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## **Framing the Filipino Diaspora: Gender, Sexuality, and the Politics of Criticism**

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# Review Essay

MARTIN JOSEPH PONCE

## Framing the Filipino Diaspora Gender, Sexuality, and the Politics of Criticism

MARTIN F. MANALANSAN IV

### **Global Divas: Filipino Gay Men in the Diaspora**

Durham: Duke University Press,  
2003. 239 pages.

RHACEL SALAZAR  
PARREÑAS

### **Servants of Globalization: Women, Migration and Domestic Work**

Stanford: Stanford University  
Press, 2001. 320 pages.

RHACEL SALAZAR  
PARREÑAS

### **Children of Global Migration: Transnational Families and Gendered Woes**

Stanford: Stanford University  
Press, 2005. 212 pages.

NEFERTI XINA M. TADIAR

### **Fantasy-Production: Sexual Economies and Other Philippine Consequences for the New World Order**

Hong Kong: Hong Kong University  
Press, 2003. 365 pages.

“Diaspora” has become an indispensable term in contemporary Filipino studies.<sup>1</sup> Part of the larger turn in the humanities and social sciences examining the transnational practices and social formations that have arisen in the wake of increased international migration, intensified economic globalization, and proliferating communicative technologies, the use of “diaspora” in Filipino studies has undoubtedly been stimulated by the massive explosion of overseas Filipino labor since the 1970s.<sup>2</sup> The term has also permeated the lexicon of culturally-oriented Filipino studies scholarship, but there have been few attempts to theorize how cultural and material senses of “diaspora” inform one another, or how “the Filipino labor diaspora” as synonymous with international Filipino labor migration inflects other uses of the term.<sup>3</sup> This essay seeks to elucidate some of these issues by approaching the books under review here as texts that do not merely document experiences of Filipinos residing “in” the diaspora but that deploy, implicitly or explicitly, “diaspora” as an analytical framework to come to terms with the complex conditions and consequences of the globalization of Filipino life. Despite their distinct disciplinary and methodological orientations and emphases, what brings these books together is a common supposition that gender and sexuality (in addition to race, nation, and class) constitute vital categories of analysis for studying the diverse social, political, and cultural formations that have arisen in the postcolonial era. My close readings of these texts specifically reflect on how the framework of “diaspora,” mediated by gender and sexuality, can facilitate a rigorous account of Filipino cultural and expressive practices enacted and produced abroad.<sup>4</sup> From this vantage point I draw out the implications of the books’ claims, suggest how they open up new lines of inquiry, and speculate on the politics and poetics of contemporary Filipino studies criticism.

### **Global Divas**

As the first full-length monograph to analyze Filipino gay men’s experiences and cultural practices in the United States, Martin Manalansan’s *Global Divas* (2003) breaks new ground in both queer and Filipino studies. Methodologically, the book is based on interviews that Manalansan conducted with over fifty Filipino gay men in the New York metropolitan area mostly between 1990 and 1995. Focusing on both the quotidian and the ritualized, Manalansan examines a range of phenomena with an eye toward exploring how Filipino gay men “create a sense of self and belonging, or citizenship, amid the exigencies of immigration and in the face of emerging notions

of global gay identity” (viii). These sites of analysis include the conceptual contiguities and differences between *bakla* and *gay*; the argot known as swardspeak; the racialized spaces of queer culture in metropolitan New York; Filipino gay men’s dwellings and daily routines, their notions of family, friends, and partners, and their ideas regarding race, class, and religion; a cross-dressing performance of the Santacruzans; and their confrontations with and responses to the AIDS pandemic.

Positing the book as a contribution to what he calls the “new queer studies” (scholarship analyzing the intersections of sexuality with race and location), Manalansan approaches his sites of investigation, as the title indicates, through a framework of diaspora (6). This lens enables him to challenge the immigration-assimilation model of migration from the Philippines to the U.S. as a temporal transition from “tradition” to “modernity,” and, obversely, to interrogate the “diffusion” model of global gay culture whereby gay modernity originates in and is epitomized by the “West” which, in turn, spreads its homogenizing influence across the globe. Contesting these oversimplifications, Manalansan argues that “Filipino immigrant gay men are not passively assimilating into a mature or self-realized state of gay modernity, but rather are contesting the boundaries of gay identity and rearticulating its modern contours” (x).

Although not theorized per se, the apparatus of diaspora brings forth the book’s greatest insights (and, as I suggest below, its most significant limitations). By positioning his subjects as “diasporic”—instead of “Filipino American”—to signal their exteriority to the Philippines, Manalansan compellingly shows how these men create life-worlds and enact practices of everyday life whose meanings emerge out of transnational connections and collisions between the (queer, urban) cultures of the Philippines and the United States. In other words, rather than simply conjoin sexuality (“gayness”) to a racialized ethnicity (“Filipinoness”)—which would be no small feat in itself—Manalansan examines the ways that these categories of analysis, meaning, and self-understanding are mediated through diasporic movement, that is, across national and cultural borders.

The generative possibilities of this framework are reflected in Manalansan’s discussion, for example, of the “vagabond tongue” of swardspeak, which, as a “diasporic” expressive form, assumes multiple roles (50). It serves as a medium of self-elaboration in which a linguistic practice from the “homeland” is transported into a new milieu and undergoes transformation. It functions as a mutating and “mobile code” comprised of English, Span-

ish, Tagalog, and Cebuano words in which “the historical and biographical histories of colonialism, postcolonialism, and diasporic displacement and settlement” are “reinscribe[d]” and “reappropriat[ed]” (51). And it serves as a mode of articulation and self-identification that marks the user as “being bakla” (47). Manalansan proffers similar transnational interpretations of the syncretic and restaged Santacruzán—which “involves the incorporation and creative amalgamation of practices and ideas from different historical, cultural, religious, geographic, gender, racial, and class locations including colonialism and folk Catholicism” (127)—and of the humorous, endearing, yet sobering discourse of “Tita Aida” as a “creative response” to the suffering and loss effected by AIDS (181).

At the same time, the framework of diaspora reveals the book’s specific parameters. That the first chapter provides a critical overview of the term bakla—whose meanings are rooted in the particularities of Philippine queer culture in their conflation of “categories of effeminacy, transvestism, and homosexuality” (25)—and distinguishes it from gay or queer makes clear that the transnational frame of analysis is trained primarily on immigrant Filipino men. (Would nonimmigrant Filipino gay men in the United States, who may not even be familiar with the term, identify with the concept of bakla?) This demarcation, however, is relegated to a footnote. There we learn that of the fifty-eight interviewees, eight “were American born” and five “are ‘one point fivers’ (1.5) since they came to America as young children or teenagers.” For the purposes of the study, then, “the immigrant group is the main basis for the book,” while “the views of the American-born informants [are used] as illustrative contrasts to the main group” (194 n.7).

