

Homeland Developments:
Filipino America and the Politics of Diaspora Giving

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Dedication

*To my dad,
Manuel J. Mariano*

You are with me every day

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Preface

The Messiness of Attachments: Diaspora, Giving, and Otherwise

By the time I came along, his motto was “A gift means that you didn’t earn it.” Thankfully it didn’t apply to his only child. As a father, he was generous. More or less. The “less” was because he never gave me what I wanted. He gave me only what he wanted me to have. I found this was often true with philanthropy and with love. The giver’s desire and fulfillment played an important role.

-- Monique Truong, *Bitter in the Mouth*

“Homeland Developments: Filipino America and the Politics of Diaspora Giving” works to understand processes of contemporary Filipino American diaspora identification through transnational organized giving efforts to the Philippines. Examining the language and commitments of transnational organizations to address social and environmental needs and injustices in the Philippines, the chapters of the dissertation chart the institutional, discursive, and transnational processes that shape, produce, and limit contemporary forms of Filipino American diaspora giving politics and identities. Rather than plot the panorama of Filipino American diaspora giving practices and the frequency in which Filipino American organizations carry out diaspora giving projects, “Homeland Developments” studies the implications of how transnational Filipino American organizations respond to the demands of neoliberal globalization, state- and corporate-sponsored solutions to national development in the Philippines, and the asymmetrical relationships between the United States and the Philippines not only

geopolitically and imperialistically but between Filipino Americans endeavoring to “help” the Philippine nation and the Filipinos in the homeland.

The pages that follow employ the terms “diaspora giving” and “diaspora identities,” and not the adjectival “diasporic,” so as to deliberate the multiplicity of giving practices and identities in processes of diaspora formation. While general usage of the phrase “diasporic identities” does not necessarily imply singularity or the correspondence between a fully formed diaspora and multiple identities, this work’s use of “diaspora giving” and “diaspora identities” points to how the space of diaspora itself—its emotional resonance, its role in globalized economies, and its borders—is produced in and through various Filipino American transnational efforts to improve the conditions and futures of the Philippine homeland. In a similar vein, this work employs the term “giving” to speak to the complex cultural politics involved when organizations and institutions position themselves as not only the voice of the Filipino American community but as authorities on transnational, diaspora giving. To give speaks not only to a gift that is given but to the relationships and divisions between giver and receiver and the social, political and economic contexts of those relationships and divisions. How do transnational Filipino American organizations negotiate those contexts and relationships, and what does this tell us about contemporary processes of Filipino diaspora formation? To give also speaks to a yielding, a giving way of a position or a force that may have at one time been seen as natural or impenetrable. How can an analysis of diaspora giving reveal the contingencies of diaspora and national belonging as well as the political economic conditions of philanthropy and emergency relief?

For almost a century, Filipino Americans have organized themselves to address social, political, and economic needs in the Philippines. For example, in 1925, Filipino Americans founded a mutual aid organization, the Filipino Federation of America, in Los Angeles, which eventually held multiple branches in the western United States and Hawaii. In addition to distributing aid to members in need, providing networks of support in the absence of family, and working to forward the demand for Philippine independence from the United States, these early Filipino immigrant organizational members—agricultural workers and menial laborers— financially supported the founder’s social (and religious) commitments in the Philippines.¹

Early Filipino immigrants were organized as co-ethnics and as laborers. Today’s Filipino immigrants in the U.S. and Filipino Americans foster an enlarged identity that connects their hometown, regional, or national commitments to new identities as philanthropists, humanitarians, benefactors, and activists. While instances of transnational diaspora giving by Filipino Americans is not new, today’s contemporary society witnesses an explosion of Filipino American organizations, associations, and foundations dedicated at least in part to improving some aspect of the Philippines. From the mutual aid societies of early Filipino immigrants to the United States, the post-1965 immigrant Filipino Americans have organized themselves into *thousands* of hometown, regional, and national associations as well as professional, alumni and activity groups in every state in the nation. Following the swell of immigration of Filipino medical professionals in the late 1960s and 1970s, Filipino American doctors and nurses devote

¹ For a history of the Federation of Filipinos, see Steffi San Buenaventura, "Filipino Folk Spirituality and Immigration: From Mutual Aid to Religion," *Amerasia Journal* 22, no. 1 (1996): 1-30.

themselves to medical missions in the Philippines, demonstrating how homeland was never left completely behind. In the past two decades in particular, Filipino Americans have created new organizations and foundations for the specific purpose of transnational development and partnership with communities in the Philippines. Filipino American associations that originally banded for social activities and mutual aid among Filipino Americans, easing to a degree the disjunctures and isolation produced by migration, have redirected their emphasis to doing what they can to raise money from the Filipino American community and beyond to finance projects benefiting communities in the Philippines.

The economic position of many middle-class and upper-middle-class, post-1965 professionals, international neoliberal policies and values to leave more and more responsibility for social welfare to the wealthy (or at least wealth-ier) and not the state, and the increased ease of travel to and communication with the Philippines have all intersected to enliven today's field of Filipino American diaspora giving organizations. The increasing numbers of these organizations and frequent conferences and symposia by leaders in the Philippines and Filipino America on how Filipino Americans can best help the Philippines fortify the urgency to theorize the implications of how we give and giving's role in the production of diaspora identities and transnational community formations. It is this urgency that colors the biases and informs the twists and turns this conversation makes.

The analysis offered operates on the institutional level. The import of this institutional and organizational approach lays in the function of ethnic-national

organizational politics to project a collective voice and image of Filipino American support for the Philippine homeland. While never wholly expressing the complexity of identity, these collective identities connect to and create spaces and subjectivities that can alternatively promote, mask, reinterpret or discourage an understanding of the global political and economic processes that contribute to the maintenance of the Philippines as a third world country and Filipinos as a generally mobile and exploitable population. At heart, the culmination of the analyses of different institutional and organizational contexts that these chapters contain constitutes a plea to transnational Filipino American organizations and to the mostly Filipino American individuals who give financially to these organizations to reconsider the popular belief that because the majority of people of the Philippines are so ensconced in economic desperation that “*anything* we can give will help.” Even the smallest Filipino American organization maintains a vision of social, economic, or political change in the Philippines either explicitly or through the implications of the homeland projects it pursues, and whether or not this vision produces diaspora identities and spaces that can intervene in the contemporary entitlements afforded to U.S. imperialism matters tremendously.

As seen in newspaper accounts, conferences, and my own interviews with Filipino American organizational leaders, the “love of the motherland” from nationalist diasporic discourse and the “love of mankind” from the etymological root of philanthropy coalesce in diaspora giving. As recited in many of these narratives of diaspora giving, the emotional ties of Filipino Americans, particularly of immigrants, led them to want to “do good” and “pay it forward” to the country of their birth. This sentiment of love

serves as a mantra for many diaspora giving organizations and projects, but it is this idea of love that requires both our critical attention if we are to theorize how such a complex expression of desire, loyalty, and commitment becomes translated in specific diaspora giving projects as well as criticism's inability to fully explain expressions of love and yearnings for belonging.

While there is the expectation that this love will guide us toward an evolved ethos of diaspora belonging, love of the homeland and love of mankind are ultimately ineffable expressions of belonging. Stated by Gregory J. Seigworth and Melissa Gregg, "As much as we sometimes might want to believe that affect is highly *invested* in us and with somehow magically providing for a better tomorrow, as if affect were always already sutured into a progressive or liberatory politics or at least the marrow of our best angels, as if affect were somehow producing always better states of being and belonging—affect instead bears an intense and thoroughly immanent neutrality."² (10) While love plays a prominent role in the mantras that rally diaspora giving writ large, these repetitions do not capture the play of emotions and wavering intensities that hover around the attachments of diaspora belonging and the ambivalence, guilt, helplessness, and desperation around giving and diaspora giving practices. What are those forces that drive Filipino Americans toward action, actions as variant as organizing a golf tournament to aid victims of a natural disaster in the Philippines or organizing a meeting with the wealthiest Filipino Americans in the area to discuss strategies to maximize the impact of their donation dollars? Belonging as a diasporan to a homeland or as a giver to a larger

² Gregory J. Seigworth and Melissa Gregg, "An Inventory of Shimmers," in *The Affect Theory Reader*, ed. Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010): 10.

social need are only but two expressions of such forces; together, they are an incomplete attempt to understand the workings of power that drive individuals or collectivities to name a predicament and claim their own method and contributions to making a better world.

I begin by charting my biases as a way of acknowledging that the intersection of diaspora identities and institutional giving, the central focus of this work, is borne of homeland attachments and commitments expressed as compassion, generosity, solidarity, gratitude, abandonment, and even desperation and fear for the future of the Philippines. These expressions of emotion held by the individuals who speak for institutions and lend their energies toward building transnational, diasporic organizations are inevitably fraught and filled with self-contradiction. While the chapters of this dissertation turn to the institutional context and the cultural politics of Filipino American diaspora giving, I take a moment in this preface to acknowledge the emotional messiness that remain, perhaps too much, in the periphery of the work.

When asked to describe how I came to my research topic, I more often than not offer a brief narrative of how my father, Manuel Mariano, a not-entirely-voluntary Filipino American immigrant, organized medical missions in the Philippines and encouraged me to join him on his trips to provide medical services to rural, indigent Filipinos who may otherwise have no access to sight-restoring glaucoma surgeries and cataract impact operations. My father entered the United States to continue his training as a doctor and with intentions to marry my mother, Lilia, who was working in a research lab, both hailing from the same village in the Philippines. In the family lore, my parents

did not intend to stay in the U.S., and their one-way return tickets back to the Philippines were secured in 1972. However, the confusion and theater of the initial days and weeks of Ferdinand Marcos' martial law in the Philippines disrupted their plans, and my parents felt forced to find a way to remain and work in the U.S.

My father was sickly and unable to operate on patients from the relatively young age of forty-five. My dad was weak, but he saw his illness as a blessing that freed him from being tied to his work as an ophthalmologist in the United States. His freedom from work enabled him to organize and carry out annual medical missions in the Philippines when his health allowed, which were made in conjunction with missionary work with the North American Baptist church. "Joyce," he would say to me, "it was always my dream to be a missionary anyway." While he became a doctor because of intense family pressure, his medical training and subsequent illnesses enabled the realization of his dream.

My father very directly expressed to my brothers and me that it was important to him that we come to know the Philippines through experiences related to volunteerism and to evangelical proselytizing. Always with a joke and smile, he would tease his and my mother's relatives who would rather see us stay put in the family homes upon our visits to the Philippines, venturing out only to visit the air conditioned malls and their community church, than leading a series of two-week surgical forays in oftentimes remote and impoverished villages. In the U.S. he would tease the other Filipino American immigrant families that the reason he lacked a Mercedes and a new Rolex watch and they didn't was because he had to save his money in order to visit the dirt and

bugs, his “friends,” in those rural Philippine villages. He wanted my brothers and me to see the Philippines that he had as a young man imagined himself serving, to love the poor, and to show our love through Christian service. In my twenties, my parents encouraged me to take a quarter off from college and join them on one of their medical mission trips to four locales on the Philippines’ largest island, the first of two trips I made to the Philippines with the specific purpose of joining my father’s medical mission.

In retrospect, my memories return to the conditions of rural Philippine life that were so different from my cousins’ lives near the Metro Manila area, but in the moment, I experienced profound feelings of intense isolation and cultural alienation. Unless given a specific task that would lead me to seek the assistance of others, I quietly led patients from one waiting area to an examination room to another waiting area, otherwise keeping to myself in the background of the commotion of hundreds of patients waiting to be evaluated and treated by the hospital staff and the dozen or so residents and helpers working with my father. Conversationally, I interacted very little with others save the members of our extended family who would join us on different legs of the medical mission. Given the dearth of my interactions, one midwife assistant, to apply a Western occupational description that does not translate in terms of her education and credentials or lack thereof, singularly and palpably stands out in my memory of this time. We were about the same age and even shared a certain resemblance, a novel enough realization on its own given my eighteen years in the plains of North Dakota. I remember her for a particular moment when she looked at me filled with emotion and told me over and over again how lucky I was that I lived in America, how she wished she could be me, and how

fortunate I was that I had my mom and dad as my parents. I knew, of course, that she was referring not to me personally but to the vast differences between us in terms of education, opportunity, and material comforts. Why wasn't she lucky enough to achieve the American Dream, she seemed to ask. I knew what she was referring to, yet I was struggling to make sense of the contradictions that surrounded me during my stay in the Philippines.

For instance, knowing a little bit about U.S. colonization in the Philippines, it confused me how much pity my parents seemed to have for the unsaved masses of this Catholic nation. While both my parents became born-again evangelical Christians as children living in the Philippines, it was bewildering to me why they were teaming up with white American missionaries as part of their medical mission to their own homeland. It boggled my mind how few doctors there were in rural Philippines, yet all of the Filipino immigrants that I knew through the North Dakota-South Dakota-Minnesota Filipino American association to which my family belonged were doctors and spouses of doctors who accepted positions in *rural*, American hospitals as a condition for their visas and eventual residency in the U.S. Also, at the time, I was gearing up to come out to my parents as a lesbian, and I blamed my difficulty with this process, in part, on their adopted religion. Feeling pressured by Western models of coming out and "being true to myself" that clashed with the Filipino cultural emphasis on parental deference, I emotionally distanced myself from my parents, a distance that made me cringe when faced with the midwife assistant's assertions of envy.

I felt the impossibility of communicating with the young midwife assistant. This impossibility stemmed from the larger contradictions fueling my inability to respond in a way that acknowledged the cultural, national, and economic differences of our lives, accounted for the neocolonial relationship between the U.S. and the Philippines, and allowed for an analysis of homeland and mobility that could address the workings of race, gender and sexuality on multiple scales. As a young woman, I did not understand that my father's dream of returning to the Philippines as a missionary extended from his regrets of leaving the Philippines, to returning to the Philippines on *his* terms, and to his desires for *how* he wanted his children to find a sense of belonging in the Philippines. I wanted to give wholly of myself to the poor Filipinos, not unselfishly but in a way that would show my father that his lessons were learned. I wanted to love the Philippines in a way that my father wanted me to love the Philippines so that my purpose would be clear and my place—in my family, in the Philippines, and in Filipino America—would be secure. I could say that the dissertation is, in a way, a response to my younger self. While it would not provide any definitive answers for the kind of confusion I experienced, this work attempts to create an interdisciplinary mode of questioning that stems from the premise that it is intellectually and politically necessary to understand the complexities of homeland returns. Accounting for the social worlds impacted by globalization, the dissertation works to build a framework that articulates diaspora identities, communities and spaces to the political economic conditions of and responses to poverty and social need.

I narrate a personal story of diaspora giving to acknowledge those forces that are less material and less structural than the particular institutional-minded approach of the chapters of this dissertation take. On the one hand, there is an urgency to the direction taken up in the chapters. The dissertation connects diaspora giving to a structural critique of neoliberal policies on the economic and social organization of the Philippines. It identifies counternarratives by those who position their giving against consumerism and the racialization of Filipino bodies. In this regard, the dissertation engages in a timely conversation about how Filipino American organizations and the Filipino Americans who support them envision their role and impact as diasporans and as agents of social change. On the other hand, I begin this dissertation with a moment of autobiographical reflection to infer my understanding that the individual and collective bodies that produce diaspora giving projects are not merely structural agents but are embodied agents with ephemeral and inchoate desires and emotions. This dissertation critiques contemporary forms of institutionalized diaspora giving, but never does it claim to know the complex motivations or desires of the individual Filipino Americans involved in diaspora giving organizations. As such, it does not cast doubt on individual intentions but insists on an analysis of the implications of institutionalized diaspora giving practices.

My personal story can be read as part of a collective yearning for belonging. It does not offer solutions or a roadmap to an alternative giving politics. However, it gestures toward the necessity of fine-tuning our attentions to forces that do not present themselves as obvious factors in the story of Filipino American diaspora giving. Put more pointedly than what I can achieve, “It may very well be through the inconsequential

and the tangential, the excessive and the abject, that we can divine alternative, more generative forms of knowledge and affiliation.”³

³ Gayatri Gopinath, “Archive, Affect, and the Everyday: Queer Diasporic Re-Visions,” in *Political Emotions: New Agendas in Communication*, ed. Janet Staiger, Ann Cvetkovich, and Ann Reynolds (New York: Routledge, 2010): 190.

Introduction

Giving Begins at Home:

Notes on the Politics of Filipino American Diaspora Giving

The ascendancy of Official Development Assistance, it seems, is over, and the era of remittances and diaspora philanthropy is well under way. Official development tools such as the structural adjustment programs and other World Bank instruments that “focused on correcting the major macroeconomic distortions hindering development”¹ controlled the nature and transfer of financial aid from donor countries toward the promotion of economic development in developing countries, setting the terms and goals of the discourse of official development in the 1980s. In recent years, however, the total amount given by migrants and immigrants to countries of origin through remittances and philanthropic giving dwarfs the total transfers of official aid from country to country. In a typical article on this phenomenon titled “The Globalization of Philanthropy,” a director of a large U.S. fundraising and philanthropy consulting firm praises “diaspora philanthropy,” which together with migrant worker remittances have come to double the amount of Official Development Assistance and speak to the changing nature of the world’s most important development actors.² The author typifies the development and philanthropy sectors’ heralding of these diasporas and their transnational economic flows

¹ From the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) glossary of terms. See OECD, “Structural Adjustment Programmes,” <http://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=7243>.

² Susan Raymond, “The Globalization of Philanthropy,” <http://onphilanthropy.com/>. I use this example as a typical one for its position on the unadulterated benefits of diaspora philanthropy. However, she does not necessarily typify the popular and policy literature with her ease of erasing the differences between remittances and philanthropy. While others combine these types of giving, I exploit this move not because I believe that these exchanges are equivalent types of transfers but to emphasize the importance of philanthropy and “social remittances” from im/migrants for these so-called developing countries.

for their potential to “fuel local economic investment and development” and “reinforce civil society.” “Philanthropy,” she writes in an oft-used sentiment of foundations and nonprofit organizations, “is the monetized expression of a community’s commitment to its future.” Professor of law Mark Sidel describes the transition from official development supporting receiving states to diaspora’s support of homeland, presuming that the receiving states’ alleged capacity for fairness translates in diaspora: “As the state cedes ground to diaspora donors, it may also be ceding the capacity to promote pro-equity giving, leaving considerations of equity primarily to diaspora givers, and to the domestic organizations and individuals with which they work.”³ Diaspora in this framework is, therefore, the future of development where the object to be developed is not the nation-state as it was in official development, but of the homeland nation.⁴

Giving and Diaspora

Diaspora and giving collide in both prosaic and surprising ways. The Enlightenment period, for example, produced both the idea of modern homeland

³ To this I would add, the organizations and individuals in the home country with which they *choose* to work. See Mark Sidel, “Focusing on the State: Government Responses to Diaspora Giving and Implications for Equity,” in *Diasporas and Development*, eds. Barbara J. Merz, Lincoln C. Chen, and Peter F. Geithner (Cambridge, MA and London, England: Global Equity Initiative, Asia Center, and Harvard University Press, 2007), 49.

⁴ Though he analyzes international charity organizations and not diaspora-based organizations as a type of international charity, Alex Rontos also describes this international context where charity steps in for the responsibilities of the state:

Central governments that once assumed a monopoly of responsibility for the well-being of their citizens are beating a collective retreat from their social obligations. This began well before the collapse of the communist systems of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, when creditors of many Third World countries forced those governments to cut back on social programs (subsidized food, medicine, housing, and transport) to meet their financial commitments. Given that state charity greased the wheels of political legitimacy in most countries with unrepresentative political systems, the decline in social services has contributed to a social and political vacuum that is now being filled spontaneously by community initiatives, on a scale that as yet to be fully appreciated.

See Rontos, “Compromising to Achieve” in *Giving: Western Ideas of Philanthropy*, ed. J. B. Schneewind (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996), 200.

nationalisms and the idea of philanthropic reform, creating new relationships among people, territory, knowledge and responsibility.⁵ Today, migrants, immigrants and their descendants “re-turn”⁶ to homeland nations through donations and support for organizations, projects, and causes, disrupting, it can be said, one-to-one relationships of nation and belonging. Organized donation programs and social change efforts regroup migrants and immigrants into homeland-oriented collectivities or diasporas, marking diaspora giving as a significant characteristic of migrant and immigrant life. The explosion of research broadly related to diaspora giving of the past decade and a half parallels the growing number of hometown associations, nonprofit organizations, foundations, and intermediary groups that participate in diaspora giving. This body of research offers “descriptions of the types of diaspora giving” and provides “an initial understanding of the channels for diaspora giving”⁷ regarding the philanthropic and social development projects of immigrants and migrants from or connected to Israel,

⁵ For example, describing the origins of philanthropy, Robert A. Gross writes, “Coined as a term in late seventeenth-century England, it became associated with the Enlightenment, for it sought to apply reason to the solution of social ills and needs. Philanthropy can take secular or religious forms. Either way, it aspires not so much to aid individuals as to reform society. Its object is the promotion of progress through the advance of knowledge.” On modern nationalisms, Yossi Shain writes, “Modern nationalism—the idea that people with distinct characteristics should have the right to govern themselves in a territory believed to their homeland—is tied to the Enlightenment and the evolution of the modern state since the eighteenth century.” See Robert A. Gross, “Giving in America: From Charity to Philanthropy,” in *Charity, Philanthropy, and Civility in American History*, eds. Lawrence J. Friedman and Mark D. McGarvie (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 31; Yossi Shain, *Kinship and Diasporas in International Affairs* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2007), 1.

⁶ To borrow from Khachig Tölölyan’s description of diaspora in “Rethinking Diaspora(s): Stateless Power in the Transnational Moment,” *Diaspora* 5, no. 1 (1996): 14.

⁷ Mark Sidel, “A Decade of Research and Practice of Diaspora Philanthropy in the Asia Pacific Region: The State of the Field,” University of Iowa Legal Studies Research Paper no. 08-09 (May 2008): 7.

Mexico, India, China, the Philippines and other countries with “traditionally diasporic”⁸ members or with high rates of labor migration from the Global South.

The present project follows these other works in its use of “diaspora giving” to encompass the myriad ways that migrants and immigrants give back, as it were, to their homelands. From there, however, it marks its departure. This project departs from much of this literature in its refusal of the neutrality of the terms under study and argues the importance of understanding the social, political economic, and cultural conditions that would render “diaspora giving” an objective phenomenon that needs only to be measured and described. The current research on diaspora giving, with its emphasis on types of exchange and channels for giving, presumes that self-evident diasporas can improve the social and economic futures of homeland if properly guided by the scientific knowledge of best practices of giving. Yet, as this dissertation demonstrates, joining diaspora and giving offers unexpected opportunities for analysis that exceed descriptions of the new and so-called innovative ways that migrants and immigrants connect with homelands through philanthropy, economic development, and social movements. Both diaspora and giving maintain the potential to extend or challenge existing hierarchies of social difference and power, prompting attention to diaspora giving critique that can both elaborate multiple forms of domination that mobilizations of diaspora giving can institute and allow an exploration of the conditions of possibility of diaspora giving discourse.

⁸ “Traditionally diasporic” presents a short-hand reference to the origins of the word diaspora, which was used to describe the forced dispersal of Jews and later Armenians. Beginning in the early-to-mid 1990s, scholars seized on the possibility of diaspora in theorizing a wider characterization of dispersals within global modernity.

This project utilizes the “giving” of diaspora giving in part to capture the myriad, overlapping and contradictory ways that the literature and participants in diaspora giving generally describe or identify these transnational practices and exchange. The manifold inflections of giving correlate to institutionalized forms (philanthropy, development, charity, humanitarianism, social movements, microfinance), to the language of the goals of social responsibility and engagement (reform, self-help, aid, justice, equality, sustainability, transformation), and to the description of social relationships involved (solidarity, sponsorship, uplift, partnership, beneficiary, funder and the like). Scholars and practitioners generally define diaspora philanthropy “as giving back by ethnic communities living abroad for social or public purposes in their countries of origin.”⁹ Organizations, governments, scholars and policy makers freely wield the terminology of giving practices, demonstrating the overlap among institutionalized forms of giving and pointing to the lack of fixity in the meanings of the categories. However, little attention is paid to how the categories of giving create relationships among diaspora spaces and subjects. For example, the conference “Diaspora Giving: An Agent of Change in Asia Pacific Communities” was held in Hanoi, Vietnam in 2008. One of the goals of the conference was to “identify innovative practices in social investment and social entrepreneurship through strategic philanthropy by migrants and discuss how these may have facilitated sustainable social change and development in the diaspora’s communities of origin.”¹⁰ The conference organizers chose to use “Diaspora Giving” in the conference title, presumably, to capture the diversity of practices engaged by diasporas, and its goal

⁹ Sidel, “Focusing on the State,” 25.

