are narrating more than their victimization, and their process of identity-formation exceeds the tight, recursive circuit of identification between colonized and colonizer. And while their identification as Filipino emerges in relation to processes of exclusion within Canada, it is not contained by them: it involves a specific engagement with the reverberating effects of imperialism across the generations. Although many second-generation Filipino-Canadian youths are not exactly “at home in the world,” their world exceeds Canada in ways that they are successfully mobilizing in order to claim belonging.

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women community activists and leaders in Vancouver, the politicization of many domestic workers while enrolled in the Live-In Caregiver Program, and the possibility of a different process of articulation across racialized groups in Canada as compared, for example, to the United States, reflecting different histories of racialization and state regulation.

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