Such contrasts could have entered in a more substantive way to specify and refine the study’s claims. While discussing the politics of language use in the chapter on swardspeak, for example, Manalansan tells us that

Archie, who immigrated as a child and was raised in America, makes it a point to punctuate his sentences with Tagalog and swardspeak words. He tries to speak swardspeak as much as possible but knows he will never be fluent. He does this to prevent other Filipinos from thinking that he is not one of them or that he has a bad attitude. Archie believes that swardspeak is one of the more important elements that differentiate Filipino queers from other gay men. He said, “When you use swardspeak, you create this world that only you and other badings inhabit.” (49)

Pointing directly to the theme of “cultural citizenship” with which the book is principally concerned (14), this moment illustrates that membership in the “world” that “other badings inhabit” is constituted as much by exclusion as inclusion (via linguistic competence). Archie’s words simultaneously gesture toward a desire on the part of a “one point fiver” to “differentiate” himself “from other gay men.” Accounting for this desire might have led to a more extensive consideration of the ways that the alienating effects of the racialized world of U.S. queer culture induce men like Archie to turn to a practice derived from the Philippines and carried over by immigrants as a means of cultivating a sense of companionship (if not romance or sex) and a distinctly “Filipino” gay identity in the U.S. The desire for self-identification (as a Filipino queer/bading) and self-differentiation (from mainstream/white queers) as well as Archie’s efforts to fulfill them (by halting uses of sward-speak) might have been interpreted as strategic responses to the racialized hierarchies stratifying U.S. queer culture.

The collective subject of representation and analysis of *Global Divas*, as ethnography, thus turns out to be a very specific demographic segment: immigrant Filipino gay men—or more precisely bakla—who lived in or near New York City during the 1990s. Although Manalansan explicitly states that “this study does not purport to give a complete picture, nor does it pretend to represent all Filipino gay experiences at all times and spaces” (viii), he does not explain the decisions informing his selective focus or the implications of his purview. Even leaving aside the fact that the book says little about second-generation “Filipino American” gay men, about Filipino gay men in other (especially nonurban) regions of the U.S., or about gay Filipinos residing in other world locations—all of which could fall conceivably under the subtitle’s rubric of “Filipino gay men in the diaspora”—the ways that the diasporic analytic, coupled with the ethnographic methodology, prompts Manalansan to pursue certain issues at the expense of others are still worth noting. By casting the book’s political and theoretical orientation most insistently in opposition to “the danger of focusing on a global or monolithic gay culture” (190), Manalansan retreats from fully engaging with the internal differences operating *within* diasporic Filipino gay culture and with the connections and conflicts between gay Filipinos and other queers of color.

With respect to the latter, Manalansan raises the politics of interracial dating and desirability. “Several informants informed that they would never even think of having a particular group of men as sexual partners or lovers

because of their race,” he tells us. “Most of the time, this group was that of African Americans. Racialized and racist assumptions prevailed. . . . A few informants also mentioned how, even if they did find an African American man attractive, they might attract the scorn or cruel jokes of other Filipinos” (109). Just as swardspeak serves as a marker for membership in bakla culture for Archie, so also does anti-Black prejudice. The transpacific frame of diaspora seems to preclude a robust account of this form of racism. Earlier in the book, Manalansan writes:

While race is not an elaborate discourse in the Philippines, skin color and ethnicity are part of the development of diasporic swardspeak in America. In swardspeak, the racial other is contrasted with the concept of *biyuti*. In this context, *biyuti* utilizes a more Caucasian-centered standard for physical attractiveness. A word used for ugly is *chaka*, from the black singer Chaka Khan. (56)

It is as though the absence of “an elaborate discourse” of race in the Philippines, which might help to explain the interviewees’ racial attitudes, excuses the anthropologist from pursuing the matter any further or from positing another explanatory framework. But what if the issue were taken up from within the space of the U.S. (where national discourse is flagrantly racial)? How might studies of comparative racialization, inflected by the conditions and compulsions of queer sexualities, facilitate a better understanding of this racist formation?

Finally, to what extent does the diasporic approach necessitate an account of how Filipino gay men in the U.S. differ not only from “mainstream” gay men and from other queers of color (including Asian Americans [128, 142–46])<sup>5</sup> but also from those in the Philippines itself? In a most basic sense, Manalansan only drops hints as to why his interlocutors migrated to the U.S. in the first place (see, for instance, 95–96, 108). But these scattered moments do not coalesce into a sustained discussion of the conditions of bakla/gay life in the Philippines with and against which the diasporic might be compared. While Manalansan is careful not to draw facile continuities across national boundaries and is everywhere alert to the dangers of romanticizing putative cultural “retentions” or reading them as the “lingering vestige of traditional culture” (189), he does not seem concerned with delineating the differences between gay or bakla life in the U.S. with that in the Philippines. Roldan,

an interviewee who felt alienated from the gym-buff culture of Chelsea and eventually found his niche as a cross-dresser, articulated one of the more startling sentences recorded in the book: “I used to think that I came to America to be gay, but then I realized that I came to America to be a real bakla” (*Akala ko pumunta ako ng America para maging gay pero ngayon alam ko na nagpunta ako sa America para maging tunay na bakla*).<sup>6</sup> Manalansan interprets the statement to mean that Roldan “has become more of the bakla than the gay man he thought he was going to be in America” (97). But Roldan’s point seems to be as counterintuitive as it is ironic. The initial thought would fall squarely within the teleological trajectory that Manalansan is so keen on challenging: the move from the Philippines to the U.S. representing a transition from not-gay (“closeted,” “bakla,” “straight”?) to gay. But then Roldan flips the notion around and claims “America”—not the Philippines—as the space where he can be a “real bakla.” Rather than metamorphose into something else entirely, Roldan through the process of migration becomes what he already was (or should have been) all along—ironically, precisely in a place where the transgendered performances of the bakla are considered not “real,” that is, are consistently misrecognized as parody rather than as “an attempt to mimic real women” (138). One of the first epigraphs of the book, cited from Mario’s narrative, similarly connects flight with fate: “I left the Philippines to become the international beauty queen that I was meant to be” (xvii). So what is it about the Philippines that prevented Roldan and Mario from assuming their desired identities?