¹⁰ Mark Sidel, “A Decade of Research and Practice of Diaspora Philanthropy in the Asia Pacific Region,” 1.

was largely to provide recommendations for realizing the potential of diaspora giving. Similarly, the authors of *Diasporas and Development* do not use “giving” or the more often used “philanthropy,”¹¹ but “development.” Their emphasis on development is not on the macroeconomic models of official development but on what they call equitable development, “the expansion of human choice widely shared across members of a community or a nation...based on normative notions of fairness in the distribution of opportunities for achieving human advancement, ... [fostering] a focus on those aspects of inequality that violate notions of fairness.”¹² Included essays in *Diasporas and Development* examine state responses to guide remittances and diaspora donations to social programs and foreign direct investment; the different fundraising strategies of hometown associations and volunteer groups; the mechanisms needed to safely facilitate transfers to homeland; and professional organizations whose members carry skills and knowledge that can address the “brain drain” of their homelands. However, even while pursuing equity, the volume focuses almost entirely on the potential for social economic impact that the diaspora holds for the homeland. In this framework, active diasporas impact passive homelands in a unilateral direction. As such, the policy-dominated scholarly field almost entirely lacks a critical analysis. Intervening in these frameworks, this project works to analyze the production of often unequal social relationships generated in the giving exchange and the underlying meanings and implications of how

¹¹ For example, see Kathleen Newland, Aaron Terrazas, and Roberto Munster, *Diaspora Philanthropy: Private Giving and Public Policy* (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2010); and Paula Doherty Johnson, *Diaspora Philanthropy: Influences, Initiatives, and Issues* (Cambridge, MA: The Philanthropic Initiative, Inc. and The Global Equity Initiative, Harvard University, May 2007).

¹² Barbara J. Merz, Lincoln C. Chen, and Peter F. Geithner, “Overview: Diasporas and Development,” in *Diasporas and Development*, eds. Barbara J. Merz, Lincoln C. Chen, and Peter F. Geithner (Cambridge, MA and London, England: Global Equity Initiative, Asia Center, and Harvard University Press, 2007), 4.

different mobilizations of diaspora giving narrate the goals of social responsibility and account for positionality in the diaspora-homeland relationship.

Individual impulses and institutionalized mechanisms of reform characterize the widely accepted difference between charity and philanthropy.¹³ However, scholars such as Adrienne Lash Jones underscore the racial implications of differentiating practices of giving, pointing to the need to consider giving as a racial formation.¹⁴ For example, Jones argues how modern conceptualizations of philanthropy, charity, voluntarism, and self-help contribute to the elision of African Americans in the academic literature related to giving. Neither descriptions of personal acts of compassion or large contributions by the wealthy toward the establishment of foundations address the motives of the donor or the fact that recipients may be specified by the donor. Because “African American giving” largely references identification between donor and recipient, she argues that when African Americans are discussed in the academic literature, “the term ‘self-help’ is applied,” diminishing the purpose and benefits of the exchange:

Presumably, because their contributions are likely to be combinations of individual and organizational voluntarism, and/or monetary or material gifts of

¹³ Lawrence Friedman, for example, provides a “litmus test” to distinguish between these types of giving: “We consider philanthropy as a collective form of charitable giving. In our view, the giver’s intent becomes an acid test to distinguish who is and who is not a philanthropist. Philanthropists intend to impose their vision of the good society through collective missionary-like (religious and secular) ventures.” Charity, conversely, is comprised of individual impulses. “Charity expresses an impulse to personal service; it engages individuals in concrete, direct acts of compassion and connection to other people... charity and philanthropy stand at opposite poles: the one concrete and individual, the other abstract and institutional.” See Lawrence J. Friedman, “Philanthropy in America: Historicism and Its Discontents,” in *Charity, Philanthropy, and Civility in American History*, ed. Lawrence J. Friedman and Mark D. McGarvie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 2.

¹⁴ While not thoroughly fleshed out, Samantha King offers a framework of understanding the nation’s investments in whiteness in her astute and engaging text on how breast cancer was reconfigured from a site of feminist politics to a site of philanthropy and a community of “survivors.” See Samantha King, *Pink Ribbons, Inc.: Breast Cancer and the Politics of Philanthropy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006).

relatively small value whose beneficiaries are more clearly identified with the donors, this special category functions as a way to indicate a presumption that there is no benefit to the larger society. In other words, gifts of time, talent, and fortune of black Americans are less often acknowledged or considered for inclusion in our descriptions of charity and philanthropy because they are usually given by blacks for the specific purpose of raising the quality of life for members of their own community.¹⁵

To intervene in the hegemony of the vocabulary, Jones suggests that no distinction be made between large gifts, smaller donations, and voluntarism so “that all gifts which are intended to serve socially useful purposes may be included without regard to the portion of society for which such donations are intended.”¹⁶ Jones’ analysis brings to light the abstract identities that institutionalized forms of giving hold at their center, abstract identities of largesse and reform that contribute to the rendering of African American giving as inferior “self-help.” Following this trend and in attempts to avoid institutional particularities of “philanthropy” and “development,” terms that the popular, policy, and academic literature generally attribute to diaspora giving, this work encapsulates multiple and often contradictory giving formations, pointing to the complexities of identity, resources, and space in its examination of the politics of diaspora giving.

Rather than a purely theoretical abstraction of mobility, identity, community, giving and exchange, “Homeland Developments: Filipino America and the Politics of Diaspora Giving” locates its analysis in the Filipino diaspora between the United States

¹⁵ Adrienne Lash Jones, “Philanthropy in the African American Experience,” in *Giving: Western Ideas of Philanthropy*, ed. J. B. Schneewind (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996), 153-4.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 154.

and the Philippines and contends with its objects of transnational analysis in terms of the racial, gendered, and capitalist operations of power in relation to globalization and nationalism.¹⁷ This analysis of the politics of Filipino American diaspora giving is premised upon the possibilities of homeland orientations that theorize both the “diaspora” and the “giving” of diaspora giving as negotiations of knowledge and power. Filipino American diaspora giving references collectivities and boundaries produced in the intersection of “diaspora” and “giving.” Filipino American identity, as used here, is therefore “an intrinsically political operation.”¹⁸ The analysis of contemporary Filipino American diaspora giving, I argue, affords insights into how Filipino Americans mediate the conflicts and discrepancies of the organization of social and political life. This project aims to consider a diaspora giving critique toward giving practices that take into account processes of racialization, gender exploitation, nationalist exclusions and neoimperialism within global capitalism. It explores how racialized and national identities are mapped onto frameworks and public presentations of diaspora giving projects and understandings of social change. Instead of a detailed description of Filipino American diaspora giving where one could enumerate the number and best practices of Filipino American organizations, associations, and foundations concerned with aid to and

¹⁷ This conceptualization positions the project against slippages between “the international” and “the transnational” in that it does not merely trace giving between countries but addresses the unequal relationships among Filipinos in relation “to an analysis of economic, political, and ideological processes,” as phrased by M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty. In Alexander and Monhanty’s work, transnational feminist analysis would “therefore require taking critical antiracist, anticapitalist positions that would make feminist solidarity work possible.” See M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty, “Cartographies of Knowledge and Power: Transnational Feminism as Radical Praxis,” in *Critical Transnational Feminist Praxis*, eds. Richa Nagar and Amanda Lock Swarr (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, Albany), 24.

¹⁸ See Paul Gilroy, *Against Race: Imagining Political Culture Beyond the Color Line* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2000), 99.

social change in the Philippines generally, this dissertation challenges the impact of and the ease with which mobility, privilege, identity, diaspora, and understandings of social need are brought to poverty alleviation and related conversations in the Philippines.

The “diaspora” and “giving” of diaspora giving entail spacial formations, distances between migrants and homelands and, in traditional giving relationships, between the giver and receiver. As well developed in the diaspora studies literature, the “new” diasporas¹⁹ of the twentieth century question the terms of belonging, citizenship, and membership within the modern nation-state.²⁰ Diaspora studies reframe the teleology of immigration and the equivalence of the nation and of home while also reminding us of the risks of reifying homeland and the possibility of multiple homes or even no homes in the diaspora-homeland relationship. Theorizing the exclusions of originary homelands, critical studies of diaspora suggest “that homelands like diasporas are produced through the material practices and cultural discourses of diasporic displacement and imaginings.”²¹ The distance, therefore, measures not only the affective, familial, political, economic, and cultural links between diaspora and homeland but references the implications of how both these spaces are imagined and produced in dynamic relationship.

¹⁹ This is to, again, distinguish the contemporary Filipino diaspora from “classic” diasporas. See Susan Koshy’s discussion of “old” and “new” diasporas, which references the “shifting forms of capitalism” in determining modes of migration. Koshy, “Introduction,” in *Transnational South Asians: The Making of a Neo-Diaspora*, eds. Susan Koshy and R. Radhakrishnan (New Delhi: Oxford University Press), 7.

²⁰ While contemporary diasporas call into question modernity’s terms of belonging, territory, and the nation-state, David Palumbo-Liu also reminds us how the classic diaspora, the Jewish diaspora, entailed diasporic longings for home and “political strategizing for a nation-state.” Other contemporary diasporas such as segments of the Palestinian diaspora politically strategize for a nation-state as well. See David Palumbo-Liu, “Asian Diasporas, and Yet...,” in *Asian Diasporas: New Formations, New Conceptions*, eds. Rhacel S. Parreñas and Lok C. D. Siu (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 283.

²¹ To borrow from Jigna Desai, *Beyond Bollywood: The Cultural Politics of South Asian Diasporic Film* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 20.

Methods

The methods for this project include in-person interviews, participant observation techniques, and textual analysis of organizational documents. I interviewed fifty-one Filipino American organizers, leaders, presidents of organizations, foundations, and associations that participate in diaspora giving projects. These interviews were mostly in-person, but several were made over the phone. The in-person interviews took place in coffee shops, restaurants, business lobbies, and in the personal homes of Filipino Americans in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Minneapolis, Washington D.C., and Atlanta. While each person was duly informed of my research goals and interview objectives, about half of the interviews were formal one-on-one interviews where I tape recorded the conversation. About half were more informal and often occurred with groups of two to four where I took notes during the conversation and supplemented my notes from my memory of the exchange after the interview. Four of these interviews with Filipino American organizers and leaders took place in the Philippines, when my trips to the Philippines coincided with theirs. In addition to organizers and leaders of diaspora giving-related organizations, I interviewed three members of the board of directors of the National Federation of Filipino American Associations, an organization that promotes Filipino American participation in civic affairs in the U.S. and the Philippines. I interviewed one director from a large Asian (not Filipino American-specific) diaspora philanthropy agency.

I engaged in participation observation on six occasions during research trips to the Philippines. I participated and observed in three Filipino American medical missions in

the Philippines, two in Rizal province and one in Marinduque. Each of these medical missions was organized by Filipino American hometown or provincial associations, where immigrants from the same province or even village work with Philippine government hospitals, bring supplies and volunteers from the U.S., and provide medical screenings, dental services, and a range of surgical procedures to patients in the Philippines who may often otherwise go without. I engaged in participant observation on two different “return trips” for Filipino American youth in the Philippines.²² I joined a three-day immersion workshop with the Filipino American Ayala Youth Development Program. In this immersion workshop, employees with the Ayala Foundation introduced the Filipino American youth to its social development projects in the Philippines, ideals of volunteerism, and Philippine culture and history before the Filipino Americans embarked on month-long volunteer and community stays in separate locales in the Philippines. I also participated in a ten-day long environmental justice return trip for Filipino Americans in the Philippines organized by the Filipino/American Coalition for Environmental Solidarity. As a group, we learned about the actions and issues of various community organizations in the Philippines doing work in the vicinity of the former U.S. military bases in the Philippines and/or on environmental justice organizing regarding toxic exposure in their communities. After this return trip, I did follow-up interviews with three participants during one of my research trips to California. I also accompanied one of the most dedicated Filipino American diaspora philanthropy organizations in terms of their ongoing and growing diaspora giving projects, Feed the Hungry based in

²² See Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

the D.C. area, on three days of service providing and volunteerism in the Philippines where they fed school-aged children, provided entertainment, and handed out school supplies through money that the organization raised in the U.S. I also attended and participated in four conferences in the Philippines dealing with Filipino diaspora philanthropy or development. I collected documents from government agencies; corporate foundations; hometown, regional, and national associations; nonprofit organizations; Philippine libraries; and the internet for close analysis.

Giving Begins at Home

The title of this introduction exploits the adage “giving begins at home” to raise questions regarding the location of exclusions, inequality, and difference within mobilizations of Filipino American diaspora giving. However, the repetition of the phrase and its sister translation, “charity begins at home,” reveals the multiple dimensions and implications of giving, national, and homeland imaginations. Even within my interviews with Filipino American presidents, founders, and leaders of organizations, associations, and foundations that support projects and partnerships in the Philippines, for example, contrasting narrations of Filipino American diaspora giving emerged from what begins as a simple phrase. The following are responses from two different founders of two very different Filipino American organizations:

In an organization, it's one's tendency for individuals to want to overextend. But charity begins at home. For us that is Bicol.²³

²³ Geraldine Bigay [pseudo.], interview by author, Atlanta, GA, March 28, 2006.

Unfortunately, Filipinos here [in the United States] always say charity begins at home and that means supporting families... We don't want to deliver charity in the Philippines. We want to work with the people.²⁴

In the first usage of the adage, “home” does not refer to the Philippine homeland but to Bicol, the respondent's, Geraldine Bigay's, home region on the southeast peninsula of the Philippines. In fact, the ability of her regional association to effectively give to “home” demands that giving be focused on regional charitable projects as, she describes, national efforts would compromise any impact that organization hoped to have and, by extension, compromise the diasporic identity of its members. Bigay and other members of her regional organization once belonged to a larger Filipino American association in Georgia but found reason to create their own regional association and resignify the diaspora-homeland relationship from the Philippines to Bicol, the national to the regional. The ethno-national association alienated the Bicolanos for their lack of Tagalog fluency²⁵ and for the choice of some of the women from Bicol to marry non-Filipino, non-white men, suggesting how racial exclusions stemming from the homogeneity of the nation extend to diaspora re-returns: “They were not welcoming because there was a group of us [from Bicol] that married Thai men.” Faced with racism and regional hierarchies within the Filipino American community in her area, Bigay participated in founding an organization that supports medical and dental mission in Bicol, creates and funds scholarships for priests from Bicol, establishes libraries in Bicol, and supports the projects of the larger

²⁴ Lydia Tanguilig, [pseudo.], interview by author, Minneapolis, MN, May 3, 2005.

²⁵ In addition to English, the national language of the Philippines is Filipino, which is the national re-naming of what was a regional language, Tagalog. While Tagalog and Bicol are related dialects, the language differences create hierarchies between elites in the Manila-capital area, the central Tagalog region, and those from the provinces, including the provinces of the Bicol region.

Bicol federation of associations in the U.S., which include providing pump wells to barrios in Bicol. In this example, Bigay understands her efforts to found a diaspora giving organization as related to her multiple exclusions from the homeland nation. Her alienation from a larger ethno-national association led her to create an organization supporting projects in a regional and not national homeland.

While Bigay disrupts nationalist homeland returns for Filipino Americans through her reworking of “charity begins at home,” the speaker attributed to the second quotation reworks dominant meanings attributed to both Filipino homeland and diaspora giving returns. In the second quotation above, the respondent, Lydia Tanguilig, uses the adage to describe what she sees as the unwillingness of Filipino Americans to support social movements and activist organizations in the Philippines because their energies and economic resources funnel almost exclusively to family in the Philippines. In this regard, Tanguilig regrets the filial relationships that structure Filipino diaspora where family members in the U.S. send remittances to family members in the Philippines, believing that to be the extent of their diaspora giving. “Charity begins at home” becomes a lament on two levels that speak to both the “diaspora” and “giving” of diaspora giving critique. She laments that the “home” of diaspora belonging primarily references family obligations, which foreclose larger mobilizations of diasporic responsibility and imaginings. While Tanguilig belongs to multiple organizations that participate in diaspora giving, her primary affiliation is with an organization in Minnesota that forms partnerships with grassroots organizations in the Philippines and raises money to provide small grants for those organizations to use on their own projects. Diaspora

giving, for Tanguilig, and the terms of belonging to the homeland, exceed essentialist and exclusionary Filipino nationalisms. Thus, “giving begins at home” is a challenge to Filipino American efforts and filial boundaries to nurture diaspora giving practices and identities that sustain relationships with Filipinos in the Philippines who work to build, according to Tanguilig, sustainable livelihood projects.

This introductory chapter takes the opportunity to demonstrate the central analytical moves the dissertation makes to distinguish its goals from the description or even heralding of Filipino American diaspora giving and toward the development of a diaspora giving critique in the context of Filipino America. To elaborate this practice of diaspora giving critique, we must consider the global economic and cultural dimensions of racialized diasporic communities and of giving, not just of individual gifts but of organized efforts toward some larger issue such as the alleviation of poverty or social justice. Filipino studies scholars deftly demonstrate how diasporic cultural productions and practices mediate experiences and expressions of transnationalism and globalization.²⁶ Organized diaspora giving requires that we take seriously key assumptions about giving, philanthropy, responsibility and other practices of diaspora citizenship. Giving practices and attendant frameworks of social reform and social change figure significantly in diaspora formation and productions of homeland, contributing to diasporic culture “materially inscribed and organizationally embodied.”²⁷ These are cultures of diaspora giving that correspond to organizational practices and

²⁶ See for example Martin F. Manalansan, *Global Divas: Filipino Gay Men in the Diaspora* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004); and Theodore S. Gonzalves, *The Day the Dancers Stayed: Performing in the Filipino/American Diaspora* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010).

²⁷ Pnina Werbner, “Introduction: The Materiality of Diaspora--Between Aesthetic and ‘Real’ Politics,” *Diaspora* 9, no. 1 (2000): 7.

identities. To elaborate this process, for example, Chapter 1 analyzes the implications of moralizing orientations of Filipino American diaspora giving that employ racialized discourses of self-help and cultural deficiency popularized in the 1980s, structuring the nature of organizational projects in the Philippines against more radical analyses of social change.

Globalization has irreversibly altered the ways that collectivities address social economic relations and political representation. Even as transnationalism produces new community formations and new nationalisms, the international remains divided into geopolitical territories in unequal relationships of power.²⁸ Shifting forms of global capital produce migrations and new diasporas that require a reframing of the space of social economic, cultural, and political demands. The relationships between citizenship and responsibility, political rights and redress, need and economic redistribution were traditionally played out within the boundaries of the modern nation-state. Historically, philanthropy, charity, and social movements, included in the language developed here, contributed to the character of the American imagined community as both benevolent and democratic and engaged the exclusions and disregard of the nation-state. However, globalization requires a critical politics of diaspora giving to reframe the space of social demands not only to trace the emergence of new diasporas such as the Filipino American diaspora but “the structural causes of many injustices in a globalizing world”²⁹ that differently impact the space of, within, and between the United States and the

²⁸ See Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller and Cristina Szanton Blanc, *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments and Deterritorialized Nation-States* (The Netherlands: Gordon and Breach Science Publishers, 2000 [1994]), 30.

²⁹ Nancy Fraser, “Reframing Justice in a Globalizing World,” *New Left Review* 36 (November-December 2005): 12.

Philippines. Nancy Fraser argues that claims for justice bounded by geopolitical boundaries “partition political space in ways that block many who are poor and despised from challenging the forces that oppress them,” insulating “offshore powers from critique and control.”³⁰ Because diaspora giving as practiced and as developed in the literature concerns itself with development and with economic redistribution on a global scale, a critical politics of diaspora giving must address not only the spatial relationships of diaspora but the spatial relationships of giving in terms of organized efforts toward development and economic redistribution. Financial markets, multinational corporations, export processing zones and the larger “governance structures of the global economy”³¹ exceed the geopolitical boundaries of the nation-state. Filipino American diasporic re-turns to an originary, ahistorical Philippine homeland neglect the global economic production of the Philippines as a Third World nation whereby the governance structure of the global economy demands access to the country’s resources, environment, and labor. Filipino American diasporic re-turns to an originary, ahistorical Philippine homeland cannot capture how the Philippine state as the supplier par excellence of migrant labor for the global economy complicates the terms of diasporic belonging. How, then, are these structures mediated by Filipino diaspora giving? How do particular Filipino American diaspora giving practices simultaneously reflect new spaces of belonging and deflect attention from the spatialization of injustice?

Most Filipino American diaspora giving organizations and associations claim to perform philanthropy, charity, or social development projects in the Philippines.

³⁰ Ibid., 9.

³¹ Ibid., 12.

Inasmuch, most Filipino American diaspora giving organizations do not claim to seek justice. By addressing the respatializing of justice, I do not mean to critique all projects who fail to address issues related to global justice without condition. Rather, I emphasize how all giving practices entail frameworks or narratives for how collectivities (Filipino Americans or Filipino diasporas or Filipino American diaspora or Filipino American diaspora giving organizations) should engage social and political life. Drawing on Fraser does not demonstrate an intention to set up social service or reform institutions as a straw man for the true goal of suggesting Filipino American “givers” all become social justice movement participants. However, drawing on Fraser’s work suggests that globalization silences, as it were, Filipinos in the Philippines who are then at risk of being doubly silenced when produced as passive objects of aid. This project does not set out to judge Filipino American diaspora giving frameworks and practices as far as their connection to anticapitalist movements. It does not mean to romanticize any one way of organizing or hold any particular politics on a pedestal, which would suggest that anticapitalist or social justice organizing were without fault.³² Rather than clear solutions, this project

³² Joan Roelofs, for example, reminds us of how the socialist Garland Fund of the 1930s fragmented leftist protest and made beggars of the radical organizations who found themselves scrambling for limited funds. Arturo Escobar also nods to this history:

Over the past few hundred years, economic and social life has tended to be largely organised on logic of order, centralisation and hierarchy building. Pushed by capitalism and its drive to accumulation, this logic has resulted in systems in which the few benefit at the expense of many. What has remained largely hidden, however, is that this logic is present not only in those social structures that are evidently exploitative but that similar logics have animated allegedly alternative systems, including socialism and most organisations on the Left.

Similarly, global justice, or “antiglobalization” movements as the Seattle demonstrations were described, do not provide a litmus test or clear solution to global injustice. For example, authors Catherine Eschle and Bice Maiguashca examine the documents, proceedings, and participation in the World Social Forum, which is “arguably the most accessible and high-profile gathering of the global justice movement in recent years” (7). The authors demonstrate the power relations within progressive movements by tracing the marginalization of feminist actors, the dominance of masculine modes of interaction, and the gender-

forwards an analysis of Filipino American diaspora giving politics toward the possibility of developing critical associations of responsibility in the Philippines. To borrow from Paul Gilroy, the language of identity and of collectivities lends itself to ways of imagining belonging to a group or community that “can be transformed into more active styles of solidarity, when they debate where the boundaries around a group should be constituted.”³³ This dissertation analyzes the constraining and exclusionary implications of essential identities and spaces of Filipino American diaspora belonging narrated by Filipino Americans and reproduced in diaspora and homeland spaces and identities.

Processes of racialization impact Filipino American diaspora giving through differentiations made by the global economy and by the nation-state. Racialized and gendered structures of inequality resulting from colonialism to economic policies supported by neoliberal globalization contribute to the formation of Filipino America.³⁴ The transnational mobilities and political economic underpinnings that create diaspora extend to people as well as their giving practices. For instance, Chapter 3 considers the emergence of a corporate foundation as Filipino America’s most visible diaspora giving intermediary, and therefore, Filipino America’s most accessible way of collectively addressing social economic issues in the Philippines. The meaning of transnational

blindness of the World Social Forum’s vision of social change. See Joan Roelofs, “Regarding Social Justice Philanthropy,” *Social Policy* 33, no. 2 (Winter 2002/2003): 3; Arturo Escobar, “Other Worlds Are (Already) Possible: Self-Organisation, Complexity, and Post-Capitalist Cultures,” in *The World Social Forum: Challenging Empires*, Jai Sen, et al. (New Delhi, India: Viveka Foundation, 2004), 349-350; and Catherine Eschle and Bice Maiguashca, *Making Feminist Sense of the Global Justice Movement* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010).

³³ Gilroy, *Against Race*, 99.