These questions regarding the interracial and the transnational arise from the book’s avowed and implied delimitations. As such, *Global Divas* remains a pathbreaking work whose specific theoretical and thematic parameters make possible new avenues for research in Filipino and queer studies that until recently had been largely separated and foreclosed by the heteronormative and Eurocentric assumptions underlying these fields.

### ***Servants of Globalization, Children of Global Migration***

Whereas Manalansan provides an up-close-and-personal account of Filipino gay men’s lives, Rhacel Salazar Parreñas situates her analyses of international Filipina domestic work—*Servants of Globalization* (2001)—and the effects of overseas labor on the children who remain in the Philippines—*Children of Global Migration* (2005)—within structural and institutional frames of reference. Contributing to the burgeoning field of Filipino labor migration

studies, the first book compares what Parreñas (2001) calls the shared “dislocations” of Filipina domestic workers in Los Angeles and Rome: the difficult experiences of “partial citizenship” in the host country; of maintaining “transnational households” (2001, 2); of “contradictory class mobility” that results in a “decline in social status and increase in financial status” (150); and of “nonbelonging in the formation of the migrant community” (3). Despite the different “contexts of reception” that condition their incorporation in Los Angeles and Rome, Parreñas shows how the women she interviews undergo similar experiences because of their “shared role as low-wage laborers in global capitalism” (3).

In both books Parreñas articulates class with gender to enumerate the various reasons why, on the one hand, conditions in the Philippines induce Filipino women to labor abroad. Parreñas (2005, 17) places much of the blame for the dire economic situation in the Philippines on the foreign debt crisis, which has been exacerbated by the “development” policies overseen by the IMF and the World Bank mandating “liberalization, privatization, and deregulation.” Parreñas (2001, 63–67) also underscores that patriarchal gender norms and behaviors—such as spousal and child abuse, infidelity, and the trials of single-mother parenting—serve as driving motives for women to leave home, husband, and kids for work abroad. On the other hand, she explains that migrant Filipino women provide “mostly care work” owing to the increasing numbers of women in the global North entering the workforce (2005, 22), thereby summoning the need for “reproductive labor” (2001, 61) that is met by women from the global South. Filipina care workers, moreover, are drawn especially not only to those countries that have exerted cultural, colonial, and religious influences in the Philippines but also to those with “very low welfare provision,” including the U.S. and southern European countries (2005, 26).

These emphases on the political economy of international migration lead Parreñas to formulate a different conception of the Filipino diaspora from that by Manalansan. For the latter, “diaspora” denotes a geographical location outside of the Philippines, even while it enables him to examine transnational and transculturated practices in illuminating ways. Parreñas (2001, 269 n.1), in contrast, defines the term “to refer to the forced dispersal of a particular group of people from their homeland to a multitude of countries,” a scattering which is “a particular result of globalization.” At the same time, her claim that “[t]his diaspora should be considered a labor diaspora because

its formation is situated in the globalization of the market economy and the designation of the Philippines as an export-based economy” raises the question of what (or who) constitutes the Filipino diaspora (59). This issue becomes especially apparent when she adapts Benedict Anderson’s phrase and designates this sociogeographic formation an “imagined (global) community” (11). It is worth lingering over this notion since it bespeaks a tension between “nation” and “diaspora”—not only as that tension emerges in the insertion of “global” into Anderson’s original, but more significantly as it allows one to reflect critically on the transnational practices of relationality and the politics of community formation that Parreñas so patiently documents throughout the books.

Analogous to Anderson’s account of the central roles played by the novel and the newspaper in making possible the imagining of the nation, Parreñas points to the publication and distribution of magazines such as *Tinig Filipino* and *Diwaliwan* as “vehicle[s] for creating the notion of a global community” (14). Containing articles written by and to overseas workers themselves, *Tinig Filipino* enables them “to reach each other cross-nationally and cross-continently. . . . These narratives are the basis of coalition and solidarity in the labor diaspora” (15). This interpretation of *Tinig Filipino* supplies the most substantial evidence in Parreñas’s two books for theorizing “coalition and solidarity” among globally dispersed Filipina migrant workers—more so than the quasi-Marxist notion that the parallel experiences of “dislocations” in and of themselves “represent conjunctures from which migrant Filipina domestic workers develop a cross-national allegiance” (12).

This conception of an “imagined (global) community” mediated and articulated through nodal points like *Tinig Filipino* contrasts dramatically with other forms of sociality described in Parreñas’s books,<sup>7</sup> particularly between this class formation and other Filipinos (in the Philippines and abroad), as well as with other racialized and gendered diasporas. Regarding the latter, Parreñas demonstrates how Filipina domestic workers in Rome and Los Angeles take up and redeploy the larger society’s racisms in an attempt to assuage their own racial subordination. Paralleling Manalansan’s discussion of how Filipino gay men in New York construct a hierarchy of racial desirability as an indirect means of drawing community boundaries, Parreñas shows how Filipina laborers “[claim] and [embrace] their racial differentiation from Latinas and blacks and [highlight] their specific distinction as the ‘educated domestics’” (174). Interviewees in Rome remark on the prevailing stereotypes of Filipinas: that they possess a “better work ethic,” that they are “nicer and more hardwork-

ing,” and that they have a strong command of English—stereotypes that turn them into “status symbols” for privileged Italians, not least because they garner higher wages than Bangladeshi or Peruvian or Polish women workers (177). Similarly, in Los Angeles, where Filipina domestics are often employed by middle class Filipino families, they “profess to provide better services than do Latina domestic workers” partly because of their English skills (178).

As this last example indicates, the Filipina labor diaspora as a “community” is constituted by class as well as racial distinctions. Parreñas’s depictions of Filipina domestic workers in Los Angeles when forced to comingle with their middle-class compatriots reveal the very opposite effects than those entailed by the literate practices of *Tinig Filipino*. Rather than communication, silence ensues; instead of connection, a willful distancing takes place (232–41). Just as class cleavages seem to prohibit the formation of alternative socialities in Los Angeles, so too do they separate overseas workers from poor Filipina domestic workers in the Philippines, i.e., those who lack the resources to migrate. Indeed, some fantasize of retiring in the Philippines with their own domestic to wait on them. As Maya Areza (all names are pseudonyms) unabashedly states, “When I retire I plan to go home for good. . . . I will get a domestic helper who I can ask to get my cigarettes for me. . . . You can hire one if you have money. It’s cheap, only 1000 pesos [U.S. \$40]” (77). Rather than provoke thoughts about the need for structural changes in the global economic order, the experience of migrant domestic work seems to inspire “fantasies of reversal” (172) that only reinforce the “three-tiered” division of reproductive labor: “While class-privileged women purchase the low-wage services of migrant Filipina domestic workers, migrant Filipina domestic workers simultaneously purchase the even lower wage services of poorer women left behind in the Philippines” (62).

The intergenerational relationships structuring “transnational families” are no less contentious than the racial and class differences circumscribing the formation of the Filipino labor diaspora. Whereas the communicative practices between locally and globally situated Filipina domestic workers potentially create reservoirs of “resistance,” the letters transmitted to and from transnational family members are remarkable for their display of acrimony, resentment, and venom.

For example, Parreñas’s rendition of Joy Manlapit’s story is anything but joyful. Describing her now-grown children from whom she has been apart for ten years, the elderly care provider in Los Angeles tells Parreñas:

Because you are here, they think that you have a lot of money. . . . They write and ask for money. You are angry, but then you are also concerned. You get mad because when they write they don’t say, “Mama, thanks for everything.” Instead, they say “Mom, this is what else I need.” I need this, I need that. They don’t bother asking you how you are, how you make a living, what you have to do to send them that money. Nothing. (127–28)

Rather than sympathize with Joy’s bitterness, Parreñas tends to hold accountable overseas working mothers for their sometimes “cold and mechanical” attitudes toward their distant children (93). She thus proceeds to quote a letter from Junelyn Gonzaga addressed to her mother and printed in *Tinig Filipino*. Although the daughter shows understanding of her mother’s plight, she nevertheless describes needs that exceed money: “*But, hey, please don’t forget that your kids also have lots of sacrifices to give, aside from growing up without a parent. Specifically, for those who thought that sending money is enough and they’ve already done their responsibilities, well, think again, because there are more than this. Your children need your love, support, attention, and affection*” (141, Parreñas’s emphases).

Junelyn Gonzaga’s letter points to the ways that the difficult relationships between migrant mothers and their homebound children get played out in epistolary exchanges through what might be termed an economy of suffering. While the economy of care is, of course, what the entire enterprise of domestic work turns on, on the other side of “care” resides a flourishing discourse of suffering and sacrifice. Although hardly new within Filipino cultural and political thought, this discourse is endowed with profound affective power in these transnational transactions and is manipulated with astonishing regularity and efficacy. From one direction, children expect their “martyr mothers” to display their own suffering, appearing to be reassured by the perception “that their mothers are *grieving* in the process of mothering them from afar” (2005, 103, Parreñas’s emphasis). Expressions of “grief, sorrow, and hardships” serve as a way for children “to measure their mothers’ remorse over her decision to impose the geographical distance on their families.” By corroborating the notion that “the reconstitution of mothering is not a choice but instead a sacrifice,” these “demonstrations of grief and gloom” become the transmitted signs that transnational mothers truly *care* for their children (107, 135).

From the other direction, however, some mothers spin the discourse of “martyrdom” to exact certain tasks and sacrifices from their children. The mother of Ellen Seneriches sends “voice tapes” to her children once or twice a month; the listeners “would hear her cry in these tapes” (107). In this case, the audible signs of maternal pain and sorrow impel Ellen to “reciprocate for the sacrifices made by her mother” by assuming responsibility for “the collective good of the family” (111). In addition, a transnational mother like Rodney Palanca’s in Saudi Arabia “uses the narrative of her own suffering to motivate her children to strive harder in school,” urging her son in “every letter and every phone conversation” to “study hard” (132). Rodney is thus enjoined to “make good” on the investment of his mother’s pain by excelling in school: “If she is suffering and struggling in Saudi Arabia, then we have a need to also struggle in our studies” (133).

One of the most significant achievements of Parreñas’s books lies in the way that they are able to convey the sheer impossibility of these complex economic and emotional situations—“impossible” not in the sense that the actors are completely deprived of all choice, but that there seem to be no ready resolutions to the many contradictions inhering in and resulting from these forms of labor and relationality.<sup>8</sup> To care for one’s children entails leaving them (“I do not like taking care of other children when I could not take care of my own. It hurts too much” [2001, 122]). To perform domestic work is to be “reminded of the contradiction of having a ‘maid’ and being one” (150). To work overseas “for the sake of the family” is to be vulnerable to charges of creating a “broken family” (109). To “invest in their children’s college education” is for transmigrant parents to believe in a future that was emphatically denied them (while many overseas workers have themselves “attained some years of postsecondary education,” they have “not been able to achieve a secure middle-class lifestyle in the Philippines” [123]). In witnessing overseas Filipina domestic workers persist in calling forth and pursuing these “impossible desires”—desires whose very paths of fulfillment simultaneously generate the means of their own undoing—we might glimpse what Tadiar (2003, 24) calls in another context “the liberating, creative acts of an impossible yet mundane faith.”

### ***Fantasy-Production***

Such faith is hard-earned and hard to come by. It is also sometimes difficult to discern in Neferti Tadiar’s *Fantasy-Production* (2003), a book which fo-

cuses much of its attention on the ways that individual and collective desires are conscripted and rechanneled to serve the dominant mode of production of the Philippine nation-state, which in turn jockey for power within the global order of competing and collaborating “national interests.”

Formidable and nearly forbidding in its conceptual and linguistic style of analysis, *Fantasy-Production* is a dense book that defies facile summarizing. While the chapter on overseas domestic workers is most pertinent to the scope of this essay, it is worth remarking briefly on how Tadiar’s larger theoretical approach connects with and reframes the uses of diaspora outlined here. The monograph traverses an expansive terrain, containing chapters on the Philippine economy as a “prostitution” mode of production under Marcos; on Manila’s “new metropolitan form” signaled in the construction of the “flyover”; on the media representations and artistic evocations of Filipina domestic workers; on Teodoro Agoncillo’s 1956 history text *The Revolt of the Masses: The Story of Bonifacio and the Katipunan*; on the “EDSA” revolution of 1986; and on the “star power” of actress Nora Aunor as depicted in the 1982 film *Himala*. These disparate topics are stitched together by an unceasing critique of what the book’s title names: the production of hegemonic fantasies that constitute “the imaginary of a regime of accumulation and representation of universal value, under the sway of which capitalist nations organize themselves individually and collectively in the ‘system’ of the Free World” (6). Analyzing “the practices of fantasy-production on the part of the Philippine nation and the contributions of this particular postcolonial national formation to global systemic transformations leading to the establishment of the New World Order, the international division of labour and organization of multinational capitalist production that emerges at the end of the Cold War” (7), Tadiar not only demonstrates how the postwar Philippine nation-state “colludes” with the ideologies and practices of the “New World Order” (in order to be counted as a proper participant within that international “family of nations”) but also tracks how the mechanisms of fantasy-production itself create “debris,” “the inassimilable remainders of its operation” (20), what she terms the “tangential”—“the collective dream forces and movements that are harnessed for the construction of hegemonic subjects and their counter-hegemonic opposition, and yet escape the universal and universalizing forms of both” (23). The production of this “tangentiality” allows for the possibility of “an impossible yet mundane faith,” what Tadiar simply calls in the conclusion “hope.”