³⁴ Catherine Ceniza Choy for example describes how “the international migration of Filipino nurses is inextricably linked to the larger processes of global restructuring in which the increased demands for services in highly developed countries as well as the export of manufacturing to developing countries have contributed to increasing worldwide mobility.” See Catherine Ceniza Choy, *Empire of Care: Nursing and Migration in Filipino American History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 2.

responsibility in this example emerges between the blurred boundaries of Filipino America, the homeland state and the market-driven corporate sector. Given the status of the corporate foundation coupled with the ease of the internet in facilitating diaspora giving re-turns, attention must be paid to the linkages among consumer society and the politics of diaspora giving. In consequence, the third chapter of the dissertation examines how this corporate foundation markets nongovernmental organizations in the Philippines for the Filipino American donor pool. The corporate foundation places emphasis on the financial transaction (as in “just give”). Doing so de-emphasizes the sociopolitical, ideological, and transformative missions of the individual nongovernmental organizations, transforming their approved list of Philippine-based organizations and their frameworks of change into equivalent and interchangeable commodities for the Filipino American market and further contributing to the decontextualization of the complexity of social struggles and the politics of giving. Analyzing this proposed equivalence, these commodities “represent the private inner truths of individual existence [and] fix the boundary of communal sensibilities,”³⁵ replacing a more participatory diaspora giving practice and imagination with commodity exchange.

Furthermore, as described in Chapter 1, a close analysis of diaspora giving practices demonstrates transnational mobilizations of America’s ordering of its racialized others. Transnational Asian American studies rewrite Asian American identities and claims to a place within the U.S. nation-state that configure Asia Americans in terms of immigration, settlement, and promises of ethnic assimilation. However, the terms of

³⁵ Gilroy, *Against Race*, 108.

American belonging for Filipino Americans as racialized but exceptional minorities, at times, mark their diaspora giving practices particularly when authority is derived from the space of America, the root of knowledge of development and philanthropy that is then used to legitimate belonging through diaspora giving practices in the Philippine homeland. In other words, Filipino Americans perceive and often claim an ability to assimilate to American cultural values and to reproduce those values in re-turns to homeland, delineating a hierarchy of diaspora belongings. Diaspora giving connections, then, draw attention to not merely their exclusion from the American nation but how the terms of their inclusion are echoed, reconfigured, and elaborated in diaspora, a reminder that “acculturation does not necessarily occur in opposition to diasporization.”³⁶

Rather than a unidirectional relationship between diasporas and homeland, it is instructive to consider, to borrow from Jigna Desai, the “unequal but multidirectional exchanges and flows” of diaspora.³⁷ The global restructuring of labor that produces Filipino America also creates less stable nodes in the diaspora, particularly in regard to the possibilities of permanent residency in the U.S. compared to the experiences of overseas contract labor, subjects of “migrant citizenship”³⁸ who work in countries where they are offered little protection from the violences of itinerant lives. Significant for the politics of diaspora giving and for this project are the ways that Filipino Americans are constructed as exceptional citizens of the diaspora and as exceptional givers and partners

³⁶ To quote Rhacel Salazar Parreñas and Lok C. D. Siu, “Introduction: Asian Diasporas—New Conceptions, New Frameworks” in *Asian Diasporas: New Formations, New Conceptions*, eds. Rhacel S. Parreñas and Lok C. D. Siu (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 14.

³⁷ Jigna Desai, “Bollywood, USA: Diasporas, Nations, and the State of Cinema” in *Transnational South Asians: The Making of a Neo-Diaspora*, eds. Susan Koshy and R. Radhakrishnan (New Delhi and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 346.

³⁸ See Robyn Magalit Rodriguez, *Migrants for Export: How the Philippine State Brokers Labor to the World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), xix-x.

with the Philippine nation-state in the social development of the country. Their exceptionalism reveals itself in the production of overseas migrant Filipino workers as deviant givers whose consumer-driven giving practices must be monitored by the state, as this work addresses in Chapter 2. Overseas Filipino workers, the official category of contract laborers from the Philippines, are produced not only through the state in its capacity as a labor broker in its participation in neoliberal globalization, but through comparison with the exemplary cultural and consumptive citizenship of Filipino Americans.

Citing popular and government discursive constructions of Filipino Americans as exemplary diaspora givers and diaspora citizens does not signify homogeneity within Filipino America. Regional differences and networks, class status and educational attainment, and the economic and occupation mandates of a particular moment structure Filipino migration to the U.S.³⁹ There is an official Philippine and popular Filipino term for Filipino Americans who return to the Philippines, the *balikbayan*, which generally signifies Filipino Americans as permanent residents of the U.S. However, as is the reality for any immigrant ethnic group, there are Filipino American citizens, second-plus generation Filipino Americans, green card holders whose stability in the United States is threatened in the current anti-immigrant nationalisms, and Filipinos in the U.S. who overstay their visas. Mobilizations of *balikbayan* erase important differences among Filipino Americans and set up the category against other Filipinos in diaspora, a point made in Chapter 2. Importantly, differences within Filipino America impact the terms

³⁹ See for example Yen Le Espiritu, "Colonial Oppression, Labor Importation, and Group Formation: Filipinos in the United States," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 19, no. 1 (January 1996).

upon which they relate to “home” in the Philippines and upon which they construct their diaspora giving politics. Filipino Americans from the Manila-capital region, furthermore, often set the terms of the national conversation on diaspora giving, yet there are many other Filipinos from ethnic minorities in provinces and mountain regions in the Philippines who struggle against dominant discourses of homeland belonging. For example, the Igorot are an ethnic tribal group from the Philippines. Among Filipinos and in diaspora, Igorots experience discrimination from non-ethnic minority Filipinos. As one respondent describes, during cultural performances by an Igorot dance troop, other Filipinos would mutter to each other, “But it doesn’t look like they have webbed feet,”⁴⁰ referencing the racialization of Igorots as uncivilized caricatures of Filipino savagery whose bodies permanently display the conditions of a time before shoes. Not only does the international Igorot Global Organization based in California support scholarships for Igorot students in the Philippines and infrastructural projects for Igorot populations in Baguio City, but it monitors and participates in discussions regarding the Indigenous Peoples’ Rights Act of the Philippines, showing how struggles against majority non-ethnic Filipino dominance is a constitutive element of its diaspora giving.⁴¹ The approach to analyzing the politics of diaspora giving forwarded here works to understand the instances in which the nation, homeland, and diaspora extend and challenge the exclusions produced by each.

In addition to producing Filipinos in the Philippines as passive recipients of diaspora giving, as earlier addressed, and to the exclusion of differences within Filipino

⁴⁰ Jimmy Cabading [pseud.], interview by author, Los Angeles, CA, September 24, 2005.

⁴¹ See Igorot Global Organization, “What is the Igorot Global Organization?” <http://www.igorotglobal.org/about.html>.

America, dominant discourses produce notions of home and belonging in relationship to the exclusion of sexual minorities and queer subjects. Even as home is a place to which Filipino Americans can orient for the purpose of helping Filipinos in the Philippines or partnering with Philippine-based organizations that work toward, for example, environmental justice, home is also a place to be protected from those who do not belong—those who are not “truly” Filipino. In an example that I have addressed elsewhere,⁴² Filipino American organization founder and president Malou Babilonia fears being seen as sexually “too Americanized”:

The work of the Babilonia Wilner Foundation began with a desire to go back Home. I had been away over a decade. I wasn't sure I could really speak the language anymore, or make myself understood. Worse, I had a ‘live-in’ (short for living-in-sin) boyfriend. How could I go Home with that sin, not to mention all the others, that too much time in America had etched on my soul?⁴³

For Filipino Americans being told one is “too Americanized,” particularly if told by an elderly Filipino relative, could be synonymous with “you are spoiled and disrespectful,” “you do not care about Filipino culture,” or even “you have rejected everything about the Philippines including me and should be ashamed.” Babilonia claims to have fears that “living-in-sin” would cast her as too American and prevent her from making a journey “Home,” and of importance for the present point, would prevent her from re-turning to the Philippines through diaspora giving, thus highlighting how sexuality (even

⁴² See Mariano, “A Home in Need: The Cultural Politics of Philanthropy and the Construction of Philippine Homelands” (paper presented at the national conference of the American Studies Association, Washington, DC, November 2005).

⁴³ Malou Babilonia, “The Pilot Adventures of BWF Sibling Founders David Pollard and Malou Babilonia,” *Call of Nature: Reconnecting Culture, Ecology, Bayan 1* (July-September 2000): 12.

heterosexuality when not properly monitored) impacts practices and possibilities of diaspora giving. In fact, she did not return until married to her boyfriend at the time, David Wilner. After they were married, Babilonia and Wilner founded a large environmental organization and foundation in the Philippines. Enabled by her full attainment of heterosexual normativity that would then grant unencumbered access to re-turn to the Philippines as an environmental advocate, Babilonia's politics of diaspora giving and the terms that enable her to participate in diaspora giving politics and discourse contribute to the normalization of Filipino American homeland returns.

These examples demonstrate how diaspora giving politics negotiate the national, the diaspora, and the homeland in how Filipino Americans imagine and legitimate their diaspora giving re-turns. Asian American cultural studies scholar Anita Mannur writes, "In this transnational moment it is crucial to examine national constructions of 'diaspora,' diasporic constructions of 'nation,' and the often mediating and contradictory boundaries of the two."⁴⁴ To this end, many diaspora studies scholars gesture to diasporas that support extremist and fundamentalist nationalist movements in the homeland, theorizing how those living outside the homeland may develop more hard-line extremisms than those within the nation⁴⁵ as well as drawing attention to the multiple dimensions of any single ethnic or national diaspora. The larger academic conversations on diaspora include this attention to radical extremism, but little has been written on how diasporas can be mobilized to contain labor and radical social movements and protest in the

⁴⁴ Anita Mannur, "Postscript: Cyberscapes and the Interfacing of Diasporas," in *Theorizing Diaspora: A Reader*, eds. Jane Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2003): 283.

⁴⁵ See for example Devesh Kapur, "The Janus Face of Diaspora," in *Diasporas and Development*, eds. Barbara J. Merz, Lincoln C. Chen, and Peter F. Geithner (Cambridge, MA and London, England: Global Equity Initiative, Asia Center, and Harvard University Press, 2007).

homeland.⁴⁶ This examination of the politics of diaspora giving contends with the impact of how diaspora giving imaginings emanating from both the Philippines and the U.S. work to quell popular discontent of elite market and political governance in the Philippines. For example, Chapter 2 engages how the promise of the American dream in the Filipino national imagination suggests a philanthropic component to migration as seen when Filipino Americans claim that their migrations are made with the expectation of not just helping their immediate families through remittances and higher wages in the U.S. but of improving the socioeconomic conditions of the Philippines. At the same time, this American dream and hope to one day live in the U.S. greases the wheels of the labor-export industry led by the Philippine state that produces overseas labor *migration* as a right, containing popular protests that would demand safe labor conditions, the dismantling of the system of land ownership system, and viable opportunities for employment in the Philippines. Additionally, Chapter 3 works to understand the implications of how arguably the most accessible and high-profile diaspora giving intermediary organization within Filipino American is a corporate social responsibility program of one of the most successful Philippine-based multinational corporations. This chapter draws on the critique that social corporate responsibility initiatives “are an effective means of quelling popular discontent with corporate power and the political

⁴⁶ These are gross oversimplifications of an array of practices. However, they are related. The Philippine state has a history of suppressing radical organizing and socialist and labor movements in the name of containing violent extremism in the countryside.

change that discontent might impel.”⁴⁷ And, as we are reminded by Arundhati Roy, “The free market does not threaten national sovereignty. It undermines democracy.”⁴⁸

How the space of the homeland, its history, economy, and culture as well as its “problems,” “solutions,” and complexity, is framed by projects of diaspora giving draws attention to the significance of philanthropy, development, and social movements in enacting diasporic and national identities. Diaspora giving practices whose larger goal is “doing good” or “helping others” maintain Filipino American separation from “others” in the Philippines and elsewhere in diaspora while simultaneously facilitating a refusal to examine the terms of their difference from those “others” and the other spaces impacted by U.S. imperialism, corporate destruction, and environmental injustice. The language of the politics of diaspora giving draws attention to the uneven relationships of both giving and diaspora practices and imaginations. While the rhetoric of official and popular nationalisms cast all Filipinos as equally of the nation, theorizations of diaspora and belonging critique nationalist constructions of homeland and the terms of exclusion. In a different fashion, while dominant practices of giving, particularly as it is said to be institutionalized by discourses of charity and benevolence, assert social expressions of economic difference, social theories on giving demonstrate how, for example, so-called acts of benevolence mask the processes of accumulation that enable benevolence. For example, the role of gift exchange in “primitive” and modern life enjoys a strong tradition in anthropology and in social theory, drawing attention to giving’s relationship

⁴⁷ James K. Rowe, “Corporate Social Responsibility as Business Strategy,” in *Globalization, Governmentality and Global Politics: Regulation for the Rest of Us?* ed. Ronnie D. Lipshutz and James K. Rowe (New York : Routledge, 2005), 4.

⁴⁸ Arundhati Roy, “Confronting Empire,” *The World Social Forum: Challenging Empires*, ed. Jai Sen, et al. (New Delhi, India: Viveka Foundation, 2004), 52.

to social reproduction. Marcel Mauss famously theorized the relationships among the giver, the gift, and the receiver.⁴⁹ Gifts are imbued with the identity of the giver in such a way that ties the recipient of the gift to the giver. From within the system of gift exchange alone, giving entails a relationship of power: “The object received as a gift, the received object in general, engages, links magically, religiously, morally, juridically, the giver and the receiver. Coming from one person, made or appropriated by him, being from him, it gives him power over the other who accepts it.”⁵⁰

Elaborating on the relationships of exchange theorized by Mauss, Pierre Bourdieu, for example, addresses the “collective self-deception” that masks the self-

⁴⁹ Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*, trans. W. D. Halls (New York: W. W. Norton, 2000). Mauss emphasizes in *The Gift* relationships of obligation and reciprocity of giving and upon receipt of a gift in the formation of the “archaic societies” under study. Scholars have applied Maussian theories of reciprocity, obligation and exchange in the context of indigenous “traditional” communities in the Philippines. One author Mary R. Hollnsteiner catalogues classifications of reciprocity in Philippine lowland communities. For example, *utang na loob* (debt of gratitude) reciprocity, she describes as:

Most consciously generated when a transfer of goods or services takes place between individuals belonging to two different groups. Since one does not ordinarily expect favors of anyone not of his own group, a service of this kind throws the norm into bold relief. Furthermore, it compels the recipient to show his gratitude properly by returning the favor *with interest* to be sure that he does not remain in the other’s debt. It is a true gift in this sense. It is also a kind of one-upmanship.

I reference this work not to distinguish between traditional and modern economies of exchange within the diaspora-homeland relationship but to emphasize that there are cultures of Filipino giving—and academic treatises on cultures of Filipino giving—that this work does not engage. However, I could continue to note that even “native” cultures of giving take place within particular social and economic conditions and relationships that Hollnsteiner’s research does not fully engage. See Mary R. Hollnsteiner, “Reciprocity in the Lowland Philippines,” in *Four Readings on Philippine Values*, 2nd rev. ed., ed. Frank Lynch (Quezon City, Philippines: Institute of Philippine Culture, 1964), 28. Ledivina Cariño and Ramon Fernan also engage Filipino cultures of giving: *bayahihan* (mutual assistance), *damayan* (assistance of peers in periods of death or crisis), *pagtutulungan* (mutual self-help), and *kawanggawa* (charity). See Ledivina V. Cariño and Ramon L. Fernan III, “Social Origins of the Sector,” in *Between the State and the Market: The Nonprofit Sector and Civil Society in the Philippines*, ed. Ledivina V. Cariño (Quezon City, Philippines: Center for Leadership, Citizenship and Democracy-National College of Public Administration and Governance, University of the Philippines, 2002), 30-31.

⁵⁰ Marcel Mauss, “Gift, Gift,” in *The Logic of the Gift: Toward an Ethic of Generosity*, trans. Koen Decoster, ed. Alan D. Schrift (New York: Routledge, 1997), 29-30.

interest of gift exchange.⁵¹ Ignored in theories of the production of social bonds through gift exchange are the economic and social conditions in which exchanges occur and endow symbolic capital upon agents and maintain relations of dependence and gratitude.⁵²

The gift economy, in contrast to the economy where equivalent values are exchanged, is based on a denial of the economic (in the narrow sense), a refusal of the logic of the maximization of economic profit, i.e., of the spirit of calculation and the exclusive pursuit of material (as opposed to symbolic) interest, a refusal which is inscribed in the objectivity of institutions and in dispositions. It is organized with a view to the accumulation of symbolic capital (a capital of recognition, honor, nobility, etc.) that is brought about in particular through the transmutation of economic capital achieved through the alchemy of symbolic exchanges...and only available to agents endowed with dispositions adjusted to the logic of 'disinterestedness.'⁵³

Individuals, institutions, foundations, companies, and the state set up "asymmetrical relations of dependence of recognition/gratitude based on the credit granted to beneficence."⁵⁴ The institutionalization of beneficence, Bourdieu reminds us, produces a "cult of individual success... which has accompanied the expansion of neoliberalism."⁵⁵

⁵¹ Pierre Bourdieu, "Marginalia--Some Additional Notes on the Gift," in *The Logic of the Gift: Toward an Ethic of Generosity*, ed. Alan D. Schrift (New York: Routledge, 1997), 232.

⁵² See *Ibid.*, 239.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 235.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 239.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 240.

To be clear, there are only a few individual participants in diaspora Filipino American giving whose enormous fortunes and “beneficence” follow the forms of “ostentatious redistribution”⁵⁶ addressed by Bourdieu.⁵⁷ However, these power relations though instituted in part by individuals are not meant to be interpreted as deliberate, individual acts, but are supported by the collective self-deception that gifts are separate from the social conditions that make “beneficence” possible. This project suggests that Bourdieu’s characterization of giving as symbolic power helps us to question how diaspora belonging and diaspora giving do not erase (when imagined as essentialist belonging in the homeland) but relate to and perhaps mask economic self-interest. In its attention to diaspora giving critique, this project recognizes that both the “diaspora” and the “giving” of Filipino American diaspora giving must account for the relationships involved—between Filipinos in the U.S., in the Philippines, and elsewhere in the diaspora as well as between givers, recipients, agents, and beneficiaries—in these transnational forms of exchange and narrations of homeland belonging.

To this end, Chapter One of this dissertation further elaborates the framework of the politics of diaspora giving to intervene in the reification of diasporic-homeland benevolence or altruism, arguing that these giving practices are not at all natural or outside of culture or history but are, on the contrary, political projects implicated in a complex web of power relationships that both regulate and produce new Filipino American and diasporic subjects and formations. This chapter analyzes Filipino

⁵⁶ Ibid., 239; Bourdieu italicizes redistribution in original.

⁵⁷ Two names in particular come to mind: multi-millionaires Diosdado Banatao and Loida Lewis. Both are very active, for example, in supporting the Ayala Foundation’s development of “diaspora philanthropy” projects and programs; see Chapter 3.

American orientations toward homeland through giving as traced through discourses of morality that legitimize hierarchical belonging in the Filipino diaspora specifically tied to being Filipino in America, invoking exceptionalist ideas of diaspora belonging.

While the dissertation largely engages public and collective giving discourses and practices, popular and official celebrations of Filipino mobility also direct their attention to remittance giving as Filipino migrant workers send an often large portion of their wages to support family in the Philippines, buoying the national economy. The second chapter of the dissertation examines the implications of what is seen to be the antithetical relationship between Filipino Americans and overseas Filipino migrant workers. By examining the constructions of Filipino American balikbayans and overseas Filipino workers through their giving practices, in relation to each other, and in relation to the idealization of the American dream, Chapter Two draws attention to the terms upon which the Philippines participates in globalization through the export of Filipino labor. The chapter provides an analysis of how the relationship between Filipino Americans and migrant Filipino workers is represented and the characterization of their giving practices in the production of diaspora space.

The last two chapters address specific organizational examples of Filipino American diaspora giving with differing approaches and implications. Specifically, it examines mobilizations of corporate-sponsored diaspora philanthropy and transnational environmental justice organizing. Chapter Three turns to the Ayala Corporation, one of the Philippines most wide-reaching conglomerates run by one of the Philippines richest families, and its incorporation of the Ayala Foundation USA, the most visible and active

program for diaspora philanthropy available to Filipino Americans. The institutionalization and rise of transnational corporate social responsibility programs in the Philippines provides an opportunity to examine how philanthropic practices in our contemporary moment are structured by global capital, and how global capital and the logics of neoliberalism impact diaspora formation and the extent and politics of Filipino American diaspora giving.

Chapter Four analyzes the work and vision of the environmental justice organization, Filipino/American Coalition for Environmental Solidarity (FACES). This chapter demonstrates an iteration of diaspora belonging understood not as common homeland origin but as the cultivation of counter-hegemonic critique, which expands our giving imaginations by opening Filipino American giving politics to wider reaching coalition building and partnerships. It brings a transnational diasporic analysis to the space of the Philippine homeland to unsettle romanticized sentiments of the Philippine island paradise through the prospect of “re-turning” to the Philippines not as a tourist eager to (re)experience the beauty of the Philippine homeland but as one engaged in critical environmental politics where the unmooring of the Philippines-as-paradise is paralleled with the troubling of absolute belonging to an originary homeland detached from colonial histories, U.S. militarism and the racialized and gendered differentiations by transnational capitalism.

Giving practices (philanthropy, charity, social development, equitable development microfinance, social movements, voluntarism, etc.) are not discreet. The terminology of this work—diaspora giving—suggests that we pay attention to the

practices and their narrations in a manner that exceeds the language of giving. Moreover, an analysis of the politics of diaspora giving rather than, say, “diaspora philanthropy,” a term that dominates the conversation on Filipino diaspora giving, and diaspora giving critique maintains that the most visible narratives of diaspora giving and homeland development do much work shaping the politics of diaspora giving, but they are not inevitable nor are they the same, insisting, instead, that we attend to the implications of the difference. “Homeland Developments: Filipino America and the Politics of Diaspora Giving” attempts to tease out the multiple layers of meaning that “diaspora” and “giving” reference for Filipino America. Rather than describe with any effectiveness the field of contemporary Filipino diaspora giving practices and organizations, it probes the implications of cultures and practices of Filipino American diaspora giving. It connects the politics of Filipino American diaspora giving to the conditions that produce migrations, re-turns, and hierarchies within the diaspora on one hand and the hierarchies of giving relationships on the other, developing diaspora giving as a mode of critique for problematizing the global order. At the same time, this project maintains the possibility that diaspora giving can belong to and help produce a space of counter-hegemonic politics and community formations.

CHAPTER I

“From Outside the Garlic House”:

Transnational Morality and Filipino American Homeland Belonging

Dr. Isagani Sarmiento, a Filipino expatriate working in the technological industry of the United States, garnered attention from Philippine government officials, Philippine corporate foundations, and Filipino American community leaders for his ideas on how the “Filipino global community,” to use his phrase, can best help the people of the Philippines, a nation marked by widespread poverty, unemployment, and what he sees as a people inured to their colonial mentality.¹ I was first introduced to Dr. Sarmiento on Labor Day weekend 2002 when approximately 5000 Filipinos, largely from the United States and the Philippines, gathered together in San Francisco for the First Global Filipino Community Networking Convention² (shortened by the organizers as “FilGlobalNet”) in which Sarmiento played an important role elaborating the concept of “community development” for the convention attendees. The convention gathered association leaders, community organizers, politicians from the U.S. and the Philippines and even prompted San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown to declare August 2002 “Global

¹ According to his organizational website and his self-published book, *Re-Building the Roots of a Nation: Beyond a Parrot's Mind* (Fairfield: Crumbs Pishonet, Inc, 2002), Isagani Sarmiento identifies as a Filipino expatriate. He came to the United States to go to graduate school in 1972, moved back to the Philippines, and returned to the United States in 1986.

² Since this initial meeting, there have been four more Global Filipino Networking Conventions that have taken place in the Philippines, the U.S. and Australia. The second and third FilGlobalNets prioritized the diaspora's part in community development in the Philippines as demonstrated with pride on an affiliated website to the Conventions: “The resolutions resulting from the 2nd Global, when presented to President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, prompted her comment that, for the first time, convention participants were not asking the government for anything but, in fact, were offering to do something for the country.” National Federation of Filipino American Associations, “FilGlobalNet,” <http://www.thirdglobalcebu.com>.

Filipino Community Month” and Mayor Mike Guingona of Daly City to create a “Filipinos in America Week” to coincide with the event. The email brochure for this “unprecedented gathering of Filipinos” described its vision as: “Building a Network of Empowered Filipinos: Never before have so many national and international Filipino groups, organizations and associations made plans to come together at the same time and in the same place. The Convention’s goal is to create the opportunity for global Filipinos to take a giant unified step in defining themselves and firmly establish their position as a truly significant international force.”³ This “giant unified step” signified, in large part, movements to institutionalize Filipino American philanthropy, charity, and social development efforts to the Philippines. As founder and president of a Filipino American nongovernmental organization and website with the goal of uniting Filipino Americans in a fight against poverty in the Philippines, Sarmiento’s organizational goals aligned with the goals of the convention, where he was given the opportunity to promote his platform and framework for diaspora giving.