Like *Global Divas*, *Fantasy-Production* is concerned with the significance of gender, sexuality, and race. And, like Parreñas's books, it approaches its objects of inquiry by operating on both material and cultural levels of analysis, indeed, arguing at every point for their mutual constitution and inextricability. Tadiar's methodology differs from both, though, in that "diaspora" turns out not to be an organizing term. Yet the inclusion of the chapter "Domestic Bodies" in a book ostensibly "about" the Philippines enables one to reconsider the relation between the Filipino diaspora and the nation-state. Whereas Manalansan and Parreñas are largely concerned with Filipinos abroad, Tadiar analyzes the role of the Philippine nation-state as itself an actor "in the world," so to speak. In Tadiar's book the Philippines thus becomes at once a case study of the effects of, as well as an acting agent in, the sustenance and elaboration of the global capitalist order: "This book argues that the fantasies of a postcolonial nation like the Philippines are at once symptomatic of and productive of an international system of desiring-actions among nations" (22). But it is precisely the massive dispersal of Filipino laborers that forces one to view the Philippine nation-state in these "worldly" terms: "Inasmuch as the Philippines is, as a supplier of global labour, a constitutive part of the world-system, its material dreams are the consequences of—as well as bear consequences for—that international order of political and economic dreamwork, which I call fantasy-production" (5–6). In this regard, the "uncontrollable excess of the nation" embodied by the millions of laboring overseas Filipinos has a return-effect on the nation-state itself, which it then seeks to control and accommodate (75).

For Tadiar this global "dreamwork" is steeped in "the logics of gender, race, and sexuality," which "act as particular modes of representation and codes of signification" within specific "[s]ystems of production" (11). This is a quite different take on the role and power of gender and sexuality from Manalansan's. Rather than examine the differences that emerge in the confrontations between Filipino and Western understandings and enactments of those identification categories, Tadiar elucidates, for example, the ways that within the context of the Asia-Pacific region "the economies and political relations of nations are libidinally configured, that is, they are grasped in effect in normative terms of sexuality" (38). In the chapter "Sexual Economies," she thus includes such headings as "The Pacific Marriage" (connoting U.S.-Japanese economic "unions") and "The Philippine-American Romance" (described as feminine mistress to masculine lover). But, as Tadiar

stresses throughout the book, these "logics" are far from metaphorical or epiphenomenal. They not only "exercise a captivating material power over our practical imaginations" (19), but also build upon and extend "a system of political and economic practices already at work among these nations" (38). Hence, the "hyperfeminization" of the Philippines "translates into the concrete exploitation and abuse of actual women" (50); the "prostitution economy" whereby "neo-colonial nations are now like prostitutes to be invested in for the extraction of surplus pleasure (wealth)" is literalized in the export of prostitutes and sex workers (49); and the infantilization of the Philippines is instantiated in the "phenomenal explosion of forced child prostitution" (63).

This articulation of international political economy with the "logics" of gender, sexuality, and race is exemplified in the chapter "Domestic Bodies." Whereas Parreñas examines the experiences of Filipina domestic workers through interviews and theories of globalization, Tadiar focuses more on the "construction" of the female domestic helper, which she sees as "the symbol of the diaspora of Filipino contract workers" (114). In particular, she surveys and interrogates the "ubiquity of the image of the OCW as a suffering body" broadcast in Philippine media during the mid-1990s (114). As we have seen, Parreñas too explores the subjective experience and coercive rhetorics of "suffering." However, whereas some of the women interviewed negotiated their subordinated status by claiming their racial identity as a marker of value in relation to other working women of color, Tadiar argues that "the intersection of gender and racial systems of differentiation within the logic of commodity fetishism" precipitates a discourse of "new-industrial slavery" (117, 116). This "refurbished" discourse of slavery becomes both symptom of and driving force behind the "acts of physical violence inflicted on the DH's [domestic helper's] body," which include "beating, burning, scratching, as well as sexual violation" (116, 117).

In Tadiar's view these objectifying renditions of female bodies in pain take "the form of tragedy" (121) which yield, on the one hand, putative solutions recommending "cross-cultural" training whereby the domestic worker "is tasked once again with the work of accommodating the difference(s) between her and her employer" (120). On the other, these "discursive autopsies" elicit moral outrage directed at the "weakness" of the state and its failure to protect its citizens abroad, with the conviction and execution of Flor Contemplacion by Singapore's government for the alleged murder of Delia Maga, a domestic worker, and her ward standing

as the most egregious example (123). The response becomes the “‘saving’ actions of the state,” exemplified in the case of Sarah Balabagan whose sentence, after being convicted of murdering her employer in the United Arab Emirates who had tried to rape her, was reduced from execution to “a year of imprisonment, 100 lashes, and ‘blood money’ for the family of her employer” (125). In Tadiar’s analysis these “tragedies” become less about the individuals themselves than about “the nation’s battle for sovereignty and dignity on the global stage” (125). As “representative figures of the diasporic population,” Filipina domestic workers bear the burden of carrying “the image they project of the nation abroad” (127, 128). Thus, “the image of the violated, sullied domestic body” converges with “the image of the destroyed, drained, destitute labouring body of the nation” to produce “the image of the shattered and scattered national body abroad” (127). It is hardly surprising therefore to see the state striving to intervene in “high profile” cases, such as those of Contemplacion and Balabagan, for their fate becomes the fate of the nation’s image abroad. In this regard the lines between the national and the diasporic become hopelessly blurred as the one turns into the other’s reflection.