In contrast to the uplifting tone of the FilGlobalNet organizers and the professed potential of global Filipinos to unite through cooperation, Sarmiento emphasizes how Filipinos in the Philippines are currently unable to join with other Filipinos in diaspora on equal terms and constructs homeland as a space perpetuating its own poverty through a collective refusal to “reason.” According to him, there can be no economic or social development in the Philippines without first addressing Filipino cultural traits and institutionalized customs that thwart expressions of rationality and reason that could lead

³ Filipino Global Networking Convention, “1st Global Filipino Community Networking Convention,” <http://www.filglobalnet.org/images/filglobalnet.html>.

to development. Sarmiento conveys his purview through a curious expression: “If you live in a garlic house all your life, you will smell like garlic and not know it.”⁴ The garlic house symbolizes that which prevents the Philippines from being an economically viable and independent nation with a populous fully prepared to contribute to the national and global economies. “Is the Philippines a ‘garlic house’, or is the ‘garlic house’ within the Filipino?” he asks.⁵ Sarmiento’s metaphor serves as the basis for a self-published book that presents his ideas on how Filipinos in the Philippines can learn to help themselves.

While shocking and melodramatic perhaps, Sarmiento’s rhetoric expresses a prevalent set of assumptions from within Filipino America. As Filipino Americans create meaning for themselves in the space that links their country of origin with country of settlement, a susceptibility to delineate the terms from which they are different from Filipinos in the Philippines⁶ manifests in moral terms, including one’s dedication to hard work and one’s inclination to give back outside of one’s kinship obligations. Sarmiento, for example, does not argue that Filipinos are an innately poorly motivated people but that there are cultural elements in the Philippines that hold the people back. He takes care to note how, objectively, there are a large number of successful diasporic Filipinos: “Many Filipinos who have left the Philippines have become internationally recognized as outstanding workers, contributing to science, technology and global wealth. Many of these Filipinos have become outstanding citizens *of other countries.*”⁷ He claims the fact of successful overseas Filipinos proves, at least to some extent, that the garlic house is

⁴ Sarmiento, *Re-Building the Roots of a Nation*, 13.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁶ Additionally and as Chapter 2 will address, Filipino Americans are constructed as distinct from other Filipinos in the diaspora and particularly those Filipinos who work in foreign countries as contract workers.

⁷ Sarmiento, *Re-Building the Roots of a Nation*, 14; emphasis mine.

not within Filipinos themselves. That some escape the garlic house by becoming successful in countries other than the Philippines must mean that Filipinos are not entirely incapable of being good workers and good citizens.

Instead of Filipinos as innately deficient, Sarmiento claims that “harmful paradigms” permeate Filipino culture and thwart progress and development in the Philippines. He identifies eight widespread and harmful paradigms of Filipino culture that have a detrimental effect on Filipinos. Included in his list of harmful paradigms is the *mam’ya na*, or procrastination, paradigm. He describes how he, like other Filipino expatriates, commits himself to hard work and values being “prompt and efficient in everything done at work.”⁸ He asks himself why Filipinos in the U.S., like himself, prioritize promptness while Filipinos in the Philippines do not. He argues that a system of incentives operates in the U.S. to encourage and reward dedicated workers and claims that no such system exists in the Philippines. Sarmiento lists another harmful paradigm, the *pwede na iyan* or “good enough” paradigm. Here he argues that Filipinos in the Philippines do not challenge the status quo whether it is the style of Filipino cooking, which has not evolved to appeal to refined palates, or the Filipino style of teaching in the classroom, which he argues is nothing more than the promotion of rote memorization. In an interview, Sarmiento further sketched the detriment of *pwede na iyan* on the aspirations of poor Filipinos:

When those say ‘blessed are the poor,’ this is actually a misinterpretation of the Bible. It is actually ‘blessed are the poor in spirit,’ as in, it is good to be humble.

‘Blessed are the poor,’ this is used to make excuses for the Filipino. It says, ‘Oh,

⁸ Ibid., 160.

my little hut is good enough.’ But it is not good enough, and multiply that times a million. There is a wealth of opportunities in the world. We can’t squelch the desire to improve.⁹

Sarmiento believes an economic system exists where sufficient opportunities can be found, and Filipinos need only to overcome their cultural training in failure and nurture their own desires to succeed.

In his formulation, Filipinos who leave the Philippines are exposed to different ways of thinking that allow them to leave harmful paradigms behind. Thus, Filipinos in the Philippines actually need diasporic Filipinos and particularly Filipino Americans, those fully outside of the garlic house, to tell them how they must take responsibility for their own cultural downfalls if they hope to progress as a nation, a responsibility advanced in his framework of diaspora giving. In a twist on the classical anthropological approach that studies “other” cultures through one’s own objectivity and lens of cultural evolutionism that adheres the promise of progress and civilization to the “undeveloped,” Sarmiento identifies the harmful paradigms because he sees himself as of the Philippines *and* of America—he was raised and educated through college in the Philippines and received his graduate training in the U.S. where he currently runs a successful software and pharmaceutical business in California.

Anthropologically, he gains outsider perspective for his mobility to the U.S. where he realizes the extent to which he was steeped in a backwards culture. In terms of giving, the traditional relationship between those who have and give to those who need is cast in specifically diasporic terms. In America, Sarmiento learned how to identify and

⁹ Isagani Sarmiento, interview by author, by telephone, June 20, 2006.

leave damaging Filipino culture behind, which leads to his ability to help others out of their own garlic houses and out from poverty. He wishes to teach other Filipinos that they can learn how to do this for themselves:

Come! Let us all come out of our garlic houses, and when we are already outside of it, let us then reason together! Join me in coming out of our cages. There is our country, the Philippines, who is waiting for us to serve her. Our country needs help to extricate our nation from its economic and political mud hole. Only those outside the “garlic house”, those who are free and independent from their cages, possess the privilege of recognizing, knowing and dealing with the “garlic” taste and smell. Let us help each other to find the right reason. Let us derive more meaning and purpose for what we do... I no longer possess the wings of a caged bird, but the wings that can fly in the sky, as high as I want. From above my cage, I could see the many harmful paradigms that shaped my psyche, those that virtually caged me from being free within.¹⁰

Narratives and Frameworks of Filipino American Diaspora Giving

Bracketing for the moment an analysis of the specific discursive contexts, histories, and relationships richly invoked in Dr. Sarmiento’s ideas on the source of and solutions to the pervasive poverty in the Philippines, the chapter begins with this example to underline the analytical complexity, context, and implications of frameworks and narratives of Filipino American diaspora giving. Many Filipino Americans, like Sarmiento, hold dearly their ability and willingness to “give to the homeland,” a phrase that takes these many chapters to unpack. Many of the Filipino American association and

¹⁰ Sarmiento, *Re-Building the Roots of a Nation*, 15-17.

organization leaders that I have had the opportunity to interview call this giving “natural” for all Filipinos, that they are by birth and by blood connected to the Philippines and that this transnational connection comes with a certain moral responsibility to impoverished Filipinos in the Philippines regardless of one’s country of residence or citizenship status. Intervening in the reification of diasporic-homeland benevolence or altruism, this project contends that these giving practices are not at all natural or outside of culture or history but are, on the contrary, political projects implicated in a complex web of relationships that both regulate and produce Filipino and diasporic subjects and formations.

Rather than a detailed description of Filipino American diaspora giving where one could enumerate the number and best practices of Filipino American organizations, associations, and foundations concerned with aid to and social change in the Philippines generally, this dissertation examines the public presentation of Filipino American diaspora giving projects through books, newsletters, websites, and newspaper articles as cultural representations of diasporization through giving. It draws on participant observations from conferences in the U.S. and the Philippines in the areas of “Filipino diaspora philanthropy” and “global Filipino community development” and challenges the ease with which mobility, privilege, identity, diaspora, and understandings of social need are brought to poverty alleviation and related conversations in the Philippines. It also relies on interviews from my fieldwork in the U.S. and the Philippines with presidents, founders, and other leaders of Filipino American organizations, associations, and foundations that deal primarily with social development, philanthropic, humanitarian or charitable efforts in the Philippines for this analysis of the politics of diaspora giving. As

leaders and organizers, these Filipino Americans and their organizations supply the ideas for managing, directing, and imagining social reform and social change in the Philippines through the diaspora. These organization and association leaders contribute to the knowledge of what the diaspora, and particularly by those in the United States, can achieve, and how Filipino Americans should—and through elision, should not—involve themselves with and comprehend a range of social and economic concerns in the Philippines. I do not claim that this group of Filipino Americans represents the entire population, and I do not argue that I accurately capture the major themes that propel these giving projects. Rather, I argue that an understanding of the politics of diaspora giving through the analysis of frameworks of diaspora giving created by Filipino American leaders and organizers indexes processes and relationships involved in diasporization that is largely overlooked in the literature. The idea of diaspora giving is produced in multiple sites, and it is a conversation that has exploded in Filipino American circles within the past two decades. In my interviews, I focus not on Filipino Americans who have ideas for how to give or on individual Filipino Americans who donate, for example, to a Philippine scholarship or disaster relief fund, but on Filipino Americans who have successfully created or led nonprofit organizations and in a few cases have transformed what was initially a socially oriented ethnic or hometown association to one with an emphasis on humanitarian, social development, philanthropic, or social justice concerns in the Philippines. These Filipino Americans participate in conferences and produce materials to show how their organizations and frameworks could be models for other Filipinos to “just do something,” as they say, for the poor in the Philippines. The rhetoric

and images relayed by these individuals and organizations can be read as successful and appealing to a larger Filipino American audience in some regard and as framing the interrelated context, extent, and capacity of diaspora *and* of giving.

Referencing the surge of work done on the concept of diaspora in the 1900s, David Palumbo-Liu comments on “the ideological purchase different articulations of the term allow”:

It becomes clear that one can’t name diaspora until *after* the fact. I prefer, then, to regard the concept of diaspora as an enabling fiction, as a pretext for the exposition of profound notions of the national, of race, ethnicity, and history. From this perspective, “diaspora” does not consist in the *fact* of leaving Home, but in having that factuality available to representation *as such*—we come to “know” diaspora only as it is psychically identified in a narrative form that discloses the various ideological investments. And these investments give each particular articulation of the concept its specific charge. It is that narrative form that locates the representation of diaspora in its particular chronotope.¹¹

Conceptually, Filipino American diaspora does not exist prior to its representation. This chapter theorizes diaspora and homeland as narrated by Filipino Americans in their descriptions of what is involved in giving back to the homeland and what is involved in helping those in the Philippines who, as it is often described, need it the most. Giving practices from Filipino America of the past two decades impact homeland affinities,¹²

¹¹ David Palumbo-Liu, *Asian/American: Historical Crossings of a Racial Frontier* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 355; emphasis in original.

¹² To be sure, diaspora giving practices impacts how Filipino Americans socially adjust or maintain relationships in the United States as well, as a way to claim belonging or status in America.

and the frameworks and platforms of diaspora giving espoused by Filipino American leaders and presidents of organizations, associations, and foundations and enacted in diaspora giving projects operate as those narratives and fictions of diaspora, expressing various and oftentimes contradictory ideological investments. Anthropologist Arturo Escobar frames his essay “Other Worlds Are (Already) Possible” in a similar way, drawing attention to social reality, our interpretations of that reality, and the products of those interpretations:

This paper is a call for greater awareness of the theoretical frameworks that we use to understand the world and what to do about it. It stems from the realisation that there is always a tight connection between social reality, the theoretical framework we use to interpret it, and the sense of politics and hope that emerges from such an understanding. This connection is often overlooked. Our hopes and politics are largely the result of a given framework.¹³

This chapter analyzes frameworks and narratives of Filipino American diaspora giving to examine how that relationship between diaspora and giving reveals profound notions of the national, race, and ethnicity.

Narratives and frameworks of diaspora giving impact the ways that Filipino Americans imagine communities—diaspora communities, Filipino American communities, and communities in the homeland. By frameworks of diaspora giving, I refer to the ways that Filipino American organization leaders identify areas of need,

¹³ See Escobar, “Other Worlds Are (Already) Possible: Self-Organisation, Complexity, and Post-Capitalist Cultures,” in *The World Social Forum: Challenging Empires*, Jai Sen, et al. (New Delhi, India: Viveka Foundation, 2004), 349.

obstructions to economic advancement, the source of poverty in the Philippines, and Filipino American responses to those contexts. A critical analysis of narratives and frameworks of diaspora giving by Filipino American organization and association leaders emphasizes that while transnational philanthropy or social development programs may be imagined by an individual such as Sarmiento, individual politics and idiosyncrasies have material implications when funneled into diaspora giving projects and programs. In turn, Filipino American leaders create projects and programs guided by their particular understanding of poverty and need. I argue that an analysis of these frameworks of Filipino American diaspora giving demonstrates how multiple discourses of morality play a significant role in the formation of diaspora and community identities, identities that elaborate distinctions between “First World” and “Third World” countries and peoples, even in professions of unity.

Philanthropy, charity, microlending, scholarship development, environmental justice, humanitarianism and emergency relief are specific ways that Filipino American associations and organizations respond to poverty or inequality in the Philippines. Instances of a Filipino American association’s support for disaster relief in the Philippines following a typhoon or a Filipino American organization’s contribution to solidarity efforts with laborers in the Philippines, for example, contrast by scale and by ideological commitment. Analyzing frameworks of diaspora giving by Filipino Americans turns the focus from the institutional form that “aid,” “rescue,” or “justice” may take to the significance of nation, class, race, gender, and ethnicity in narratives of diaspora and homeland. One can see from the previous pages how social change in the

Philippines envisaged by Filipino Americans carries ideological and epistemological consequences, implications that are given careful consideration in this project. I do not glibly intimate that individual presidents, founders, and organizers of Filipino American organizations purposely produce philanthropic or social development projects and platforms in the service of global capital or U.S. imperialism or that these Filipino Americans are unwittingly co-opted to do so, but the knowledges produced in giving practices can contribute to and maintain these dynamics of power. Homeland, in this sense, can legitimate identity claims of Filipino Americans and their position in the Filipino diaspora, drawing on discourses of unity that in return compound the social capital of being Filipino *American*, intensifying and justifying divisions within the Filipino diaspora and on a global scale. This project complicates the ways Filipino American leaders enact notions of diaspora giving and its frameworks, contexts, and rhetorics. It does not dismiss the commingling of compassion and nationalism deeply held by those Filipino Americans involved but acknowledges that they have implications for broader studies of diaspora and giving.

Isagani Sarmiento, who was introduced at the beginning of this chapter, is a passionate and widely respected supporter of Philippine economic and social development and donates a considerable amount of his time and his own resources to help the Philippines, but central to my argument and this dissertation is that there are consequences to giving beyond the direct impact of the immediate gifts themselves in terms of the cultural politics involved. Frameworks of diaspora giving often rhetorically claim a capacity to unite Filipino Americans or “global Filipinos” in common cause and

orientation to the homeland, conferring power to the idea of diaspora giving and constructing an image of “communal togetherness” that serves to “generate illusions of normalcy and progress.”¹⁴ However, as scholars of both nationalisms and social movements are well aware, unification without critical attention to how the abstract citizen¹⁵ or social identity is produced disavows the processes of othering and the differentiations upon which claims of a united whole are made.

To frame this project, this chapter charts the contradictions underlying transnational and diasporic claims of unity upon which diaspora giving practices are grounded and theorizes the implications of these claims for diasporic constructions of being Filipino. The idea of diaspora giving back to the homeland outside of remittances and consumer goods to one’s family is a definitional attribute of contemporary diaspora formations. Differentiating between dispersion and diaspora, Khachig Tölölyan, the widely cited editor of *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*, delineates a salient characteristic of diasporas as:

[A] rhetoric of restoration and return that, in practice, takes the form of a sustained and organized commitment to maintaining relations with kin communities elsewhere, and with the homeland, to which diasporans either return literally or, more commonly, “re-turn” without actual repatriation: that is, they turn again and again toward the homeland through travel, remittances, cultural

¹⁴ See E. San Juan, Jr., “Filipino Writing in the United States: Reclaiming Whose America?” *Philippine Studies* 41, no. 2 (1993): 158.

¹⁵ The state attempts to resolve its contradictions of citizenship through the abstract citizen, “each formally equivalent, one to the other, defined by the negation of the material conditions of work and the inequalities of the property system.” See Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), 2.

exchange, and political lobbying and by various contingent efforts to maintain other links with the homeland.¹⁶

Filipino Americans “re-turn” without repatriation to the Philippines and orient themselves toward the homeland through their giving to social development, philanthropic, and humanitarian programs in efforts to maintain links with the homeland and address the poverty that they see in the Philippines. However, philanthropy, social development, or social justice practices, such as those addressed in this dissertation, and travel, remittances, political lobbying and other “contingent efforts,” as listed by Tölölyan, that maintain Filipino American links with the homeland speak to various motives, obligations, and priorities, resulting in divergent discourses of homeland belonging and the terms upon which belonging is enacted. Characterizing diaspora through travel to the homeland evokes either family reunion or tourism, limited or perhaps even cynical in its measure of the term’s analytical purchase. Exemplifying a diaspora through the rate of occurrence of remittances supports a genealogical familial formation that cannot, for example, attend to the gendered and sexual exclusions mandated in normative family economic structures and taken as given in the racialized order of the global economy.

This chapter considers Filipino American orientations toward a homeland through their giving broadly conceived not merely to trace those transnational linkages but to analyze how belonging in the resultant diaspora is maintained through moral difference and moral discourse specifically claimed by being Filipino in *America*. In the subsequent chapter, I address what Tölölyan phrases as “kin communities elsewhere” and outside the

¹⁶ Khachig Tölölyan, “The Contemporary Discourse of Diaspora Studies,” *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 27, no. 3 (2007): 649.

United States and the homeland, particularly in terms of how dominant discourses position Filipino American in relationship to overseas Filipino workers, a Philippine legal and cultural category that designates Filipinos that work on contract in countries where permanent residency is rarely an option. In the present chapter, the United States is emphasized as a particularly significant node in Filipino diaspora space when considering the politics of diaspora giving. It is significant because of the role that America plays in the Philippine cultural imagination¹⁷ and the moral inheritance that accompanies American narratives of assimilation and progress upon which the authority of diaspora giving is too often made. It is also significant because of the influence that the United States has over Philippine political, military and economic affairs as well as for the fact that the bulk of diaspora giving projects are initiated by Filipino Americans.

Institutionalized giving, as many critics of philanthropy, humanitarianism, and charity have noted, support regressive social formations, covering over and perpetuating the inequalities produced in capitalistic relations. For example, critical race theorist john a. powell argues, “The very existence of philanthropy presupposes economic and political arrangements that are counterproductive to our notions of justice.”¹⁸ Drawing on Marx

¹⁷ As early as 1935, anthropologist Roman Ruiz Cariaga described the American influence over material culture in the Philippines and its impact on Filipino identity: “Anything made in the magic land of America is eagerly sought in the Philippines, and increases the prestige and social standing of the owner.” For two other examples of the multitude of sources, Jessica Hagedorn’s novel *Dogeaters* and postcolonial Filipino studies scholar E. San Juan, Jr.’s *Allegories of Resistance* address the Americanization of Philippine culture in very different ways. See Roman Ruiz Cariaga, “The Filipinos at Ewa” (unpublished paper, 1935), quoted in Jonathan Y. Okamura, *Imagining the Filipino American Diaspora: Transnational Relations, Identities, and Communities* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), 98; *Dogeaters* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1990); *Allegories of Resistance: The Philippines at the Threshold of the Twenty-First Century* (Diliman, Quezon City: University of Philippines Press, 1994).

¹⁸ john a. powell, “Proposal for a Transformative Racially Just Philanthropy,” *Souls: A Critical Journal of Black Politics, Culture, and Society* 4, no. 1 (2002): 41.

and Engels' condemnation of bourgeois society, Joan Roelofs argues how the nonprofit sector *enables* the continuation of capitalism:

Those who wish to promote change should look closely at what sustains the present system. One reason capitalism doesn't collapse despite its many weaknesses and valiant opposition movements is because of the "nonprofit sector." Yet philanthropic capital, its investment and its distribution, are generally neglected by the critics of capitalism. Most studies of the subject are generously funded by the nonprofit sector itself; few researchers have followed up on the observation of Marx and Engels in *The Communist Manifesto*:

A part of the bourgeoisie is desirous of redressing social grievances, in order to secure the continued existence of bourgeois society ... To this section belong the economists, philanthropists, humanitarians, improvers of the condition of the working class, organizers of charity, members of societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals, temperance fanatics, hole-and-corner reformers of every imaginable kind.¹⁹

The move toward the institutionalization of diaspora giving is recent and is linked to global technological changes and the concentrations, mobility and socioeconomic levels of emigrant groups, and it relates to the institutionalized forms of giving, identities, and relationships of power in national projects and economies and their critique. Giving performed across the space of diaspora contributes to the meanings and identities that

¹⁹ Joan Roelofs, "The Third Sector as a Protective Layer for Capitalism," *Monthly Review: An Independent Socialist Magazine* 47, no. 4 (September 1995): 16.

emerge from that space and orientations toward the homeland, and does not presuppose that diaspora space or linkages to the homeland are in themselves critical or outside of dominant nationalisms and nationalist exclusions as some have argued. For example, in a seminal contribution to Filipino American studies, authoritative Asian American studies scholar Yen Le Espiritu describes Filipino American orientation toward the Philippines as demonstrating resistance to their racial subjugation upon migration:

To resist racial categorization, Filipino immigrants in the United States also have refused to sever their ties to the Philippines. They have assumed instead the role of *transmigrants*, generating and sustaining multistranded relations between the Philippines and the United States. While some narrators in this book identify more with one society than the other, most have kept ties with family, friends, and colleagues in the Philippines through occasional visits, telephone calls, remittances, and medical and other humanitarian missions. In so doing, they have created and maintained fluid and multiple identities that link them simultaneously to both countries. As an example, while Luz Latus identifies herself as “an American citizen” who is “very much interested in and informed on what goes on in this country,” her dream is to return to the Philippines to help “my country and my people.”²⁰

²⁰ Yen Le Espiritu, *Filipino American Lives* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995), 27-28; emphasis in original. Espiritu recites a similar description in a more recent book, *Home Bound*: “Most of the Filipinos whom I interviewed, regardless of their regional and class origins, have kept ties with family, friends, and colleagues in the Philippines through occasional visits, telephone calls, remittances, and medical and other humanitarian missions. In so doing, they have created and maintained fluid and multiple identities that link them simultaneously to both countries. These transnational connections underscore the multiplicity of Filipino lives and work against definitions that would fix them in one identity or one place.” See *Home Bound: Filipino American Lives across Cultures, Communities, and Countries* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), 10.

Like Tölölyan, Espiritu conflates disparate practices of occasional visits and telephone calls with medical and humanitarian missions, erasing differences between familial links and social practices, differences that present very different starting points for a transnational or diasporic framework. Instead of tracing the links of traditional structures based on lineage and cultural heritage or of a kinship-based diaspora, this project utilizes a diaspora framework to theorize the limitations, risks, and possibilities of diasporic belonging conducted through a range of commitments addressing social and economic inequality in the Philippines. To return to Espiritu's interview of Luz Latus from above, instead of understanding the desire "to return to the Philippines to help *'my country and my people'*" as evidence of a transmigrant identity produced in resistance to racial categorization, I pursue a study of how that relationship of "return" and "help" are engaged, and how Filipino Americans position themselves in the seemingly innocuous refrain of "*my country and my people.*"

Diasporic Hierarchy, Difference, and Morality

To address this idea of diasporic positioning as Filipino Americans orient themselves in the diaspora in relationship to the homeland and to the Filipinos in the Philippines, let us return again to Dr. Isagani Sarmiento. I suggested earlier in the chapter that Sarmiento projects a Filipino diaspora infused with the desire to develop the homeland by articulating a diasporic identity ("our country...is waiting for us to serve her") and an American identity with his particular vision of how to best help the poor in the Philippines who are written as both backwards and redeemable. He positions himself as an exemplary diasporic citizen oriented toward the homeland and prepared to dutifully

and ceaselessly work toward its cultural and economic betterment, while Filipinos located in the Philippines remain subjected by colonial mentalities and helpless in their immobility and their cultural quagmire. Homeland, for him, is the source of culture, though a backwards culture from which he has overcome.

From this example we can see that narrations of diaspora giving produced by Filipino American organizational leaders demonstrate significant moral dimensions in the formation of diasporic identities. Moral dimensions reveal themselves in the differentiation among Filipino communities and spaces, elevating some groups and spaces and reifying cultural differences between those with material wealth and those with material needs in an uneven giving relationship. These dimensions play out in how the Filipino American leader or organizer for diaspora giving frames her ideas of giving and in the production of the recipient or client of diaspora giving programs and proposals. For Sarmiento, the boundaries of the critique extend to this Filipino American's analysis of poverty in the Philippines and the mutual construction of "backwards" Filipinos, who require assistance, and "successful" Filipinos, who give assistance. Mobility is linked to moral development in the diaspora. The culture of poverty thesis of the "garlic house" fails to examine the role of neocolonialism, the concentration of land and political and economic control in the Philippines to a small handful of families, or the nature of the Philippine's participation in neoliberal globalization in the production and maintenance of poverty in the Philippines that delimit this theory of social change in the Philippines. With Sarmiento we see an example of the way morality can be evoked to obfuscate political and social analysis, offering an example of what postcolonial Filipino studies

theorist E. San Juan, Jr. describes as the substitution of “cultural reductionism... for concrete analysis of determinate political and socioeconomic situations.”²¹

There is a tendency in frameworks of Filipino American diaspora giving where narratives of American exceptionalism are celebrated not only by official and popular representations of the nation but by Filipino Americans, particularly as it allows for Filipino American knowledge over Filipinos in the Philippines in the politics of diaspora giving. Isagani Sarmiento positions himself as free, and he is free because he distances himself from the Philippines and positions himself as of the diaspora *and* of America where his education, labor, and success confirm the culture of poverty in the Philippines. Objectivity, which he is then able to apply to poverty in the Philippines, is produced through his work and labor in the United States where the contradictions of transnational industry’s use of racialized labor with the increased mainstreaming of anti-immigrant racism are re-written as freedom.²² Instead of historically situating work and labor in the United States as a contradictory site of stratification, Sarmiento’s analysis of poverty in the Philippines elaborates a variant of American exceptionalism that identifies labor in the United States as the place where Filipinos become good citizens (outstanding workers as outstanding citizens) allowing for their role as good global citizens in the service of the

²¹ E. San Juan, Jr., “The Filipino-American War of 1899-1902 and Its Contemporary Resonance,” Asian/Pacific Studies & Information Service at the Institut für Völkerkunde (Institute of Social Anthropology), University of Vienna, <http://www.univie.ac.at/voelkerkunde/apsis/aufi/history/sonny2.htm>, under “Philippine History” (1998): par. 8.

²² This draws on Lisa Lowe’s generative work, *Immigrant Acts*, that characterizes this contradiction of racialized immigrant labor in the United States with specific attention to Filipino labor in the book’s first chapter: “Transnational industry’s use of Asian and Latina immigrant women’s labor in the United States is the current site where the contradictions of the national and the international converge in an overdetermination of capitalism, anti-immigrant racism, and patriarchal gender stratification... In the U.S. colonization of the Philippines in 1898-1946, war and occupation served national capital imperatives through expansion and the interruption of the previous conditions of the agrarian Philippines, which displaced Filipinos from previous forms of work, thus providing an exploitable labor force available for emigration to the United States.” See *Immigrant Acts*, 16-17.

Philippines. Michael Omi and Howard Winant's foundational work on racial formations identifies a dominant ethnicity paradigm in the U.S. that works to "incorporate racial categories within ethnic ones, and thus to locate racial minorities in an analytical framework defined by the dynamics of assimilation and cultural pluralism."²³ Here, in Sarmiento, we see an assimilation-based ethnicity paradigm that displaces contradictions around race and nation through the articulation of hard work, mobility, and American citizenship, allowing for the simultaneous construction of Filipino Americans as the "outstanding citizens" of the Filipino diaspora.

Conversely to the position that diaspora formations can intersect with assimilationist ideologies is a trend in Filipino American studies exemplified by Jonathan Y. Okamura who states in his book on the Filipino American diaspora that "[d]iasporic peoples *resist* the assimilationist national strategies and ideologies of the nation-state" merely by extending "their identities and communities beyond its borders."²⁴ In this vein, an ethnic group's orientation toward a homeland is read as resistance and as a transnational critique of national strategies of subjection such as with Yen Le Espiritu's definition of transnationalism in her more recent book on Filipino Americans, *Home Bound*: "I conceptualize transnationalism—the processes by which immigrant groups forge and sustain strong sentimental and material links with their countries of origin—as a disruptive strategy, enacted by immigrants to challenge binary modes of thinking about time and space and to resist their differential inclusion in the United States as subordinate

²³ Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 45.

²⁴ Okamura, *Imagining the Filipino American Diaspora*, 25; emphasis mine.

residents and citizens.”²⁵ However, I argue that attention to the politics of diaspora giving can demonstrate quite the opposite. Instead of describing an ethnic group as a diaspora because of trans-border identity and community formations and naming it a resistance to assimilationist national strategies, Sarmiento’s politics of diaspora giving supports diaspora formation premised on the dynamics of assimilation and an elaboration of celebratory, racialized assimilation based on the simultaneous elision of transnational industry’s use of racialized and gendered mobility and immobility. Through the knowledge and authority gained by their claims of assimilation into the American national culture, Filipino Americans can orient themselves toward the Philippine homeland with ideas and frameworks of diaspora giving that simultaneously rewrite their dominant racialization and legitimize a cultural authority over Filipinos in the Philippines.

While in the Philippines doing fieldwork, I had a memorable conversation with a prominent Filipino studies scholar who was unconvinced as to what could ultimately be accomplished by studying Filipino American giving to the Philippines. He went on to make the argument that “the giving [by Filipino Americans to the Philippines] might start out as altruism, but can a sense of solidarity be fostered from this giving? There is the increased management, extraction, and institutionalization of philanthropic or social development projects on the one hand, but on the other hand, there is extreme poverty. Even if there is meaning for building a streetlight, what is left after you go?” To put it differently, he acknowledges the tremendous movement between Filipino America and the Philippines through the purveyance of charity and the increased institutionalization of

²⁵ Espiritu, *Home Bound*, 70-71.

diaspora giving projects, and these projects may contribute to a sense of Filipino American or perhaps diasporic identity but may not necessarily have anything to do with solidarity or the building of a diaspora giving practice based on a shared sense of responsibility for what is identified as the source of poverty or hunger in the Philippines. It is true that one of the most treacherous and erroneous beliefs of giving is the presumption that donating money or in kind produces relationships of solidarity. Sympathy for another's circumstance or life options alone, for example, prevents the creation of a more complex and critical understanding of poverty, social relationships, and inequality. Giving driven by sympathy alone can be a very conservative institution that centers upon individual feelings of emotion in place of social and economic analysis, legitimating the social order through the extension of a helping hand. Raising money for and providing a streetlamp in a poor village and then returning home only to pat oneself on the back does not in deed contribute to a relationship of solidarity. Surely, this scholar raises important points that should not be ignored, but, I contend, these points do not suggest a topical morass but a strategy for framing the topic that constructively contributes to the literature on Filipino diaspora by addressing the multiple moral dimensions of diaspora formation highlighted in the critical study diaspora giving.

The discourse of a culturally and morally deficient Filipino in the Philippines, for example, has not only been the tool of direct colonial cultural legitimation,²⁶ but drives certain forms of diaspora giving. Thus constituted, the reprobate Filipino in the Philippines requires the Filipino American for uplift, and the Filipino Americans are

²⁶ For one of the numerous examples, see the historical work of Warwick Anderson, "Excremental Colonialism: Public Health and the Poetics of Pollution," *Critical Inquiry* 21 (1995): 640-69.

freed from the burdens of partnership with those they seek to help. The aforementioned Filipino studies scholar in his conceptual move from “altruism,” that is, the feeling of moral obligation on the part of individual Filipino Americans to help those in need in the Philippines, to “solidarity,” or organized attempts toward addressing social needs fueled by a politics that connects the interests of the Philippines to Filipino America, points to varying approaches to “need” in the Philippines by Filipino Americans, needs which are themselves grounded in divergent discourses of morality.

Professor of social policy Hartley Dean describes the understanding of human needs and the implications of that understanding in the enactment of social policy as “arguably, the single most important organising principle in social policy.”²⁷ Social policy responds in a manner consistent with attendant understandings of human needs, and, therefore, divergent approaches to human needs are at the root of competing approaches to policy. According to Dean, to refer to the discourses of need is to examine how people “understand and talk about the underlying moral issues associated with state welfare provision.”²⁸ Dean introduces four approaches to conceptualizing human need, “economistic,” “moralistic/moral-authoritarian,” “paternalistic,” and “humanistic/humanitarian,” where each approach draws on a moral discourse that shapes the range of possible policy. Moralistic approaches draw on a “common sense” discourse, where if people’s needs are not met it is due to the collective behavior of the group. Paternalistic approaches acknowledge need “in terms of what secures our social

²⁷ Hartley Dean, *Understanding Human Need: Social Issues, Policy and Practice* (Bristol, U.K.: The Policy Press of University of Bristol, 2010), 2.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 182.

belonging and what is needed to establish and preserve the social order.”²⁹ Poverty, in this approach, would elicit compassion and beneficence from those enacting and supporting a particular policy that would then translate into narrow policy efforts to alleviate immediate suffering without addressing larger structural and institutional causes. Legislators enact social policy that both speak to their own understanding of need and reproduce the moral discourse to which they believe their constituents would respond. Filipino American organizations do not operate under the same constraints as legislative bodies, and, as nongovernmental entities are often seen to be free of the temptations that corrupt government officials or would chain them to their lobbies and constituents. However, Dean’s rubric contributes usefully to an analysis of the moral aspects of diaspora formation. Frameworks of diaspora giving draw on moral discourses of need, but there is no constituency in the Philippines authorizing Filipino American organizations to act on their behalf as there is for legislators and policy. Instead, poor Filipinos in the Philippines, a rough categorization that itself runs the risk of reification and is used self-consciously in that regard, are constructed through the same moral discourses of need that authorize Filipino Americans diasporics to act on their behalf.

Take, for example, the following organizational history from an interview with Isabella Santa Ana, a Filipino American founder of a nonprofit organization in the U.S. that sends books and school supplies to poor school children in the Philippines:

I was born and raised in the Philippines, and so I am very much aware of the poverty and the disparity between the rich and poor, so I think I have enough information and have a decent resource and the confidence that through creativity

²⁹ Ibid., 5.

I will be able to help out. It's just that here in America we accumulate stuff. What do we do with them? My husband and I just started updating, upgrading things and just accumulating so much stuff that normally we would donate them to Goodwill or other nonprofit organizations or even at church. But I'm seeing that these material things can be utilized back home. What I did was I just gathered them and shipped them to the Philippines. I'm saying that I'd made it a commitment to make it my mission to do that. That is where the blocks started to come together. *With some informal research and more of just thinking through by myself, this is what I've come up with.* My immediate supporters were just my family and then it grew and reached out to some of my friends. Things just grew one step to the next. I wasn't in the Philippines. I've not gone back to the Philippines for more than ten years. With the technology and the man power, and some connections in terms of my parents who annually go back to the Philippines, I think I have enough tools, so to speak, to make this vision work. With my daughters always coming home with extra pencils, erasers, crayons they'll never use because they already have enough, and it's becoming cluttery and I assume for those families within the same standard of living or even those well-off do encounter the same circumstance. If a household could gather one *balikbayan* box and stuff it with all the education resources and ship it to the Philippines at half-price, then establish a nonprofit organization so that there are tax benefits as well.³⁰

³⁰ *Balikbayan* is Filipino for returnee, generally referring to im/migrants from North America who return to the Philippines for a visit. Isabella Santa Ana [pseud.], interview by author, by telephone, April 20, 2009;

A paternalistic morality guides Santa Ana's knowledge of poverty in the Philippines, and her diaspora giving replaces the desire for physical returns to the homeland. In her description, Santa Ana seeks to address widespread poverty and "the disparity between the rich and poor" through donations of excess consumer goods. Like Sarmiento's, Santa Ana's framework for giving purveys the idea that passive Filipinos in the Philippines need the diasporic Filipino's knowledge as well as their resources. Her command of poverty and need in the Philippines is a result of having lived in the Philippines and moved away. Her claim of knowledge that she holds over the Philippines is particular to a diasporan, but more precisely, to a diasporan in America. For example, her security in the knowledge that she has enough information within herself for how to develop a program of social development from an essential Filipinoness and having been born and raised in the Philippines and then built a life in the U.S. would not translate if the direction were reversed. An innate comprehension of inequality is not usually claimed by those born and raised in the United States and applied to the U.S. as a whole but is particular to knowledge bestowed upon those in the United States having arrived from places like the Philippines. It is a paternalism apprehended through their residence in America and directed toward the Philippines that constructs a privileged Filipino American subject in relationship to a passive poor Filipino object in the Philippines. Ideologies of American exceptionalism do taint many Filipino American diasporic organizations, and in this instance, giving is enabled because America is the place where "stuff" can be accumulated and excess is an acceptable way of life. Whereas a moralistic approach to need in the Philippines addresses a reprobate Filipino awaiting Filipino

emphasis added.

American uplift, this paternalism constructs a hierarchy—a Filipino in need of Filipino American charity and a framework of diaspora giving that maintains the social order.

Santa Ana emphasized more than once that this charity—this “stuff”—was not needed by her family and no longer wanted in her American household. These items, the beginnings of her ongoing giving project, were only clutter to her and her family and resignified as gifts through simultaneous claims of knowledge of poverty in the Philippines and a compassion for those without access to her level of consumer goods. Her diasporic identity and moral responsibility overlap with her self-proclaimed American materialism that elides the social context of those differences. Donating excess consumer items is made equivalent to undertaking the larger problem of poverty in her organizational vision. Her charity positions her as benevolent, and her framework for giving pointedly asserts that this benevolence happens without sacrifice or analysis or context: excess clutter is merely redirected from Goodwill to the Philippines. A paternalistic imagination of giving reiterates the Subject/object binary of Filipino American exceptionalism and produces practices of diaspora giving that refuse investigation into the complicated processes that contribute to poverty in the Philippines. Giving and knowledge of the needs of poor Filipinos in the Philippines in this instance is perceived as unidirectional and outside possibilities for solidarity or an counter-hegemonic giving relationship.

A consideration of Santa Ana’s politics of diaspora giving intervenes in the refrain that Filipino Americans by nature want to help alleviate poverty in the Philippines. Moralities of need in the Philippines create the recipient of diaspora giving,

and the poor Filipino in the Philippines is written as passive and as outside of the knowledge base for understanding poverty alleviation. Santa Ana's own knowledge of the Philippines from having once lived there and through familial relationships supplants consideration for working with or learning from already existing nongovernmental or community organizations in the Philippines or even more informally through particular individuals, families, or villages in the Philippines. Diaspora giving with its unique claims to belonging and knowledge, therefore, runs the risk of erasing the recipient of the giving relationship in a way that is particular to diaspora politics and not, for example, to other kinds of international giving where native knowledge is replaced with professionalized, scientific knowledge such as by international relief organizations following the devastation and fatalities by the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004 and the recent massive earthquake in Haiti. Santa Ana's sense of being of the Philippines yet outside of it establishes a diasporic essentialism in her framework for diaspora giving. The elision of the poor Filipino from a diasporic frame of reference is naturalized through Santa Ana's benevolence, so that the resultant diasporic identity is transnational in scope but claimed through the maintenance of international hierarchy outside of a structural, political economic critique of poverty. As stated by sociologist Donileen Loseke, "Constructions of social problems and social interventions are accompanied by productions of the types of *people* involved in those problems or served by those interventions. The produced morality of interventions therefore might well be related to the produced morality of its clients."³¹ To which I would add with diaspora giving, the

³¹ Donileen R. Loseke, "'The Whole Spirit of Modern Philanthropy': The Construction of the Idea of Charity, 1912-1992," *Social Problems* 44, no. 4 (November 1997): 428.

morality of the poor or needy Filipino in the Philippines is produced in relationship to the moral authority of the Filipino American.

It is this mode of diaspora giving financially or in kind but without an openness to “give up”—or to recognize how Filipino Americans are invested in diasporic hierarchal difference—a moral authority that reproduces Filipino American exceptionalism and does so in the spirit of nationalism and with a limited vision of redistribution, despite the fact that redistribution is fundamentally what many nonprofits claim to undertake. Take the following description from a Filipino American working with an ongoing Filipino American medical mission to the Philippines³² as to why his particular Filipino American colleague participates in diaspora giving: “I truly believe that without CMM [the Carolina Medical Mission], some of the patients might not have made it. Providing quality medical care is CMM’s goal and mission. I asked one of the doctors why she volunteers year after year. She smiled and simply said ‘Because our kabayan (fellow Filipino) needs help.’”³³ In this sense, diaspora giving entails the availability to give and forwards giving as a diasporic virtue. In what was to resonate as a heart-felt entreaty to ethnic or diasporic nationalism, this brief retelling of why she gives of her time and expertise obscures the complex social relationship between the Filipino American doctor and her *kabayan*, many of whom live in areas with no access to medical professionals because of

³² Medical missions are a very common project for Filipino Americans. Generally, they are one- or two-week-long clinics where Filipino American doctors and nurses set up in provincial hospitals or town centers to administer care and often disperse pharmaceuticals for common ailments. Other medical missions have a surgical component where Filipino American doctors perform surgeries on Filipinos in the Philippines, who, presumably, could not otherwise afford them and were screened by either Philippine-based doctors or themselves. Some medical missions are ongoing and return to the same village or province yearly or biannually. Others, especially those that are sponsored by hometown or regional associations, may be one-time or more sporadic.

³³ Edward Binanay, “In Perspective,” *Carolina Medical Mission Newsletter* 11, Issue 1, April 2009, 2.

the Philippines' role in producing and exporting doctors and nurses for the United States, Canada, and Great Britain.³⁴ Instead, the relationship is framed as personal and nationalist moral obligation, a framing that obscures class and citizenship differences as well as belies donors' status as a result of their giving.

This is not to say that this or any doctor should not participate in medical missions or downplay the fact that she was successfully able to provide direly needed medical services. However, just as Santa Ana's gathering of unwanted school supplies does not address the larger issue of poverty or Filipino American's complex relationships with those issues, this medical mission's goal of "providing quality medical care" can only do so in the narrowest sense because it covers over the transnational medical industrial complex that structures one of the most visible trajectories of Filipino mobility and deems medical treatment a consumer good that can only be afforded by a small percentage of the world's population. Again, it is not to demonize this one doctor's brief statement or her willingness to travel to the Philippines to administer care, but it is to argue that the moral obligation to come to the aid of one's countryman in a time of crisis does not address equal or democratic "quality medical care" for the *kabayan*. The practicality of giving, including professional volunteerism, and responses to need capitulate to immediate solutions rather than to the close and difficult examination of structures of material inequality.

Philosopher Paul Gomberg calls this process the "fallacy of philanthropy," which I extend to a wider array of giving practices:

³⁴ For a distinguished work on this phenomenon, see Catherine Ceniza Choy, *Empire of Care: Nursing and Migration in Filipino American History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003).

By “philanthropy” I will mean primarily [the] assimilation of the practical issues raised by hunger and poverty to our duty to rescue victims of calamity, secondarily the substantive proposal to give money to hunger relief organizations such as CARE, UNICEF, or Oxfam (a use closer to its ordinary meaning). Here I will argue that the assimilation is wrong; it is the fallacy of philanthropy. Moreover, I believe, the practical proposal that derives from the philanthropist assimilation is not a good one.³⁵

To elaborate, Gomberg’s ironic use of “philanthropy” above calls our attention to what he calls its fallacy. When philanthropy is seen as “rescue,” we are applying the same ethical norms that dictate we rescue a victim of natural disaster to the problems of hunger and poverty. In a calamity, the victim is innocent and an unforeseeable, disastrous event befell her; “[b]ecause of their misfortune, we must devote our resources to their rescue.”³⁶ Virtually all of the Filipino American hometown and regional associations that I had contact with or that have a presence on the internet participate in emergency relief to aid victims of natural disasters in the Philippines. However, ethical norms of rescue do not address chronic social problems or how poor populations bear an uneven impact of natural disasters due to their proximity to decrepit infrastructure, and our current ethical culture does not require relief of the poor.³⁷ For Filipino American leaders who publically frame poverty and hunger in the Philippines with the same logics and same rationales as used for emergency relief, the reach of diaspora giving is truncated

³⁵ Paul Gomberg, “The Fallacy of Philanthropy,” *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 32, no. 1 (March 2002): 30.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 45.

and drained of a wider range of possibilities to promote conversations and programs for more radical mobilizations and cultures of diaspora giving. For diaspora giving-based identities, there is additionally no urgency to push for an examination of the culmination of “extra stuff” that is accumulated at the cost to those without. The fallacy lies in the practical conflation. Providing relief may help an individual or group, but it does not address the solution to massive poverty and “is harmful to the project of putting an end to hunger and other effects of extreme poverty.”³⁸ These philanthropic, and I would add volunteer, responses draw our attention away from responses that imagine an end to poverty. They warrant particular attention because these are projects enacted by those with the motivation, authority and connections to claim this knowledge of the road to poverty alleviation on the part of the diaspora and the homeland.

Deliberations of how to aid the victims of hunger and poverty are very relevant for how we choose to give. For example, organizing in solidarity with peasant revolutions or organizing a food drive do not share a common remedy for the problem of entrenched poverty. The causes of and responses to poverty should and do matter. To extend my example from the beginning of the chapter, if poverty is the result of harmful paradigms pervading a culture, then it should follow that the solution to poverty is teaching reason and enforcing diligence. In Sarmiento’s parable, the whole of the Philippines suffers because of the cultural belief that “my little hut is good enough,” which implies that “I need not work harder for a sturdier home.” The cultural value squelches the nation and its national subjects’ desire to improve. In this logic, it would be misguided for the diasporic to build a poor Filipino a new and modern home. We

³⁸ Ibid., 51.

could presume that the new home would quickly fall into disrepair if the harmful paradigm is not first addressed.

Gomberg proposes that the organization of the production and distribution of food contributes to the *creation* of hunger: “The fallacy of philanthropy is one reason (among many) for the one-sidedness of philosophical discussions of hunger. Focusing our attention on immediate help, the analogy tends to obscure that the ordinary workings of capitalist markets create and exacerbate poverty. So the fallacy of philanthropy narrows the discourse about hunger. It lets capitalism off the hook.”³⁹ In the assimilation between “self-help” and poverty alleviation, Sarmiento not only lets capitalism off the hook but obscures the contradictions of global capital and state power in the name of diaspora philanthropy. In March of 2001 Sarmiento sponsored a symposium called “A Unified Strategy for Building Filipino Self-Reliance” held in San Francisco. Attendees included then Philippine Secretary of the Department of Interior and Local Governments, Jose D. Lina, and then Secretary of Tourism Richard Gordon. Lina enthusiastically championed Sarmiento’s project to “train barangay seamstresses in Lumban, Laguna to teach them how to sew dresses for Barbie dolls.”⁴⁰ To be sure, the production of Barbie dolls is a complicated option to pose to an impoverished community. Mattel, the manufacturer of Barbie, is the world’s largest toy company, and human rights activists have targeted their labor practices to be as exploitative as Nike’s and Reebok’s.⁴¹ As a

³⁹ Ibid., 55.

⁴⁰ *Barangay* is a Tagalog word that designates a political and social unit at the village level. Quote is from Isagani J. Sarmiento, “FISH for PEACE Website,” <http://www.fishforpeace.com>.

⁴¹ For example, on their website, the *Human Rights for Workers Bulletin* describes a 1996 *Dateline NBC* special that reported thirteen-year-old girls in Indonesia were making Barbie clothes for \$2 a day and that the “retailing of toys and games is one of the most profitable industries in the United States, dependent almost entirely on imports of products manufactured mostly by poor young women abroad.” “A New

leader in diaspora giving and touted by representatives of the Philippine government, Sarmiento is posited as the Filipino diasporic par excellence, as, to borrow from David Palumbo-Liu, the Filipino American emissary of commerce for the Philippines and cultural translator.⁴² If this were truly an exemplar model of the possibilities and culture of diaspora giving, there would be no way to intervene in a global economic order that *perpetuates* the poverty of poor Third World women, serving as bold reminder that diasporas are not necessarily alternative formations in the modern world. This social intervention denies that the political and economic ordering of global capital produces need. Rather, it focuses on the development of the moral character of Filipino subjects through their commitment to institutions of capital. Further, it authorizes the diasporic to act, he who has achieved the capitalists' dream of embodying morality through his aid to the Philippines.

Corruption in the Homeland

Earlier, the chapter introduced the First Global Filipino Networking Conference. The convention was a major political event. On behalf of president at the time George W. Bush's administration, then Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony Principi addressed the audience with a focus on the concerns over the Filipino Veterans Equity Act, an issue that resonated with the audience as indicated by the standing ovation given to the 350 Filipino WWII Veterans who were royally and noisily ushered into the opening ceremonies. From former president's Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's administration, a number of representatives made their presence known—then Senate President Franklin

Corporate Code Against Toyland Sweatshops," *Human Rights for Workers Bulletin* 2, no. 23 (December 19, 1997), <http://www.senser.com/b23.htm>.