For examples of cultural engagement that contrast with media sensationalism and state “management,” Tadiar turns to artist Imelda Cajipe-Endaya’s sculptural installations “*Ang Asawa Ko Ay DH*” (My Wife is a DH) and “Filipina: DH” as well as to poet Ruth Elynia Mabanglo’s 1990 Tagalog collection *Mga Liham ni Pinay* (Letters of Pinay). Rather than interpret these artworks as more “authentic” versions of the Filipina domestic worker, Tadiar approaches them as “attempts to come into alternative political relation with helpers, that is, to bring domestic helpers into relation with those of us who might see our implication in their plight as the occasion for some form of transformative mediation” (132). While Cajipe-Endaya’s “*Ang Asawa Ko Ay DH*” calls attention to the dehumanization and instrumentalization of the DH body by constructing the headless sculpture out of the tools of her trade (broom, dustpan, mop, iron), Mabanglo utilizes the epistolary mode in a series of poems in which she “writ[es] as and to overseas Filipina women” (137). In light of the previous discussion of the ways that epistolary transactions both sustain and strain transnational family relationships in Parreñas’s account, Mabanglo’s “poem-letters” are especially resonant (137). Indeed, Tadiar reads them in the context of her claim that the “subjective activity and power of domestic

helpers is expressed through the diaries, letters and phone calls they send to their families and each other” (136).

Bearing titles marking the locations from where they are sent (Singapore, Kuwait, Japan) and written in the first-person, Mabanglo’s poems are guided by a poetics, according to Tadiar, that “is not a matter of representing others or speaking in behalf of others. It is, rather, a practice of involving oneself in another. Mabanglo takes the substitutability of women, their exploitative exchangeability within a capitalist, sexist and racist socio-economic order, and turns it into a means of partially experiencing the lives of the women for whom she feels” (138). This self-extension is further realized through the serial form: by “writing as *different* Filipinas,” Mabanglo avoids reifying “Pinay” into a single category reducible to pure labor-function and inscribes “multiplicity” into the commodifying ascription of “otherness” (138, Tadiar’s emphasis). Tadiar, moreover, notes that the poems not only articulate “Pinay’s” experiences to others but also show the speaker(s) receiving others’ letters with joy: “I wait by the gate and the door for letters,/ My heart fills up through the telephone,/ I used to cry in the beginning,/ I didn’t know that everything could be cured through reading” (*Nag-aabang ako ng sulat sa tarangkaha’t pinto,/ Sa telepono’y nabubusog ang puso./ Umiiyak ako noong una,/ Nagagamot pala ang lahat ng pagbabasa*) (141). In this poetic practice of partially inhabiting multiple selves and creating epistolary exchanges, the collection becomes “an attempt to place Pinays, both at home and abroad, in involved relations with one another, relations which are at once subjectively liberating and socially empowering” (142). Whereas Parreñas sees the parallel structural position of women in the Filipino labor diaspora as the “ground” on which they can forge crossnational alliances, Tadiar interprets the “gatherings” of and by domestic workers as actual and expressive situations that “*create new contexts* for overseas Filipino women, contexts which foster their desires for connection to other women and which mobilize their subjective extendedness and being-for-others, that is, the conditions of their experiential labour, in ways that go beyond ‘necessity’ and their value for commodity exchange” (142, my emphasis). Adopting and redeploying a form already used by domestic workers themselves, Mabanglo’s epistolary poetics participates in such gatherings, while at the same time enabling us readers “to come into alternative political relation” with them, precisely by positioning us as the addressees and recipients of expressive transmissions that would otherwise be directed elsewhere.

## The Politics of Diaspora Criticism

In the concluding chapter of his book *From Exile to Diaspora* E. San Juan (1998, 190) places the Filipino diaspora, like Parreñas, in “the context of globalized capitalism today” and describes it as “a fusion of exile and migration: the scattering of a people, not yet a fully matured nation, to the ends of the earth, across the planet throughout the sixties and seventies, continuing up to the present.” Asserting that “[n]o one yet has performed a ‘cognitive mapping’ of these movements,” he suggests that “this late-capitalist diaspora demands a new language and symbolism for rendition.” He remains skeptical, however, about that prospect in sardonically asking, “Who cares for the Filipino anyway?” (ibid., 191). Dated 21 June 1996, the essay perhaps could not have predicted the recent outpouring of Filipino studies scholarship.<sup>9</sup> Nor could it have anticipated the curious resonance the question would acquire as it reverberates with the proliferating scholarship on Filipinos and the “Global Economy of Care” (or, for that matter, with Catherine Ceniza Choy’s *Empire of Care* [2003]).<sup>10</sup> Although San Juan (1998, 191) seems to be thinking of “creative” expression (“Should it be rendered as narrative? or as spectacle?”), one might view the surge in contemporary critical writing on the Filipino diaspora as making incisive forays into the “mapping” of these cultural cartographies.

Each of the monographs discussed above demonstrates the manifold ways that “diaspora” can be used both as descriptor (to refer to the dispersal of Filipinos across the globe) and as analytic (to examine the transnational cultural and social practices that link Filipinos in distant locations). In doing so they reveal how the Filipino diaspora is constituted through internal differences (immigrant from second-generation Filipino gay men; middle-class from working-class Filipinos in Los Angeles; migrant workers abroad from their children and domestic servants in the Philippines), through external differences (bakla from African, Asian, and white American gay men; Filipina from Latina and African American domestic workers), and represented through divergent forms (Philippine news media, state discourses, art, and poetry). I have focused particularly on the linguistic and literary practices utilized and invented in this social situation (swardspeak, *Tinig Filipino*, family letters, epistolary poetry) that these scholars bring to light in order to draw attention to the ways that “the Filipino diaspora” is not merely a socioeconomic fact but also a cultural formation *articulated*—linked and expressed—through specific discursive mechanisms.

It bears emphasizing as well that, in showing how normative and transgressive conceptions and performances of gender and sexuality mediate the Filipino diaspora, these scholars invest their intellectual energies in individuals and “communities”—gay immigrant men and overseas working (class) women—who can hardly be said to comprise the “proper” subjects or “representatives” of the Philippine nation, much less of their adopted or temporary dwellings. Moreover, that these scholars are currently located in U.S. academic institutions inevitably gives a particular inflection to their work, whose reception is channeled through the disciplinary organizations and social politics that operate in this setting. This context is crucial for gauging how these scholars negotiate the politics of criticism and representation.