⁴² David Palumbo-Liu, *Asian/American*, 343.

Drilon, Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon, and the former first gentleman Jose Miguel (Mike) Arroyo who all addressed the convention.

In Mike Arroyo's speech to the convention, he spoke to a breadth of topics, from urging the U.S. Congress to act on the Veterans Equity Bill, advocating for a Dual Citizenship Bill that was currently before the Philippine Congress, assuring the continued growth of the GNP of the Philippines, and touting the stringent anti-crime stance of the his wife's administration. In elaborating his wife's anti-crime record, Arroyo explicitly addressed Filipino Americans. "It's safe for you now," he proclaimed.⁴³ Arroyo was referring to their "safety" on two different levels. On one hand, he described how clusters of kidnapers and drug dealers were dissembled presumably due to the intelligence agencies of the Arroyo administration, thus making it physically safe for Filipino migrants and immigrants to enjoy the Philippines. On the other, he was referring to the "safety" that Filipino im/migrants should feel when investing and giving to causes, programs, and organizations the Philippines, citing the exposure and control of a number of specific tax and embezzlement scams that impacted the trust in the government's ability to safeguard investments. Making a specific request for funds, Arroyo described how he along with nongovernmental organizations began the groundwork for the Adopt a Barangay program over a year prior. Adopt a Barangay was imagined in attempts to structurally safeguard the donations of Filipinos abroad from corruption to reach the intended community units of the Philippines. Governmental and non-governmental agencies in this program identified two hundred of the poorest *barangays* (villages) as well as specific projects to assist those *barangays*. Donations from Filipino Americans

⁴³ Author's notes, September 2002.

could now go directly to certified projects. As Arroyo understood, legacies of Filipino governmental graft and corruption, on national, provincial and local levels, have left Filipinos in America as well as Filipino American organizations anxious regarding donating to the Philippines. Many Filipino Americans who have donated to projects with a focus on social development have historically been the victim of scams, investing in projects that do not even exist, and are thus hesitant to give to programs outside of their own familiar circles. Adopt A Barangay, as it was presented to the convention, was designed to redress these fears.

Having shown the impact of moral discourse in diaspora formation and through the politics of diaspora giving, the chapter concludes by focusing on the ubiquity of corruption in representations and frameworks of diaspora giving. While corruption is very much a “real” part of modern states, I do not get much into the reality of corruption in the Philippines per se. Rather, the chapter considers how discourses of corruption impact the moralities of diaspora identities and its pervasiveness in frameworks and representations of diaspora giving. Corruption is considered to be the wellspring of poverty and underdevelopment in the Philippines, leaving other possibilities as to the source of poverty intact. With its “moral and evolutionary overtones” corruption can serve to locate those “Others” outside of what are considered civilized democracies.⁴⁴ As previous cultural studies of corruption have noted, corruption functions as an idea or as a medium through which people and institutions organize themselves.⁴⁵ Moreover, as stated by Akhil Gupta, “[C]orruption lends itself rather easily to barely concealed

⁴⁴ Dieter Hall and Cris Shore, “Sharp Practice: Anthropology and the Study of Corruption,” in *Corruption: Anthropological Perspectives*, eds. Dieter Hall and Cris Shore (Ann Arbor, MI: Pluto Press, 2005), 3.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 20.

stereotypes of the Third World... When notions of corrupt ‘underdeveloped’ countries are combined with a developmentalist perspective, in which ‘state-society relations’ in the Third World are seen as reflecting a prior position in the development of the ‘advanced’ industrial nations, the temptation to compare ‘them’ to ‘our own past’ proves irresistible to many Western scholars.”⁴⁶

At the international level, charges of corruption are volleyed against non-Western countries by Western leaders, multilateral organizations, and political watchdog groups. Political scientist Mlada Bukovansky writes of this “anti-corruption consensus” cohered within the past few decades where the problem of underdevelopment is linked directly to a country’s problems of corruption. As such, corruption serves as an explanatory function in terms of the economic gap between the North and South. Economic problems of these underdeveloped countries are blamed on corruption rather than “inappropriate tariff structures” and other narrowly economic impositions of neoliberal demands.⁴⁷ As a result, “advanced industrial countries implicitly and unjustifiably claim the moral high ground for themselves, and ascribe to the ‘developing world’ the status of the moral reprobate while simultaneously making vague and possibly unworkable governance demands on developing country governments and societies.”⁴⁸ With this developmental focus, Bukovansky explains how “current anti-corruption rhetoric signals an extension of multilateral efforts to expand and solidify the institutional foundations for a global market

⁴⁶ Akhil Gupta, “Blurred Boundaries: The Discourse of Corruption, the Culture of Politics, and the Imagined State,” *American Ethnologist* 22, no. 2. (May 1995): 378.

⁴⁷ Mlada Bukovansky, “The Hollowness of Anti-corruption Discourse,” *Review of International Political Economy* 13, no. 2 (May 2006): 183.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 198.

economy,”⁴⁹ evoking the moral underpinnings of the current market economy and effectuating neoliberal markets as the unquestioned solution.

Working at the local ethnographic level, Gupta writes, “The discourse of corruption turns out to be a key arena through which the state, citizens, and other organizations and aggregations come to be imagined.”⁵⁰ This section enters a discussion of corruption through which diaspora, as one of those other arenas and aggregations, and diasporic identities are produced and come to be imagined in narrations of diaspora giving. While scholars rightly address how corruption discourse operates in the orientalization of the “developing world,” the risk survives for the Philippines and the people of the Philippines as seen under examination of the politics of Filipino American diaspora giving. Elsewhere, Gupta writes, “Any discussion of corruption necessarily assumes a standard of morally appropriate behavior against which ‘corrupt’ actions are measured.”⁵¹ Filipino American leaders of diaspora giving organizations regularly and freely condemn Filipino culture and the Philippine government for its rampant involvement in corrupt activities while depending on personal connections to state officials to carry out their own philanthropic and social development endeavors. They cite the individual behaviors of certain political officials engaged in corruption and graft as the source of Philippine underdevelopment that allows the reasoning that individuals acting toward the greater good can counteract disparate acts of corruption and be the solution to the country’s problems, which consequently supports the unquestioned goals

⁴⁹ Ibid., 182.

⁵⁰ Gupta, “Blurred Boundaries,” 376.

⁵¹ Akhil Gupta, “Narrating the State of Corruption,” in *Corruption: Anthropological Perspectives*, eds. Dieter Hall and Cris Shore (Ann Arbor, MI: Pluto Press, 2005), 175.

of neoliberal economic development in the Philippines and positions Filipino Americans as moral diasporic citizens outside of the existing political economic system that perpetuates widespread poverty in the Philippines.

In general, corruption in regard to the Philippine government and to Philippine daily life is a—or really, *the*—perennial topic of conversation and news coverage. How successfully a neighbor or local business owner was able to “negotiate” with a Bureau of Internal Revenue tax officer is common conversation as negotiations are spoken of as lowered tax assessments on the books in exchange for “lining the pockets” of an unscrupulous government representative. With varying levels of indignation and embarrassment, Philippine news sources reel and sigh with the recitation of the Philippines’ ranking in lists of “Most Corrupt” countries.⁵² On a political level, every president since Ferdinand Marcos, whose legacy has become synonymous with the national embarrassment of deeply entrenched Philippine corruption, has used an anti-corruption-focused campaign, pledging the country’s commitment to fighting corruption

⁵² For example, the Hong Kong-based Political & Economic Risk Consultancy puts out an annual list of corruption scores for countries in Asia. The Philippines ranked first for the most corrupt in 2007 and 2008, sixth in 2009, and fourth most corrupt in 2010 of the Asian countries included. The survey measures perceived corruption through analysis of interviews with business people. For the most recent report by Political & Economic Risk Consultancy, see “Asian Risk Prospects--2010,” <http://www.asiarisk.com/subscribe/dataindx.html>. Additionally, Transparency International publishes an annual Corruption Perceptions Index. The Philippines ranked 131st out of the 180 nations in 2007 for “least corrupt nations,” 141st out of 179 in 2008, and 139th out of 180 in 2009. This survey interviews business people and country analysts with questions related to “bribery of public officials, kickbacks in public procurement, embezzlement of public funds, and questions that probe the strength and effectiveness of public sector anti-corruption efforts, thereby covering both the administrative and political aspects of corruption.” See “Corruption Perceptions Index” under “Methods,” http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2009/faqs#method6. As framed by the United Nations Development Program, about thirteen percent of the country’s annual budget was lost to corruption in 2006 as quoted in Carlos H. Conde, “Philippines Most Corrupt, Survey Says,” *New York Times*, March 13, 2007, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/13/business/worldbusiness/13iht-peso.4891792.html?_r=1.

and, once elected, publically seeking the help of multilateral institutions in their performance of moral fortitude. Recently elected president Benigno (Noynoy) Aquino III, the son of the martyred Benigno (Ninoy) Aquino and former president Corazon Aquino, won on a campaign strategy that capitalized on outgoing president Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's rocky tenure, which was colored by allegations of corruption against her and her family. Among Arroyo's most embarrassing scandals were what is widely called the "Hello, Garci" audiotape of Arroyo telling an election official what her margin of victory *should* be for her 2004 election run and before election results were fully tallied; and her husband's, Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo's, connection to illegal gambling and its warlords. During his first State of the Nation address given July 26, 2010, Nonoy Aquino focused his comments on the state of corruption in the country and attacked Arroyo's record, calling out her administration for its misuse of natural disaster calamity funds and involvement in the price fixing of electricity rates, and his first order of business as president was to lead a Department of Justice investigation into allegations against Arroyo for graft and corruption regarding a failed national contract for broadband services, an investigation that began a day after the outgoing president's immunity from lawsuits was lifted.

Corruption as it is popularly described mars the Philippines' chances for economic and social development by siphoning funds that theoretically could go to services for the poor but fall into the hands of public employees from the lowest rungs of the Bureau of Internal Revenue on through each level of local, provincial, and national government. Corruption's connection to economic and social underdevelopment appears

as an obvious one where public monies and resources are redirected by public officers toward private advancement and gain, making corruption a perennial conversation not only of Filipino daily life but also of concern for the Filipino American organizational and association leaders engaged in diaspora giving frameworks and projects. Seen as the source of poverty, the majority of Filipino American organizational leaders condemn corruption in the Philippines in tandem with efforts to help the Philippines, an innocuously unobjectionable stance. Consider the following responses from three separate interviews:

Dealing with the Philippines is difficult. The system is not the best. Even if it is a charitable donation, customs and officials still want money under the table. It is so hard to deal with them, and we don't have a relationship with any government official but the others [other Filipino American organizations] do. The corruption is so bad. Even charity is not spared that kind of attitude. Say you're sending books or hospital beds—no one in the Philippines is spending, not even commercial entities—but when donations are received in the Philippines and given to poor people, there is still grease money. That is the saddest part. That's why we give to Feed the Hungry and Filipino Migration Foundation [U.S.-based Filipino American diaspora giving organizations] who do have [close connections with government officials in the Philippines].⁵³

⁵³ Benjamin de los Reyes [pseud.], interview by author, Washington, DC, April 21, 2006. de Los Reyes is the president of a large Filipino American association that is very active in raising money to donate to Filipino American nonprofit organizations that support projects in the Philippines.

The recipients [in the Philippines] really are very grateful. They are so impoverished. The economics of the health centers, it is a microcosm of what's happening nationwide. It is another example of how Filipino politicians don't care for the people. There is corruption on every level. For example, the modus operandi of municipal health centers, and I have this on very good authority, and I won't name names, is that there is a regular allocation of medicines from the government, say, one million pesos worth. The director, who is a doctor, will hide the medicines. He'll wait for a typhoon or an opportune time until a state of calamity is declared. When there is a state of calamity, you can request the release of government funds, so there is money released to the hospitals to purchase the extra medications, say one million pesos worth. The doctor will pocket the money and release the original medicines.⁵⁴

I think that because of their past experience, even to the Red Cross, it's hard to do works in the Philippines. Even the Ford Foundation removed their headquarters because of the administration in the Philippines. Even World Bank now, they had bad experience with the contractors. Just like President Marcos everybody getting kick-outs. Even World Bank had a bad experience with GMA [former president Gloria Macapagal Arroyo]. For me, it's really how we can streamline the function of the government and at the same time also how to make us the Filipino people be proud of their identity because if you're strong, we can uplift the

⁵⁴ Lea Tolentino [pseud.], interview by author, Rizal, Philippines, February 2, 2006. Tolentino organizes medical missions in the Philippines with other Filipino American doctors.

socioeconomic development of the country. I don't know if corruption is ingrained.⁵⁵

These narratives of corruption circulate prominently in discussions and frameworks of diaspora giving and contribute to the unquestioned knowledge of corruption as the primary source of poverty in the Philippines. Rampant corruption, additionally, serves to further distance Filipinos in the United States, where much political corruption occurs without tainting the rectitude of American exceptionalism, from Filipinos in the Philippines. The incredulity in the quotations above speaks to the understanding that the intentions of philanthropic or social development giving are pure and that a deep impact could be made through their programs if not for the corruption of certain governmental representatives. Even though corrupt officials may disrupt the potential impact of diaspora giving, giving through nongovernmental organizations itself is seen as outside of the political economic system that creates poverty and therefore can be posed along with the impeachable workings of an unfettered market as the solution. From the retelling of Mike Arroyo's address to the First Global Networking Convention earlier in this section, Mike Arroyo speaks with no apparent irony when government officials declare war against corruption even while allegations of corruption are made against them. More importantly, Mike Arroyo aligns Filipino Americans with the fight against corruption and positions Filipino American diaspora giving alongside foreign direct investments and the growth of the country's GNP as the beneficiaries of any successes that his wife Gloria

⁵⁵ Jocelyn Alvarez [pseud.], interview by author, by telephone, April 6, 2009. Alvarez is the active president of one of the small handful of Filipino American associations that has transformed itself in recent years from a social and mutual support group to a diaspora giving nongovernmental organization registered as a U.S. nonprofit.

Macapagal Arroyo, the former president of the Philippines, had in fighting corruption. Corruption is the enemy of the rightness of neoliberal logics and the moral foundation of transnational industry. The former first gentleman uses the idea of philanthropic giving as a signal to the diaspora that corruption is under control and as a legitimizing tool for the state. The fight against corruption safeguards the flow of development aid funds, private capital projects, the continued building of export processing zones, *and* the flow of Filipino American diaspora giving.

In another example of framing Filipino American diaspora giving that more strongly connects corruption to the persistence of poverty in the Philippines, select Filipino Americans recently created a new diaspora organization, the Filipino United Network (FUN), specifically to organize against corruption in the Philippines. Thus far, the organization has been successful in networking a group of “distinguished” Filipino American leaders from “various medical, legal, business, socio-civic, and humanitarian organizations”⁵⁶ with Philippine development groups and elected officials. In their description, the organization provides the “leadership, inspiration, and assistance from overseas” toward the transformation of the Philippines and a “moral revolution” in the country:

The Filipino United Network has great faith in the Filipino. FUN does not believe that the Philippines is hopeless, or that the Filipinos at home are not worthy of the sacrifices and the revolution being waged on their behalf by their fellow Filipinos overseas.

⁵⁶ Filipino United Network, “The Story of FUN,” <http://www.filipniounitednetwork.com/aboutus.html>.

The Filipino United Network and the millions of visionary Filipino patriots abroad are launching a war against graft and corruption among government officials in the Philippines, the cancer that is devastating the nation, causing more than 75% of the people to wallow in massive poverty, depriving them not only of the material, but of their soul, and dignity.⁵⁷

Its crusade is a war against graft and corruption among government officials, in all its branches, and fighting for the ideals and principle of accountability, honesty, and transparency in governance among our national, provincial, city, town, local government unit officials... The Filipino United Network shall serve as the vigilant advocate and watchdog overseas for the Filipino people around the world, including those at home... For lack of a better term, FUN will serve like a “consumer” advocacy group to ensure quality of “products” on the market, except that, in this case, the “products” are the candidates running for office or incumbent government officials. FUN wants to ensure the quality of these leaders or politicians –that they are honest, accountable, effective, and transparent. Once FUN has confirmed these qualities, FUN will apprise and educate the Filipinos overseas and those at home as to who among the candidates or leaders have passed FUN’s scrutiny and “carry the seal of approval” of the Filipino United network.⁵⁸

Filipino Americans are posed at the forefront in this transnational battle for what is moral and honorable in the Philippines. The present chairman of FUN, Philip S. Chua, spreads

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Filipino United Network, “FAQs,” <http://www.filipinounitednetwork.com/faq.html>.

the organization's mission, attending conferences and publishing editorials in Philippine- and U.S.-based newspapers. As the charter leader of the organization, Chua contributes to how this "benevolent humanitarian organization" and advocacy group frames its interventions on behalf of diasporic Filipino Americans, constructing a Filipino American diaspora that stands surely against that scourge of the Philippines. "You and I have always abhorred the corruption among our government officials in the Philippines, from top to bottom, and deplored the sad state of our country, where more than 70% of our people wallow in massive poverty," writes Chua. "While the issue is a complex one, the most obvious etiology of this shameful malady is the overwhelming graft and corruption among our amoral and decadent government leaders."⁵⁹ As an example of moral leadership, Chua goes to great lengths to assure Filipino American donors that their contributions to FUN are used for the intended purposes, flying to the Philippines to personally hand over checks to recipient organizations in the Philippines and checking death certificates of families who claim to have lost a member from natural disaster and seek assistance from those organizations.

In this economic understanding, there are individual leaders and an unscrupulous population that prevent the Philippines from eradicating poverty, and Filipino Americans are in the position to play the leadership role identifying the morally upright, shifting the economic prospects of the homeland and giving hope to the Filipino people. Filipino subjectivities of those in the Philippines and of the diaspora are shaped in relationship through the moral discourse of diaspora giving. Ideologies of Filipino American integrity

⁵⁹ Philip S. Chua, "A One-Dollar Moral Crusade Against Graft and Corruption," *Mabuhay Radio*, January 2, 2008, <http://www.mabuhayradio.com/op-ed-page/a-one-dollar-moral-crusade-against-graft-and-corruption>.

circulate along with the ubiquity of narratives of corruption in the Philippines when mobility to the U.S. align with decency or at least the ability to identify that which is corrupt. In the politics of diaspora giving, the implications are that Filipino America is seen as a distinct formation from the Philippines, making it difficult to imagine frameworks of diaspora giving that recognize the contradictions of transnational industry and the international community's racialization of the Philippines as a Third World country prepared to serve the First World with its excess labor. Through moralistic diaspora giving frameworks and practices, Filipino Americans can be wholly outside the creation and maintenance of the Philippines as part of the Third World. As stated in an interview with Georgie Cruz, a Filipino who received his graduate education and worked for five in the U.S. and was active in building a Filipino community to participate in diaspora giving projects while studying and living in the U.S., there is a system of corruption in the Philippines and not only in terms of individual corrupt officials, and Filipino Americans participate in the system from which they claim innocence: "The professionals in the U.S.—these are the people that gave up on the Philippines. But Filipino Americans will never have respect until their country is fixed. When people talk about corruption, that everyone needs bribes. However, if you look at the bribe as a transaction cost, then it is just part of the system and also long lines versus paying for the express lane. Bribes for faster service is a transaction cost. Every *balikbayan* knows how to make bribes at the airport."⁶⁰ Moreover, if corruption unduly perpetuates poverty in the Philippines, the system of corruption is not tied merely to the Philippines or to similar countries but to the larger political economic system that creates poverty and

⁶⁰ Georgie Cruz [pseudo.], interview by author, Makati, Philippines, May 19, 2005.

hunger, pointing to the need to re-imagine the relationships and frameworks of need involved in diaspora giving. As stated by Walden Bello in *The Anti-Development State: The Political Economy of Permanent Crisis in the Philippines*:

While corruption definitely needs to be condemned, it is not the reason behind the county's stagnation. A more adequate explanation lies in the state being subjugated by a succession of ruling elite factions to serve narrow interests instead of the larger goals of sustainable development and social justice.⁶¹

Conclusion

This chapter presents evidence as to how diaspora politics and formation cannot be fully understood apart from an analysis of the politics of diaspora giving. I understand there exists widespread feelings of just wanting to “do *something*” about corruption, calamity and widespread poverty in the Philippines, and I am included among those Filipinos who donate money to such designated funds. However, the danger arises when Filipino American organization and association leaders purport to address the alleviation of poverty in their frameworks of diaspora giving, equating the source of poverty to the exigencies of calamity and corruption. Often, good intentions mask privilege and denial, supporting and reinserting the structures that perpetuate inequality onto the space of diaspora.

Diaspora giving names these transnational practices of Filipino Americans, but the two elements of the term can also work together to evade vigorous critiques of the contemporary global economic structure. As others have argued, some Filipino

⁶¹ Walden Bello, et al., *The Anti-Development State: The Political Economy of Permanent Crisis in the Philippines* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines, Department of Sociology and Focus on the Global South, 2004), 244.

Americans orient toward homeland as a form of resisting their racialization by U.S. institutions. However, this chapter intervenes in this mobilization of transnational linkages, demonstrating how Filipino Americans elaborate the terms of their assimilation as dominantly written. In a similar vein, giving practices are considered by some to be a way of “striking back” at an unjust world even as frameworks of giving cover over or deny the perpetuation of injustice. Consider the following popular press primer on fundraising that demonstrates the connection between giving and the drive and desire to fight corruption:

People send money because you allow them to get back at the corrupt or the unjust. There are too few outlets for the anger and frustration we feel on witnessing the injustice and corruption that pervades our society. Both our moral sense and the secular law hold most of us in check, preventing expressions of violence or vocal fury that might allow us to let off steam. For many, contributing to charity is a socially acceptable way to strike back. Whether a public interest organization committed to fighting corruption in government or a religious charity devoted to revealing divine justice, your organization may help donors channel their most sordid feelings into a demonstration of their best instincts.⁶²

This example prioritizes the power of diaspora giving and not of the potential of particular organizations to develop sustained critiques of neoliberal globalization. Individualized acts of giving channel and contain the “most sordid feelings” of donors and of society, depoliticizing the global structuring of inequality or, for example, the

⁶² Mal Warwick, *How to Write Successful Fundraising Letters*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008), 13.

subjugation of the Philippines by a “succession of ruling elite faction,”⁶³ including the family of the current president of the Philippines who won the election on an anti-corruption platform. In terms of diaspora giving, Filipino Americans are multiply interpellated by rhetoric that calls on them to act upon their “best instincts” to fight corruption or poverty in the Philippine homeland. The focus on fundraising and not on the larger context of need and of giving lends itself to the notion that *all* types of giving are good and that the impetus should be on just giving something. Many Filipino American organizations echo this position with missions to address poverty and poverty’s relationship to corruption in the Philippines. Giving can be a way to “strike back,” where justice can be served through a donation to the “right” kind of organization, playing on Filipino American distrust of the Philippine government and their agency as diasporans. In popular accounts, there is little room to consider the larger politics of diaspora giving, and moral considerations fall on the responsibility of individuals to simply give what they can.

Nowhere is this urgency more felt than following a natural disaster. In the weeks following the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, we in the United States could not help but feel the urgency in which relief and aid organizations disseminated their phone numbers and websites on television. Megastores facilitated donations during point-of-sale exchanges, pop music stations challenged their demographics to “text for a cause,” and celebrities organized telethons and recreated the “We Are the World” video to raise money for various relief organizations. Popular awareness arose over the risk of corruption in this elevated state of monetary transactions, and organizations and news sources did their best

⁶³ See note 71 above.

to disseminate information so that money could reach potential victims with a minimal amount of fraud and overhead costs. In the midst of this, one particular organization stood out from the rest, one of the few that gave pause within the donation deluge but for reasons that anti-corruption cautiousness could not address. INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence (INCITE!) asked its supports, “How can we intentionally support the long term sustainability and self determination of the Haitian people? When crises of this magnitude occur, we all understandably want to act quickly, but we must also figure out how to act thoughtfully in our efforts to develop a comprehensive, sustainable, and accountable transnational radical feminist response.” They continue:

The event of an earthquake of this magnitude can be catastrophic for any place. But in Haiti, it also exacerbates decades of poverty, aid dependency, military dictatorship, unsustainable development, invasions, neoliberal structural adjustment policies, corruption, and many other intersecting forms of violence. These political realities increase the multiple and complex forms of marginalization and social vulnerability women and their families will continue to face in the days, months, and years to come.⁶⁴

Even while the urgency of relief was palpable in the aftermath of the earthquake, this organization was committed to expanding and reimagining the nature of emergency relief and assistance from mere rescue to questions of sustainability, accountability, and self determination, which they connect to a larger framework of political economy and neocolonialism in Haiti. Instead of framing their support of Haiti as “to just give” or “we

⁶⁴ INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence, “Haiti Earthquake Response and Analysis,” *INCITE! News*, January 20, 2010, <http://www.incite-national.org/index.php?s=63&n=16>.

must give now” or “anything you can give can help,” this organization proposes ways that individuals and organizations can educate and organize themselves so as to develop a politics of giving that underlines the United States’ connection to Haiti and counteracts the hierarchy that is often embedded in the giving relationship. As an alternative to “just give,” INCITE! urges its supporters to educate themselves and their communities on the history of “deliberate impoverishment, control, debt, dependency, and neglect in Haiti” and on how crises of disasters are “connected to the social, political, environmental, and economic issues you may work on.”⁶⁵ While necessarily broad, INCITE! re-imagines a framework for international and transnational giving that urges supporters away from the innocence of a giving that provides relief through individual donations toward a politics of shared responsibility, accountability and critique. Chapter Four of this dissertation turns to one example from Filipino America of an organization that critically builds a politics of diaspora giving upon ideas of responsibility that do not eschew larger questions of privilege and connection.

Filipino American diaspora giving grows every year in that Filipino Americans create more organizations and hold more conferences so that they can actively participate in improving their homeland. Largely absent from this conversation is the willingness—the openness to “give up”—to critique hierarchical giving and diaspora identities that bestow power and knowledge on Filipino Americans in differential relationship to Filipinos in the Philippines, safeguard the racialization of Filipino peoples and spaces and the maintenance of inequality by transnational capital, and construct divisions of morality in frameworks of diaspora giving. Without this willingness, discussions and

⁶⁵ Ibid.

imaginings of alternative frameworks of diaspora giving through a politics of shared responsibility, accountability and critique cannot be nurtured.

CHAPTER II

Beyond the Balikbayan Box:

Remittances, Philanthropy, and the Filipino Diaspora

The overseas Filipino worker [OFW] is increasingly competing with the Filipino immigrant as the discursive paradigm of overseas Filipinos experience. Although the category of OFW is not homogeneous, and includes people who possess a wide range and variety of skills and expertise, education, and background, the OFW has characteristically been viewed as a “guest worker,” the terms of whose contract preclude the likelihood of permanent settlement abroad. Appearing as the ‘antithesis’ of the Filipino-American balikbayan [returnee to the nation], the OFW is defined in terms not so much by her desire to return to the Philippines, but by the certainty of her return. The guarantee of eventual return to the Philippines, therefore, locates the OFW firmly within the Philippine national imaginary.

--Caroline S. Hau, *On the Subject of the Nation*

Our traits as a people lend ourselves well to being part of the [global] service industry. Perhaps that is what globalization means to us.

--Patricia A. Sto. Tomas, Secretary of Labor and Employment Secretary, Philippines

In the nomenclature of the Philippines, “balikbayan” and “OFW” refer to official state and popular designations of Filipino mobility. Translated as “returnee to the nation,” balikbayan generally references Filipino Americans who, having left the homeland for life in America, return to the Philippines as visitors, tourists, or even, as emphasized here, partners in Philippine national development projects. While not all Filipinos in the U.S. are citizens or permanent residents of the U.S., the dominant representation of balikbayans presumes their permanent residency in America. The

overseas Filipino worker or OFW retains her Philippine citizenship and works temporarily and predominantly on contract in countries all over the world.¹ Scholars, the Philippine government, and the media generally distinguish Filipino balikbayans and overseas Filipino workers through their residency status and therefore their relationship to homeland return. Caroline Hau in the first epigraph above expresses the different relationships to homeland return as a *tension*: the “desire to return” by the Filipino American immigrant versus the “certainty” of return on the part of the OFW, guaranteeing the certainty of the OFW’s place in the national imaginary. Anthropologist and scholar on Filipino migration Filomeno Aguilar echoes Hau’s division, placing emphasis on the “merely symbolic” ethnicity of Filipino immigrants, who as a group live largely in the U.S., versus the Filipino labor migrant’s more material ethnicity:

Unlike immigrants, most labor migrants on fixed-term contracts are not granted permanent resident status, and thus prevented from identification with and sociopolitical incorporation to the labor-receiving states. Immigrants in one context may disregard Filipinoness but revive it on certain occasions, or in other contexts uphold it as a basis of difference; labor migrants, for their part, cannot hang on to their national identity in a merely symbolic way.²

In the second quotation of the epigraph, Patricia Sto. Tomas was quoted in an a mainstream magazine, and the brackets are from the original article.

¹ As defined in Republic Act No. 8042: Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995: “‘Migrant worker’ refers to a person who is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a state of which he or she is not a legal resident to be used interchangeably with overseas Filipino worker.”

² Filomeno V. Aguilar, Jr., “Beyond Stereotypes: Human Subjectivity in the Structuring of Global Migrations” in *Filipinos in Global Migrations: At Home in the World?*, ed. Filomeno V. Aguilar, Jr. (Quezon City, Philippines: Philippine Migration Research Network and Philippine Social Science Council, 2002), 17.

While “desire” mediates the relationship between Filipino Americans and the Philippines in Hau, the “choice” of Filipino Americans to orient toward homeland merely extends a multicultural celebration of difference in Aguilar, which in effect, distances Filipino Americans from larger conversations of race, racial exclusion, and the racialization of Filipinos in a global context and distances their construction as a national category of mobility from the construction of overseas Filipino workers.³

Rather than theorizing orientations toward homeland through discreet categories of national return, this chapter demonstrates how these two categories of Filipino im/migrant experience converge. Discussions of im/migrant return and the Philippine national imaginary invariably draw on and reflect the giving practices of im/migrants, emphasizing the centrality of giving in official and popular mobilizations of diaspora and homeland. By examining the constructions of Filipino American balikbayans and overseas Filipino workers through their giving practices, *in relation to each other*, and in relation to the idealization of the American dream, this chapter draws attention to the terms upon which the Filipino people “lend themselves,” to reference the second quotation of the epigraph above, with ostensible ease to their participation as itinerant labor in the “[global] service industry.”

While return in the first quotation of the epigraph may initially refer to the embodied return to the Philippines of Filipino migrants, we can read the tension that the

³ Aguilar in his use of the disregard/revival of Filipinoness at the will of the individual is drawing on what sociologist Mary Waters famously theorized as symbolic ethnicity via Herbert Gans, where *white* Americans strategically display their ethnic identities as a way of dealing with the contradictions of American values of individualism and the collective identities of group heritage. See Mary C. Waters, “Optional Ethnicities: For Whites Only” in *Origins and Destinies: Immigration, Race, and Ethnicity in America*, eds. Silvia Pedraza and Rubén G. Rumbaut (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1996): 444-454.

author identifies between Filipino American balikbayans and overseas Filipino workers as manifest in the social and cultural values placed on the “returns” of labor migration: the economic returns of balikbayans to national development projects and the economic returns of overseas Filipino workers to the national economy. Philanthropic and development assistance from Filipino American balikbayans versus remittances from overseas Filipino workers characterize their respective economic returns that are each forms of giving heralded in the media and by the Philippine government. At the same time, however, the respective forms of giving correspond to moral valuations of giving that construct Filipino Americans as partners in national economic development and overseas Filipino workers as deviant givers whose practices must be monitored and channeled.

Presently, dominant representations figure the OFW as the remittance giver, the Filipino who saves the Philippines through her⁴ sacrifice laboring abroad. The Marcos government institutionalized the OFW’s “certainty of returns” of remittance returns, to reflect and refract the language from the Caroline Hau quotation, when it required migrant workers to remit 50 to 80 percent of their earnings through authorized channels in the Philippines, controlling the exchange rates and holding passport renewal until

⁴ As a general writing practice I alternate, “her” and “his,” “she” and “he” when necessary. The use of “her” here is done purposefully to index the feminization of global Filipino labor migration in recent decades. The writing developed into a subfield of globalization and migration, and from it has sprung some of the most critical and dynamic work on Filipino migration. See for example Anna Romina Guevarra, *Marketing Dreams, Manufacturing Heroes: The Transnational Labor Brokering of Filipino Workers* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2010); Rhacel Salazar Parreñas, *Servants of Globalization: Women, Migration and Domestic Work* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001); Nicole Constable, “At Home but Not at Home: Filipina Narratives of Ambivalent Returns,” *Cultural Anthropology* 14, no. 2 (May 1999): 203-228; Shu-Ju Ada Cheng, *Serving the Household and the Nation: Filipina Domestic Workers and the Politics of Identity in Taiwan* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006); and Ligaya Lindio-McGovern, “Labor Export in the Context of Globalization: The Experience of Filipino Domestic Workers in Rome,” *International Sociology* 18, no. 3 (September 2003): 513-534.

migrant workers submitted proof of remittance returns.⁵ Migrant workers protested these terms of giving, and President Corazon Aquino, Marcos' successor, replaced the mandatory remittance scheme, shifting direct governmental control of remittances onto the terrain of nationalism. New government agencies and an explosion of banking and market products emerged to facilitate ongoing remittance transactions, which the media and the state produced as the overseas Filipino worker's fulfillment of nationalist duty.

In more recent descriptions of nationalism's power over remittances returns, members of the Philippine government attempt to downplay the Philippines' demand that its citizens participate in overseas labor migration by emphasizing that OFWs in fact have choices regarding migration and remittance returns. The government's emphasis on "choice" attempts to define overseas migration and remittance sending through the individual agency of each current and potential migrant, minimizing how the government depends on their remittances for economic survival and their labor export as a strategy for the containment of popular unrest. For example, former Secretary of the Department of Labor and Employment, Patricia A. Sto. Tomas, writes of the need for the Philippines "to redefine itself as a highly competitive labor-sending country" and that "as a strategy for labor migration management, the government shall explore and develop more and better markets for overseas employment." She claims that OFWs maintain the choice of participating in national development and continues:

⁵ This mandate was introduced by President Marcos in December 1982 through Executive Order Number 857. See Katherine Gibson and Julie Graham, "Situating Migrants in Theory: The Case of Filipino Migrant Contract Construction Workers" in *Filipinos in Global Migrations: At Home in the World?*, ed. Filomeno V. Aguilar, Jr. (Quezon City, Philippines: Philippine Migration Research Network and Philippine Social Science Council, 2002), 39; and Ildefonso F. Bagasao, *Enhancing the Efficiency of Overseas Filipino Workers Remittances*, Asian Development Bank final report, ADB TA-4185-PHI, July 2004: 47.

To my mind, the OFWs are part and parcel of the national development agenda insofar as they are, in a lot of ways, agents of development, mainly for themselves, and secondly for the country. Their involvement in overseas employment is, by design, fraught with a meaningful purpose. It is meant to be an ‘enabling’ tool to help them act on their own choice—a choice to get ahead in life and move up in the world; a choice to improve the lot of their immediate families and give them a future to look forward to; and *a choice to remain relevant in national development*.⁶

OFWs remain relevant to the Philippine national imaginary so long as they continue to “choose” to migrate and remit, obscuring the state’s role in the production of the Philippines as a “highly competitive labor-sending country” considerably concerned with “labor migration management.” The state functions as a labor broker, mobilizing their client OFWs for their economic returns. To borrow from sociologist Robyn Magalit Rodriguez, labor brokerage is a neoliberal strategy whereby the Philippines enables its citizens in finding employment abroad and uses the “profits” from remittances to build its foreign currency reserves and pay off its debts.⁷ Fellow Filipino studies sociologist Anna Guevara echoes and expands on this configuration of profits through labor migration that benefit the labor-brokering state, describing how “managing labor migration and specifically the remittances garnered from overseas migrants...reflects its adoption of

⁶ Patricia A. Sto. Tomas, “Overseas Filipino Workers in the National Development Agenda: The Government’s Perspective,” in *Migration and Development Issues in the Philippines*, Monograph Series 2, ed. M. R. Medina (Manila, Philippines: OFW Journalism Consortium, Inc., December 2004), 7-8; emphasis added.

⁷ See Robyn Magalit Rodriguez, *Migrants for Export: How the Philippine State Brokers Labor to the World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), x, xvi.

values based on neoliberal capitalist principles. These ‘free market’ values promote the importance of economic competitiveness and individual responsibility, under *the guise of freedom and choice*.⁸

Reworking the emphasis of Hue’s description, the balikbayan’s return to the Philippines is motivated by his own personal “desire” to return and, therefore, his economic returns are not made by obligation or structured by the neoliberal global economy, casting balikbayan giving practices with a philanthropic or developmental hue. As desirous but not mandated for return, they are at liberty to choose to return or not, and any diaspora returns are already an economic benefit or bonus for the Philippines. OFWs and their “certainty” of return are precluded from this individual choice. While their remittance giving is no longer directly tied to their ability to procure a work contract overseas, OFWs become legible to the nation only as far as their remittances are assumed. As such, OFWs’ lack of individual freedom or compromised freedom to remit and engage in other forms of diaspora giving circumscribes their production as a national category of mobility. The balikbayan maintains maneuverability as to how he enters into the national imaginary because, as an expatriate, it is his choice to remain loyal. It is not the balikbayan’s body that bears the hope of the nation as it is with the overseas workers and their labor⁹ but his consciousness and philanthropic morality. Balikbayans bring hope to the Philippines through their deeds, investments, experience, values, and giving. As such, even remittances sent from balikbayans are seen as a gift, freely given. One

⁸ Guevarra, *Marketing Dreams, Manufacturing Heroes*, 8; emphasis added.

⁹ For work on the migrant labor, bodies, and the nation through the execution of migrant worker Flor Contemplacion, see Neferti Xina M. Tadiar, *Fantasy-Production: Sexual Economies and Other Philippine Consequences for the New World Order* (Manila, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2004), 124.

columnist for a major Philippine newspaper emphasizes this in his representation of Filipino Americans as exemplary diasporans:

There is a cliché which says the worth of a person is not what he owns, but what he gives. Records show that Filipino-Americans remitted \$8 billion to the Philippines in 2009, representing almost 60% of all remittances by Overseas Filipinos (OFs) and Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) – despite 2009 as a recession year in the United States...In shameful acceptance of the negatives that have become part of the image of Filipino, not only the poverty of a people in a rich land or the greed of a small minority at the painful expense of the majority but including the divisiveness that we inflict on one another, Filipinos have the worst in them to hide the brilliance of the same culture which is extremely generous aside from being extremely talented. It is time that we confront what weakens us and find deliberate ways to dismantle them by setting a course to let the best in us lead the way...*The sterling example of Filipino-Americans in lending a consistent helping hand symbolized by an \$8 billion remittance to relatives in the motherland is an affirmation that they continue to love the Philippines.*¹⁰

Because Filipino Americans set the “sterling example” for all Filipinos, the negative aspects of Filipino culture such as the propensity toward divisiveness correlate to the one other category mentioned by name, the overseas Filipino workers. This chapter demonstrates how a focus on giving practices unearths the nature of the tension that

¹⁰ Jose Ma. Montelibano, “Glimpses: The \$8 billion Fil-Am Remittance,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (August 20, 2010) http://services.inquirer.net/print/print.php?article_id=20100820-287783; emphasis added.

separates constructions of the balikbayan and the OFW and points to how discourses of giving and mobility work to locate each figure in relationship to power and privilege. Larger calls for all Filipinos to support the nation mask how their differences are produced in the ways that mobility and social privilege attach to the meaning placed on diaspora giving practices, and the fissures reproduce when we fail to give attention to the particular ways that diaspora nationalisms celebrate and subject Filipino American balikbayans and overseas Filipino workers through their giving practices.

The Eight Million Filipinos Overseas

The Philippines is in the top migrant-sending countries in the world with an estimated ten percent of its population working in over 190 countries worldwide. Using 2007 figures, total remittances from overseas Filipino workers were ten times the amount the Philippines received from foreign direct investment, and they fueled the growth of the gross domestic product, providing support for a nineteen percent gain in the strength of the peso against the U.S. dollar. The year 2002 saw an average of 2,400 Filipinos leave per day from Philippine international airports to their land-based jobs overseas. If given the chance, one-fifth of the Philippine population would work and live abroad. Migration out of the country is the economic and employment salvation of the country; migration out of the country could also lead to the demise of Filipino culture.

Familiar to Filipinos in its repetition, this picture of the centrality of migration to the Philippine economy reads like an introduction to any number of government, academic, policy, and journalism texts. Even while the specific numbers and rankings shift from year to year, Filipinos evoke the sentiments in innumerable, everyday

conversations and expressions, alternately spoken with resignation, guilt, pride, and shame. Implicit in the descriptions and in the larger story of Filipino labor migration and remittances are complex and competing discourses of nationalism, giving, family, displacement and belonging.

As introduced in the previous section, the Philippine state participates in neoliberal globalization through the brokering of Filipino labor overseas, producing scores of institutions and policies to facilitate and maintain its reproduction. While the state facilitates overseas labor migration, it must simultaneously attempt to control the political, economic, and social linkages that overseas Filipino migrants maintain with the Philippines in order to perpetuate their participation in the global economy. In so doing, the Philippine state produces remitting subjects,¹¹ that is, a particular kind of diaspora *giving* subject where giving is characterized by a laborer's relationship to family and a migrant citizen's relationship to the state, which manages migrant citizens and their characteristic mode of giving, remittances. It is a diasporic relationship premised, primarily, on giving remittances to one's immediate family and supported by the Philippines' commitment to supplying the "Great Filipino Worker," an expression attributed to former president Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, to almost every country in the world. In commemoration of Migrant Workers Day in 2002, Arroyo states, "The Philippine economy will [in] the foreseeable future continue to be heavily dependent on overseas worker remittances. The work and reputation of the overseas Filipinos confirm

¹¹ I borrow the phrase from Ester Hernandez and Susan Bibler Coutin, "Remitting Subjects: Migrants, Money and States," *Economy and Society* 35, no. 2 (2006): 185–208.

to the world that indeed, the Philippines is the home of the Great Filipino Worker.”¹² In exchange, presidential administrations from Aquino to Arroyo¹³ repeatedly characterize Filipino migrant workers as *bagong bayani* or the country’s “new heroes,” a nationalist discourse of recognition that dominates the government’s representation of overseas migrant workers. It is a precept in academic work on OFWs to identify the state’s recognition—but not relief¹⁴—of overseas worker *bagong bayani*. However, as scholars such as Robyn Magalit Rodriguez remind us, OFWs’ choice to work in a temporary capacity abroad is only truly heroic if migrants continue their remittance sending,¹⁵ underlining once again how the sentimentality of heroism and sacrifice is fundamentally about “returns.”

As introduced in the quotation by Caroline Hau that begins this chapter, Filipino Americans through the figure of the balikbayan compete with overseas Filipino workers in “the discursive paradigm of overseas Filipinos experience.” Just as the Philippine state purposefully controls the political, economic, and social linkages that overseas Filipino workers maintain with the Philippines, it cultivates these linkages with its expatriates and permanent residents of other countries, Filipinos primarily living in the United States. As with remittances and the nationalist rhetoric that surrounds remittance giving, these linkages of the balikbayan to the Philippine homeland center on the cultivation of giving subjects. In 1973, not even a year into martial law and the experiment with a New

¹² As quoted in Guevarra, *Marketing Dreams, Manufacturing Heroes*, 3.

¹³ It remains to be seen how the recently elected Aquino, Benigno Aquino III (Noynoy), will interpellate OFWs in the national imagination. However, signs are pointing to the OFWs’ dissatisfaction premised on Aquino’s recent decisions to slash funding for OFW support.

¹⁴ “Recognition but not relief” for OFWs was formulated by Steven C. McKay, “Filipino Sea Men: Identity and Masculinity in a Global Labor Niche” in *Asian Diasporas: New Formations, New Conceptions*, ed. Rhacel Salazar Parrenas and Lok C. D. Siu (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007): 72.

¹⁵ Rodriguez, *Migrants for Export*, 84.

Society, Ferdinand Marcos instigated “Operation Homecoming,” actively courting Filipino expatriates abroad to visit the Philippines, promising reduced airfares and expedited entry processes and officially using the term *balikbayan*, or “returnee,” for the first time.¹⁶ Marcos created this “ingenious”¹⁷ *balikbayan* program to address the political and economic concerns over the implementation of martial law and the accusations of repression and corruption rightly directed at it by calling on *balikbayans* to visit their homeland as tourists through subsidized vacation packages and expedited processing.¹⁸ At that moment, the majority of Filipinos living outside the Philippines were in the United States. The oil boom in the Middle East that lasted until the mid-1980s and depended upon temporary migrant labor was just beginning, and the global phenomenon of overseas Filipino workers, particularly the feminization of this labor formation, had yet to fully emerge. Marcos encouraged the Filipino American *balikbayan* to return and visit the Philippines as tourists whose money spent on vacation would be an investment in the tourism economy that he was desperate to build. Through implicit support by Filipino Americans and their *balikbayan* tourist returns, Marcos hoped to assuage international concern regarding his usurpation of power. As stated by Marcos’ Secretary of Tourism, “Every visit is an endorsement of the continuation of the political, economic, and social stability achieved by ... martial law.”¹⁹ Marcos attempted

¹⁶ Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller and Cristina Szanton Blanc, *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments and Deterritorialized Nation-States* (The Netherlands: Gordon and Breach Science Publishers, 2000 [1994]), 3.

¹⁷ As described by Augusto Fauni Espiritu, *Five Faces of Exile: the Nation and Filipino American Intellectuals* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005).

¹⁸ See Linda K. Richter, “The Philippines: The Politicization of Tourism,” in *The Sociology of Tourism: Theoretical and Empirical Investigations*, ed. Yiorgos Apostolopoulos, Stella Leivadi, and Andrew Yiannakis (London and New York: Routledge, 1996).

¹⁹ Jose Aspiras, “Tourism in 1973 ... A Success All the Way,” quoted in *Ibid.*, 53; ellipses in Richter.

to transform overseas Filipinos into an overseas community, discursively united through a common orientation toward the Philippines, identified with a common institutional category, and serving a particular purpose for the state.

The balikbayan as tourist and development agent began with Operation Homecoming, but the discourse persists today. Filipino Americans, it can be argued, understand their homeland tourist re-turns as a form of diaspora giving that supports national development, which is a historical continuation of their role as balikbayans. In response to a general question about how Filipinos in the U.S. could best help Filipinos in the Philippines, for example, one Filipino American association and community leader responded that Filipinos need to have pride in coming from the Philippines and that this pride should lead to vacations “back home”: “We can have this pride in being from the Philippines and helping them [those in the Philippines] at the same time. Economically, we take vacations there and we spend money there and spend dollars there.”²⁰ As contributors to economic development, balikbayan tourists are courted through and identify with discourses of giving tied to their dual subject positions as Filipino and as American.

The Commission on Filipinos Overseas, an agency of the Office of the President, maintains links with Filipino permanent residents and citizens of foreign countries. Created to surveil anti-Marcos activists and exiles in the U.S., its primary purpose today is to facilitate philanthropy, medical aid, and Philippine national economic development assistance from overseas Filipinos, donations and humanitarian efforts almost entirely from Filipino Americans. Again, this is a particular kind of diaspora giving, and it

²⁰ Angelo Alaan [pseud.], interview by author, San Francisco, CA, April 4, 2005.

produces a diaspora giving subject characterized not by a laborer's relationship to family and a migrant citizen's relationship to the state as is the remitting subject, but by a trans-nationals' relationship to their homeland, a trans-national, as used here,²¹ distanced from activist and radical proclivities through the transformation of their primary giving activities from anti-Marcos activists to partners in so-called development. The transformation of the goals of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas charts the Filipino American community's own diasporic representation from activists in exile to middle-class philanthropists and would-be development partners. The transformation is from the state's production of "exilic subjects" to "trans-national subjects," who partner with the state as development agents. This is not claim that most Filipinos in the United States were political exiles or supported the politics of exiles during the 1970s and 1980s. However, Filipino American homeland orientation demonstrated at that time a marked politicized element that no longer characterizes Filipino American orientation to homeland, which today draw heavily on practices and discourses of tourism, philanthropic and charitable giving.

A framework of the politics of giving and an analysis of regulatory state institutions identifies dominant characterizations of the relationship between overseas migrant workers and Filipino Americans: emigration does not necessarily call into question one's loyalty to the nation, or, as stated in the epigraph, one's relationship to the national imaginary, but differences of migration and diaspora emerge premised upon a remitting subject's disciplining by the "labor brokerage state" and a trans-national

²¹ The hyphen is used to designate the distance of the term from a critical transnationalism that references the economic processes of globalization as opposed to what I'm doing here, which is to describe how diaspora can be hegemonic and anti-radical in nature.

subject's partnership in national economic development. Moreover, the nation-state normalizes both figures, containing radicalism and revolutionary elements of the population by propping up the Philippines' particular role in neoliberal globalization as the world's supplier of cheap labor.