Despite the growth of Filipino studies scholarship in the U.S., the field continues to labor under the sign of “invisibility,” having to confront the notion that Filipinos and their cultural products are ignored by or illegible within the U.S. “mainstream” or stand in a subordinate relation to other racialized minorities (East Asian Americans, African Americans, and so on).<sup>11</sup> In this sense, to represent Filipinos at all—whether in creative or critical work—is to enter into politicized territory whose stakes are irreducible to the production of “positive” or “negative” images. Nor do these scholars take refuge in a suspect posture of objectivity. In a simultaneous self-reflexive gesture and outward call, Tadiar (2003, 24) argues, “If cultural criticism is to participate in the sway of history in directions tangential to the dominant acts of fantasy-production, it must heed the wayward dream-acts of living social movements, such as Filipinas dreaming new tastes, trying out new lives.” It seems to me that the authors of these texts allow themselves to be implicated in and swayed by the social groups or “movements” which they seek to apprehend, analyze, and, at times, align themselves with—an investment most evident in the use of the autobiographical mode.<sup>12</sup> Similar to the way Mabanglo partakes in the experiences and endeavors of those whom she purports to “represent” through the very *form* of the poem-letters, Manalansan, Parreñas, and Tadiar interject moments of autobiographical reference into their monographs as implicit means of troubling the “boundary between dreamers and analysts” and of signaling “passionate attachments” to their subjects (ibid., 3, 265).<sup>13</sup>

For instance, the transgender practices associated with bakla culture and documented in *Global Divas* could be seen to reinforce “Orientalist ideas” of Asian men (straight and gay) in the U.S. as effeminate, passive,

subservient, and so forth (Manalansan 2003, 143). But rather than orient his critique toward normative Filipino masculinity or heterocentrism, Manalansan (ibid., 190) criticizes the short-sighted “idealization of a globalizing gay culture.” One might surmise that the reticence around homophobia is at least partly informed by the perceived lack of Filipino representation in the U.S., for to criticize Filipino culture for its homophobic strains would, from the perspective that equates sexual tolerance with modernity, risk rendering it as “traditional” and “unenlightened” in its sexual mores (as though Western culture were, on the whole, accepting of queers).

But a jolting moment of self-reflexivity, which points directly to the politics of criticism, provides another explanation for why Manalansan pursues the racial-immigrant critique of Western-style gayness. Toward the end of a discussion on the racial and class “topography” of New York and its outlying boroughs, he describes how “a senior scholar of queer studies” who read an earlier version of the chapter was “incensed at what he considered to be my voyeuristic tour of the gay (white) mainstream community” and declared, “The white gay community is my community. I love this community.” Reflecting on this reaction, Manalansan (ibid., 87) writes, “As someone who has been situated ‘out there,’ I began to realize that in many ways, the senior scholar saw me as an upstart and troublemaker who did not know his proper place.” This irruption of another critic’s voice helps to explain why Manalansan levels his critique of “global gays” in such fierce opposition to the “white gay male gaze” which he describes as “an omniscient, unreflexive observer whose erotic and practical politics are based on an imagined level playing field for all queers” (ibid., 6, Manalansan’s emphasis). Given this sort of detraction, is it any wonder that he would focus so intently on issues of cultural citizenship and social belonging—issues that extend, on another level, to who counts as a “proper” practitioner of queer studies itself?

In an unexpected moment of overlap with *Global Divas*, Parreñas (2005, 2) opens *Children of Global Migration* with a scene of gender misrecognition: “In the Philippines, I was often assumed to be a man, or more precisely a transgender woman, a *bakla*. Ironically, I am a heterosexual woman.” Puzzled by this misperception, Parreñas is told that her gender ambiguity is an effect of “*galaw*, or movement,” a “toughness” cultivated in the “inner city housing projects” in the U.S. (ibid., 3). What interests me about this autobiographical vignette, however, is less the implication that gender codes are

acquired and interpreted differently in different contexts than the admission that she would “take a break from my gendered woes and seek the comfort of gender recognition that welcomed me in another country. To be categorically defined as a woman, with all of its labels, stereotypes, and assumptions, became a welcome break from my gender ambiguity” (ibid., 2). Although Parreñas uses the story to inquire into “the other ways that society may similarly attempt to control the reconstitution of gender” (ibid., 4), one might also read it as a subtle way for her to extend her understanding of why normative gender ideologies remain stubbornly rigid in the face of structural transformations that would seem to encourage their flexibility—like Manalansan implicitly curtailing the temptation to dismiss Philippine gender codes as “traditional” and less than “feminist.”

Tadiar’s (2003, 266) use of the autobiographical is particularly intriguing as it is woven almost seamlessly into the critical writing, enacting her point that “[o]ur claims must be our own even as they are made in concert with others.” While italicized autobiography first enters *Fantasy-Production* in the chapter “Metropolitan Dreams,” it is in “Domestic Bodies” that we see Tadiar explicitly making her claims “in concert with others” (ibid., 77, 100–102). Following her discussion of Mabanglo’s poetry, Tadiar inserts a section titled “Going” that narrates her experiences as “*A Filipina in Japan*” where “*Nobody knows me*” (ibid., 143, 142). This meditation on living “*Here, away*,” where Filipinas are “*a common sight*” but where “*I think I am a different Filipina*” is remarkable precisely for refusing to assert that difference (ibid., 143). Although she states that “*I think I am here for different reasons*,” she never divulges what those reasons are (ibid.). Rather, this moment performs a writing practice analogous to Mabanglo’s which empathizes with Filipinas abroad and participates in the construction of that “context of struggle” without presupposing an a priori identification with them.

Bereft of the buffer of historical and spatial distance, these scholars imply that the autobiographical mode constitutes a crucial part of the invention of the “new language and symbolism” for coming to terms with the Filipino diaspora. This work demonstrates, in other words, that accounting for the Filipino diaspora—indeed, framing its theoretical and sociogeographic contours so that it can be brought into analytical focus in the first place—not only requires concerted attention to the complex mediations of gender and sexuality but also gives rise to a *poetics* of criticism whose formal operations reveal the impossibility of allowing oneself the luxury of standing outside

of the conditions that one is describing.<sup>14</sup> Positioned within the discourses and social practices they seek to comprehend, these scholars perform the work of “transformative mediation” by bringing us readers into “alternative political relation” with the Filipino diaspora, challenging those of us who *care* to think creatively and compassionately about those whose histories, expressive practices, and daily lives we write about and, if only partially and inadequately, dare to represent.

## Notes

- 1 I build on Enrique de la Cruz's (1998) conception of Filipino studies. He distinguishes the field from both “Philippine Studies,” which he considers “a subfield of area studies,” and “Filipino American Studies,” which is concerned with “identity and settlement of Filipinos with the framework as the U.S. mainly.” He asserts that “Filipino Studies is transnational in its concerns and linkages, and is the most comprehensive in terms of space and time . . . .” Unfortunately, de la Cruz tends to idealize this interstitial field by suggesting that it arrives “without the baggage of colonization. It draws upon area studies, but with the critical sensibility derived from post colonial investigations. It draws upon Filipino American Studies, and examines the history, identity, and settlement of Filipinos elsewhere around the world, including the Philippines” (ibid., ix). If colonialism and imperialism continue to mark the history of the present—not just in the Philippines but in “Filipino America”—in what sense does Filipino studies operate free of “the baggage of colonization”? My own view is that Filipino studies provides a capacious designation for the growing body of multidisciplinary scholarship emerging in the U.S. but increasingly engaged with scholarship concerning Filipinos being produced in other locations (such as the Philippines, Australia, and Asia).
- 2 Parreñas (2005, 5) writes that an “estimated 7.38 million Filipinos work and reside in more than 160 countries.” This statistic is based on a Kanlungan Centre Foundation publication from 2000. The Centre's (2006) website estimates that 8.5 million Filipinos currently work in over 180 countries. The scholarship in diaspora studies is too vast to cite here. Brazier and Mannur 2003 is a helpful compendium of essays.
- 3 Examples of this scholarship include San Juan 1994, 1998; Okamura 1998; Mendoza 2002; and Ignacio 2005. For a useful collection of interdisciplinary essays on Filipinos in an international context, see Aguilar 2002. For a cautionary note about adopting “diaspora” to describe Filipinos in the U.S., see Vergara 1999.
- 4 My current book project on Filipino literature in the U.S. strives to formulate and historicize a model of “diaspora” for reading this discrepant, transnational tradition as it emerges in the contexts of U.S. imperialism and migration, in part, by attending to the ways that the literature's complex formal strategies, modes of address, and (queer) sexual politics force us to conceive of it as oriented beyond ethnicity and the nation.
- 5 Manalansan (2003, 146) does record the testimony of Hector who says that since “we are the gooks, chinks, and brown-skinned fags . . . we need to connect with other Asians.” He also points

to cross-dressing as a practice that “has provided a kind of anchor for the creation of affinities with other Asian men, Latinos, and African Americans” (ibid.).

- 6 All translations are Manalansan's (2003).
- 7 It is true that Parreñas (2001, 194) interprets face-to-face interactions as scenarios in which domestic workers can share stories and experiences and thereby, borrowing from James Scott, “produce the ‘hidden transcript’” of strategies of “resistance.” But she also states that in Rome an “extremely high level of distrust plagues relationships among Filipinos” largely due to “the rise of competition and capitalist activities” that supplement their regular wages (ibid., 213). Again, the laborers' *structural* position on its own does not automatically guarantee solidarity. Further, Parreñas hedges a bit when discussing how (im)migration to the United States relates to her conception of the Filipino labor diaspora: “The large contingent of Filipino labor migrants to the United States is conceivably part of a larger outflow of a hierarchical labor diaspora from the Philippines. Professionals, semiprofessionals, and low-wage workers make up this diaspora” (ibid., 10–11). She goes on to assert, however, “The Filipino labor diaspora is conceivably composed of one labor force in the global economy” (ibid., 11). Is the point, then, that there are multiple *Filipino* diasporas distinguishable by class and profession? If so, to what extent does that way of framing the Filipino diaspora preclude the possibility of Filipinos interacting *across* class and geographic lines?
- 8 Parreñas (2001, 148) does propose that a transformation of the gendered ideology of the family—easing the expectations placed on mothers to supply the majority of emotional care even while abroad, allowing for extended kin and fathers to fill this need, and intervening in public discourse around the moral privileging of the nuclear family—“would temper the pain of separation.” And yet, although “[t]ransnational families open the door for the reconstitution of gender by rupturing the structural constraints that encourage the ‘normative gender behavior’ more appropriate to patriarchal nuclear households,” Parreñas (2005, 6, 165) finds that “the performance of mothering and fathering in transnational families does not question but instead maintains gender conventions.” She points to “[p]ressure from kin and community to uphold gender conventions, cultural pressure to meet moral standards of gender in society, and the resistance of men to expand their work” as factors that “stall” gender transformations (ibid., 165).
- 9 It was first published in *Amerasia Journal*. See San Juan 1997.
- 10 “The Global Economy of Care” is the title of chapter one of Parreñas's (2005) *Children of Global Migration*. See also Choy 2003.
- 11 I reconsider the politics of Filipino “invisibility” elsewhere. For a recent critique of the idea, see Pisares 2006.
- 12 These four monographs are not the only Filipino studies texts that contain authorial self-inscriptions. See, for example, the prologue to Mendoza (2002, xiii–xxiv); Choy (2000, 2005), which describes the “intellectual journey” that informs *Empire of Care* (Choy 2003); Espiritu (2005, xi–xii); and the preface to Ignacio (2005, xvii–xxiii). Although it does not comment explicitly on *Fantasy-Production*, Tadiar's (1999) essay is worth noting here since it uses the autobiographical register to discuss the overlapping impact of migration, U.S. imperialism, and racial and gender difference on the politics of “community.” My sense is that these autobiographical expressions of investment not only evince the personal stakes for the authors but also gesture toward “justifications” for pursuing scholarship on Filipinos at all. This implicit need to “explain” one's choice of subject matter points to the subordinated status of Filipino studies within the U.S. academy.

13 I am not, of course, referring to their individual "personalities" but to the implicit and explicit staging of the authorial personas presented in their work.

14 In Tadiar's (2003, 265) words, "I am practicing 'feminist irony' when I perform the fantasy-critique of this place called the Philippines without being able to remove myself from it and its consequences. I am, after all, one of those consequences. But more than that, it is of great consequence to me—it is a place which continues to shape my life, a place with which I have absolutely vital, living, material relationships, a place that remains a source, a means and an end of many of my most passionate attachments." I do not mean to suggest, however, that Filipino diaspora discourse inevitably expresses "passionate attachments" to the Philippines itself. This discourse should be capacious enough to allow for relationships and connections (as well as ambivalences and animosities) among Filipinos and their differentiated cultural practices worldwide.

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