One of the refrains of Filipino labor migration is the sheer numbers that capture the Philippines' success as the premier labor exporter in the world: "In all, about 8 million Filipinos—an astounding one tenth of the country's citizens—currently work overseas to support families back home,"²² writes a *Newsweek* article. "On average, 3,400 Filipinos leave daily for work abroad, over a million per year, to join the nearly ten million Filipinos (out of 90 million) already out of the Philippines, scattered around the world. It is the largest global diaspora of migrant labor next to Mexico, the highest per capita exporter of labor in Southeast Asia," describes postcolonial theorist E. San Juan, Jr.²³ Characterizing the Philippines for the established Migration Information Source website, migration scholar Maruja M.B. Asis introduces the extent of the country's "culture of migration": "Since the 1970s, the Philippines — a country of about 7,000 islands peopled by diverse ethno-linguistic groups — has supplied all kinds of skilled and low-skilled workers to the world's more developed regions. As of December 2004, an estimated 8.1 million Filipinos — nearly 10 percent of the country's 85 million people — were working and/or residing in close to 200 countries and territories."²⁴

²² George Wehrfritz and Marites Vitug, "Workers for the World," *Newsweek* (Pacific Edition), 144, issue 14 (October 4, 2004) <http://web.ebscohost.com>.

²³ E. San Juan, Jr., "Overseas Filipino Workers: The Making of an Asian-Pacific Diaspora," *The Global South* 3, no. 2 (Fall 2009): 99.

²⁴ Maruja M.B. Asis, "The Philippines' Culture of Migration" under Country Profiles. Migration Information Source. <http://www.migrationinformation.org/USFocus/display.cfm?ID=364>.

The number of Filipinos overseas, which almost always refer to overseas Filipino *migrant labor*, both skilled and unskilled, is quoted at around ten percent of the population, usually described as between eight-nine-million Filipinos. The Commission on Filipinos Overseas produces these statistics, whose latest figure for the “Stock Estimate of Overseas Filipinos” is 8,187,710.²⁵ This number, some eight million Filipinos who live and work outside of the Philippines, does much work—socially, politically, and culturally. Philippine officials tout this number to prove the availability, marketability, and desirability of the Filipino laborer in international rankings. Critics of the Philippine government use this number to denounce the national economic development policy of promoting and facilitating overseas Filipino workers. For example and to draw again from E. San Juan’s previously cited article, “Clearly the Philippine government has earned the distinction of being the most migrant- and remittance- dependent ruling apparatus in the world, mainly by virtue of denying its citizens the right to decent employment at home.”²⁶ As much as supporters and critics of the Philippine state’s policies of labor brokerage diverge as to the government’s responsibility to facilitate labor migration or to provide jobs in the Philippines, both groups obscure the fact that this number, the eight million Filipinos overseas, mistakenly references labor migrants. Almost one-half of the eight million overseas Filipinos

²⁵ Commission on Filipinos Overseas, “Stock Estimate of Overseas Filipinos as of December 2008” http://www.poea.gov.ph/stats/stock_est_2008.pdf.

²⁶ E. San Juan, Jr, “Overseas Filipino Workers,” 100.

maintain permanent residency or citizenship in countries other than the Philippines, the majority of whom live permanently in the United States.²⁷

To date, there are more than three million Filipinos in the United States, the majority of whom are not in the U.S. by way of visas related to their contract work. In fact, the eight million Filipinos overseas include U.S.-born second-generation Filipino Americans, who may or may not even be aware of the phenomenon of global Filipino contract labor migration. It is, then, a curious phenomenon that the oft-cited “eight million Filipinos overseas” collapses all Filipinos in the United States into the grand number of overseas migrant laborers. Perhaps one gain from including Filipino Americans in this total would be padding of the Philippines’ prominent standing in global labor-export rankings, which vary from year to year but mark the Philippines in the top ten if not the top three countries with the highest rates of out-of-country labor migration. The Philippines aggressively markets the availability, the quality, and the “affordability” of its citizens to the international business world. The Philippine state “[parades] its citizens as the hottest global labor commodity, whose education, English-language fluency, and ‘tender loving care’ attitude are their ‘comparative advantage’ over others.”²⁸ Its labor-sending-country ranking is testament to the quality of its export. Perhaps another benefit to collapsing Filipino Americans into the “eight million Filipinos

²⁷ “Of the 8.18 million overseas Filipinos, roughly 3.62 million are overseas Filipino workers, 3.90 million are permanent residents, and 0.65 million are classified as irregular. The top 5 countries of destination for overseas Filipino workers are the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Japan, Hong Kong, United Arab Emirates, and Taiwan. For the emigrants or permanent residents (including spouses and other partners of foreign nationals), the United States of America, Canada, Australia, Japan, United Kingdom, and Guam are the major destination countries.” Commission on Filipinos Overseas and the Office of the President of the Philippines, *Handbook for Filipinos Overseas*, 8th ed. (Manila, Philippines: Commission on Filipinos Overseas, June 2010), 12.

²⁸ Guevarra, *Marketing Dreams, Manufacturing Heroes*, 2.

overseas” is that it deemphasizes Filipino Americans’ remittance power. Because labor migration is so fraught, the Philippines must emphasize what the country and what families of labor migrants gain from their mobility, which are remittances and their role in buoying the Philippine economy. While the statistics on remittances to the Philippines are difficult to track, of the almost \$16.5 billion in remittances that entered the Philippines through traceable channels, almost \$8 billion came from the United States in 2008.²⁹ Collapsing all Filipinos in the United States and elsewhere into the “eight million Filipino (laborers) overseas” detracts attention from the Philippines’ continued dependence on the United States, albeit not through an official capacity but through Filipinos in the U.S., the majority of whom are expatriates or native-born citizens of the U.S.

The numbers of overseas Filipinos and their remittances rehearsed here emphasize that Filipino Americans, while simultaneously counted and then elided in larger conversations on Filipino labor migration, figure prominently in the anxieties that surround nationalism, migration, and giving practices, alternately represented as remittances, philanthropy, or support of economic development. The epigraph of this chapter states that while Filipino American balikbayans were once considered the iconic figure of Filipino migration, the figure of the overseas Filipino worker (OFW) better captures the contemporary moment’s overseas Filipino experience. It is true that the figure of the overseas Filipino worker traces neoliberal globalization’s demand for exploitable, mobile populations of racialized and gendered labor and the Philippine state’s role in supplying such labor, and perhaps, Filipino American balikbayans more

²⁹ Bangko Sentral Pilipinas, “Overseas Filipinos’ Remittances by Country, By Source (2000-2008).”

often conjure a different diasporic moment when the former colonizer re-configured its Asian American population through the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965. However, it is not only the OFW who is “firmly within the Philippine imaginary,” as the author claims. While the overseas Filipino worker may appear as the “‘antithesis’ of the Filipino-American balikbayan,” I argue that attention to the ways that these figures are mutually constituted, “drawing their discursive legibility and social power in relation to one another” to borrow a phrase from Asian American literary scholar David Eng,³⁰ through their giving practices reveals the implications of such a binary construction. Because of differences in citizenship, the Philippine state must differently guide Filipino American balikbayan and overseas Filipino worker (OFW) giving practices, yet it guides them toward the shared goal of national economic development, producing seemingly distinct balikbayan and OFW subjects and diasporas but united toward official national development goals. Moreover, in its current economic structuring, the Philippine state needs the OFWs to survive, yet it is the figure of the Filipino American that drives the “dream” of living abroad.

This chapter examines how representations of Filipino Americans and overseas Filipino contract workers are tied to the cultural, social, and political meanings placed on their diaspora giving. There are certainly many differences between the groups due to the structuring of past and current im/migration laws and opportunities, opportunities for permanent residency and one’s right to state protection, and the political and social capital that these differences engender. These differences support representations of

³⁰ David L. Eng, *Racial Castration: Managing Masculinity in Asian America* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001): 2.

Filipino Americans and OFWs as opposites and in tension to one another in their perceived loyalty to the Philippines. Focusing on giving specifies the multiple tensions that are said to divide these groups and demonstrates how the Philippines maintains their difference even in attempts to unify the Filipino diaspora. To underline how diaspora giving maintains these differences, we must first acknowledge how cultures of U.S. imperialism shape labor migration, which in return constructs Filipino Americans as the idealized diasporic subject.

To reiterate the significance of labor migration to the Philippine economy, the chapter turns to excellent recent works by Anna Romina Guevarra and Robyn Magalit Rodriguez that demonstrate the efforts of the Philippine state to produce the Philippines as “the home of the Great Filipino Worker,” an essentialized, racialized, and gendered discourse that reproduces a compliant Filipino laborer for the international economy, and to galvanize the dream or the right of labor migration for its own population. To address decades of debt built through structural adjustment programs of the World Bank and the International Monetary fund and a need to replenish their pool of foreign currency, the Philippine government formally utilizes and controls the export of its citizens as the foundation of its neoliberal economic strategy and participation in global capitalism. These commitments produce a new kind of citizenship, what Rodriguez describes as an oxymoronic “migrant citizenship,” where the state casts overseas labor migration as a “right,” which it pledges to protect, masking its own inability to protect its citizens in foreign countries.³¹

³¹ Rodriguez, *Migrants for Export*, xix-x.

The Philippine state needs the OFW to survive for the economic power of her remittances and for the role of international labor migration in quelling social unrest from widespread unemployment and its untenable system of land ownership. As recently stated by former deputy chief of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration and former administrator of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, the Philippines' two most important labor brokerage agencies, overseas Filipino migrant workers constitute the development strategy of the Philippines:

Regarded as a temporary programme or a stop-gap economic measure to address the high unemployment rate during the Marcos era, the programme eventually became an important fixture of national policy because of the recognition of the role of international labour markets in containing the problem of local unemployment. With overseas employment taking away a big percentage of the new entrants to the labour force and the billions of dollars that overseas Filipino migrant workers pump into the economy through their foreign exchange earnings, overseas employment has slowly been recognised as a development strategy of the Philippines. The decision to mainstream the programme into the development agenda of the medium-term development plan, and the increasing call for a deliberate policy to capitalise on the overseas Filipino worker as a real asset to the economy, support this emerging perspective.³²

³² Carmelita S. Dimzon, "Migration Policies, Remittances and Economic Development in the Philippines" in *Migration, Remittances and Development*, ed. by Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (Paris, France: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Publishing, 2005), 97.

Importantly and as described by Guevarra, the Philippine state's management of its national identity as a "manager of labor migration," as referenced above, lays in "its ability to manage both aspirations and its image as a responsive state."³³ Yet, even as the state needs the overseas Filipino to survive, it is the figure of the Filipino American that drives the "dream" of living abroad.

As the symbol of the abundance of what migration can offer a Filipino, the Filipino American represents the ultimate recompense of overseas labor migration. The United States' colonial history in the Philippines created the professional systems that would funnel, for example, Filipino health professionals to the U.S. as well as the desire, in terms of higher wages and participation in the American dream, for U.S.-directed mobility within the Filipino population. As Catherine Ceniza Choy writes in her influential book, *Empire of Care*:

The development of this international professional labor force and the origins of Filipino nurse migration are not solely the results of contemporary global restructuring, but rather are historical outcomes of early twentieth-century U.S. colonialism in the Philippines. A culture of U.S. imperialism informed the creation of an Americanized training hospital system in the Philippines as well as new socioeconomic desires among Filipino nurses that would eventually prepare and motivate more of them to work abroad than in the Philippines. In the 1950s and 1960s, U.S. exchange programs and new occupational immigrant visas helped to transform previous colonial migrations of a Filipino nursing elite into mass

³³ Guevarra, *Marketing Dreams, Manufacturing Heroes*, 49.

migrations of Filipino nurses to the United States, migrations that refashioned, but ultimately perpetuated, racialized hierarchies.³⁴

With such systems in place, America continues to maintain its persistent hold on the Philippine cultural imagination, a fantasy of the good life that carries implications for how the Philippine state encourages its citizens to work abroad, for the aspirations of labor migrants, and in terms of the symbolic power of Filipino Americans.

The dream of America in the Philippine cultural imagination is one of the more prominent themes—or laments—in Filipino studies. Because of the perceived economic returns and the social capital that life in America yields, Filipinos imagine the U.S. as the ideal destination and “working in the United States is *the* ultimate opportunity.”³⁵ It is not merely a general dream to live in America; it is also the potential that America holds for Filipino labor migrants, a social imagination that is not lost on the Philippine state and employment agencies in the Philippines. Aware of the prominence and promise of working in the United States and equally aware of the limited number of and long waits for U.S. immigrant visas, employment agencies in the Philippine promote contract work in certain other countries as stepping-stones to the United States, maintaining the dream of America while ensuring a continued stream of labor to other countries such as in Saudi Arabia.³⁶ Nurses, for example, are “bombarded with images that suggest that working in the United States will lead to a significant transformation of economic status.”³⁷

Describing the experiences of nurses who have worked in Libya, Saudi Arabia, Singapore

³⁴ Catherine Ceniza Choy, *Empire of Care: Nursing and Migration in Filipino American History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 191.

³⁵ Guevarra, *Marketing Dreams, Manufacturing Heroes*, 161; emphasis in original.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 111-112.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 161.

and the U.K., Guevarra writes, “Regardless of their experiences, they were all working to fulfill one aspiration—to eventually make it to the United States.”³⁸

Insomuch as the United States occupies a prominent place in Philippine national culture and in the institutional production of the Philippines as the home of the Great Filipino Worker, the symbolic construction of Filipino America enables the Philippines’ success as a labor-brokering state. Within this construction, it is not only the promise of living in America but also the imagined social transformation from Filipino to Filipino American and its attendant social capital, a quality of being that Theresa Conidoza Suarez describes as a “‘made-it-in-the-U.S.A.’ legitimacy and status.”³⁹ There are, albeit relatively few, contract workers in the United States (3.5 percent of the world’s Filipino contract workers are in the United States while 65 percent of Filipino permanent residents or expatriates are in the United States),⁴⁰ but the possibility of permanent residency in America is the carrot that drives Filipinos toward overseas labor migration. The American dream structures trajectories of labor migration characterized by the elusive transformation from Filipino to Filipino American, producing competing diasporas between those who have “made it” to America, symbolized by the balikbayan, against those who “hope to make it,” symbolized by the OFW who may agree to work in a stepping-stone country but maintains the hope of achieving balikbayan status. It is this tension that betrays the contradictions of migration, and it is this tension that is obscured in general discussions of diaspora giving. The balikbayan, literally and in its state-

³⁸ Ibid., 171.

³⁹ Theresa Conidoza Suarez, “Military Masculinity and the Language of Citizenship in San Diego” in *Militarized Currents: Toward a Decolonized Future in Asia and the Pacific*, edited by Setsu Shigematsu and Keith L. Camacho (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 193.

⁴⁰ Commission on Filipinos Overseas Stock Estimate of Overseas Filipinos as of December 2008

sponsored and popular iterations, is defined through both his so-called achievement of living in the United States and arrival at Filipino American status as well as his desire for return (or “returns”) to the Philippine homeland. Its “antithesis,” the OFW, is defined through her “certainty of return” (or “returns) to the Philippines. While the state works to ensure the repatriation of remittance returns, Filipino migrants manage the hardships of migration through consumer-driven returns, a dimension of diaspora giving that must be negotiated by migrants and, in turn, contributes to the binary construction of balikbayan and OFW subjects. This is echoed by Anna Guevarra who argues that this Americanized Dream “revolves around material acquisition and a heightened power to consume material goods.”⁴¹ While this is the dream, the celebrated Filipino American subject holds unintended effects in terms of giving. This subject of migration is a giving subject. The chapter now turns to consumerist-based diaspora giving to demonstrate the relevance of the politics of diaspora giving to our understanding of the maintenance of hierarchy within the Filipino diaspora.

Consumerism and the Filipino Diaspora

In 2008, *Asian Journal MDWK Magazine* distributed a special “Balikbayani Issue”⁴² of its Filipino American weekly magazine. The title of the issue is a Tagalog portmanteau, bringing together the words *balikbayan* and *bayani* (hero) to reference the significance of overseas migration to the economy of the Philippines. *Balikbayan* or “returnee” designates a temporary return to the Philippines with connotations similar to that of a tourist and, as discussed, dominantly signifies Filipino American citizens of the

⁴¹ Guevarra, *Marketing Dreams, Manufacturing Heroes*, 166.

⁴² http://www.ajdigitaledition.com/webpaper/webpapers/2008/aj080917/viewer_frame.html. Sept 17-19, 2008.

United States in relationship to the Philippines. *Bayani* in nationalist Filipino discourse principally signifies a different frame of Filipino migration—the overseas Filipino worker who retains her Philippine citizenship and works temporarily and predominantly on contract in countries all over the world. Former Philippine president Corazon Aquino popularized the description of migrants as “new heroes of the Philippines” (*mga bagong bayani*) in speeches, praising, for example, a group of Filipino maids in Hong Kong for contributing to the reduction of the unemployment rate in the Philippines to about nine percent by choosing to work abroad instead of being “part of that statistic.”⁴³ Overseas Filipino workers are also written as heroes because their remittances have buoyed the economic indexes in the Philippines. As described in “Remittances: Our Nation’s Lifeblood,” an article from this special issue of *Asian Journal MDWK Magazine*: “Money sent by the overseas Filipinos back to the Philippines thru remittances has made a significant and considerable contribution to the Philippine economy. By providing a steady stream of dollars in the market, remittances have helped stabilize the peso and boost the economy through consumption and investments.”⁴⁴ “Balikbayani,” therefore, indexes the centrality of diaspora giving and integrates the two primary figures of Filipino migration, the Filipino American “returnee” and the migrant overseas worker “hero,” drawing attention to the myriad affiliations among migration, citizenship, remittances, giving, homeland and diaspora that this chapter addresses.

⁴³ See “Filipinos Take Jobs Abroad, Boost Economy Back Home,” *Journal of Commerce*, Exports 8B, December 15, 1988.

⁴⁴ Cynthia de Castro, “Remittances: Our Nation’s Lifeblood,” *Asian Journal MDWK Magazine* (September 18-19), 2.

Arguably, the objective of the special issue is to join the two competing categories of Filipino migration through attention to consumerism and remittances. The cover of the special “The Balikbayani Issue” features a cartoonized box wrapped in a U.S. one-hundred-dollar bill against a bright, happy yellow background overlaid with the words “Balikbayani: Out-of-the-bucks.” Brand-name Western grocery items recognizable to the Filipino observer as Nabisco cookies, Hershey’s chocolate bars, and Spam luncheon meat despite illegible corporate logos spill out from the box in the illustration. For Filipinos, the connection among migration, remittances, homeland, and consumer goods is apparent and even humorous as these particular items—the U.S. dollars and the consumables—are among the most customary items given by immigrants to their Philippine families. To the Filipino, the cover clearly depicts a “balikbayan box,” a large cardboard box, standardized in size to expedite cargo shipping and used to send food products, clothing, electronics and toys (preferably from the United States though sent from many nations) from Filipinos outside of the Philippines to friends and family in the Philippines. It is self-effacingly referred to as “Filipino luggage” in its ubiquity—one cargo company estimates that at least 300,000 balikbayan boxes are sent annually from the United States alone.⁴⁵ The play on words on the cover, “Balikbayani: Out-of-the-bucks,” is decidedly without irony as they celebrate the overlaps among consumers, migrants, markets, and nationalism. As such, the magazine largely reads as an extended advertisement with “articles” describing the success and dedication to nation of specific cargo-shipping companies and remittance-sending services in the United States in

⁴⁵ Phuong Ly, “Money Is Not Enough at Christmas,” *Washington Post Online*, December 24, 2004, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A23376-2004Dec23>.

addition to the half-dozen “actual” advertisements for remittance centers, banks, and box-shipping companies.

The centrality of giving for Filipino im/migrants in their relationship—and pertinence — to the Philippines is clear. In the magazine’s discourse, it is an essential truth that Filipino migrants would identify the Philippines as “home” and that their gifts would make Filipinos in the Philippines “proud.” For example, the following description is from the magazine’s call for advertisers under the heading “Balikbuying Power: Brand, Loyalty, Country” :

Filipinos have always been known for their devotion to their families and loved ones—a devotion so immense they would go to great lengths in able to provide better for them, seeking to work in a foreign land, unnerved of the challenges which await them... There is an estimated 4 million Filipinos in the US today and with this sheer number, they are responsible for over 50 percent of the total remittances to the Philippines. Aside from the United States, other major sources of remittances are Filipinos in Saudi Arabia, United Kingdom, Italy, United Arab Emirates, Japan, Singapore and Hong Kong... Still, as these Pinoy expats and Filipino immigrants find their dreams of providing better lives for their families, loved ones and themselves come into realization, the more they find themselves yearning for home. *OFWs. Expats. Balikbayans. What’s in a name? They are our returning superheroes.*⁴⁶

⁴⁶The Asian Journal Magazine, "Balikbuying Power: Brand, Loyalty, Country," http://www.balikbayanmagazine.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5&Itemid=3; italics added for emphasis.

In this rhetoric, there is a simultaneous attention to Filipino Americans and an insistence that all overseas Filipinos are equivalent in their yearning for home, a desire for return that is manifest in their remittance giving.

Elsewhere in the issue, the contradictions of equivalency surface. Upon closer inspection we find that a name carries great significance for status, mobility and the terms of receipt for one's giving. For instance, the desire for return is shown as, ultimately, the desire to return (returns) to the Philippines from the United States:

There's nothing like receiving a big cardboard box full of goodies or pasalubong [the gifts brought to the Philippines in the balikbayan boxes] from relatives overseas. It's the warm feeling Manny Paez remembers when he was younger growing up in the Philippines. "I used to tear open the cardboard box and hang them up along my walls so my friends could see that I'm receiving gifts from my family in the U.S.," said Paez. That was decades ago for Paez but the feeling remains the same for many people in the Philippines...While most [migrants] send money back home to their family, it's the balikbayan box that adds an extra touch like adding whipped cream on an ice cream sundae.⁴⁷

Regardless of the rhetoric that OFWs and balikbayans are simply the same especially for their desire to give, there are slippages that occur between OFW and balikbayan that demonstrate differentiated discourses that shape each figure, discourses that differently position each in relationship to the homeland, to morality, and authority. As Vicente Raphael describes, "Balikbayans emerge as figures to be envied. Their easy association with Western consumer products and access to a powerful state apparatus in

⁴⁷ Joseph Pimentel, "Bucks from the Big Box," *Asian Journal MDWK Magazine* (September 18-19).

the United States mark them as different: they represent the fulfillment of Filipino desires realizable only outside the Philippines.”⁴⁸ This is not to say that this enviable position does not come without its burdens. The pressure to bring gifts to family and friends in the Philippines can even prevent the Filipino American from returning to the Philippines at all, emphasizing the potential benefits and costs of such “returns.” As one respondent declares:

It’s always a problem when you give. You give to feel good. You give to help. You give to have control. When you give to your hometown, think about what are you announcing. To tell people that you are better off than when you left. Like the *pasalubong* [the gifts brought to the Philippines in the balikbayan boxes]. I would talk to other Filipinos [in the U.S.], ‘Why don’t you go back to the Philippines to visit?’ And they always said, ‘Oh it’s too expensive.’ ‘But you take vacations to Florida.’ And they said, ‘It’s the *pasalubong* that is so expensive.’⁴⁹

The sacrifice of being envied, it seems, creates the high costs of return. Though enviable, which creates an untenable burden for some Filipino Americans, OFWs are the “real heroes,” describes a Filipino American physical therapist, “They remit almost all their earnings, while we (immigrants) only give some money to show relatives we are still important.”⁵⁰ It is a sacrifice that significantly deviates from the sacrifice of migration for OFWs, the hero of the nation for her willingness to work abroad and remit

⁴⁸ Vicente L. Rafael, *White Love and Other Events in Filipino History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), 208.

⁴⁹ Georgie Cruz [pseudo.], interview by author, Makati, Philippines, May 19, 2005. Cruz was active in building a Filipino community to participate in diaspora giving projects while studying and living in the U.S.

⁵⁰ As quoted by journalist Jeremiaah Opiniano, “Overseas Migration: A Filipino ‘Fixture’ Forms a Nation’s Future,” *Pacific Rim Report* no. 47 (August 2007), under “Hero, Hard Worker.”

a large portion of her earnings. For balikbayans, the sacrifice to abandon the desire for return (returns) to the homeland is premised upon expectations for the distribution of gifts and consumer items in the Philippines, the objects for which they are envied. Their ability to control their giving practices illustrates their choice to return, or not. Significantly, the mutation from philanthropic or charitable gifts to consumer-based gifts described in the Georgie Cruz quotation above from “when you give” to “pasalubong” distinguishes Filipino American diaspora giving when Filipino American convince themselves of their inherent difference from OFWs, a point the chapter will momentarily visit below.

Economic returns structured by the individual choice to re-turn to the homeland as a tourist or as a consumer impact Filipino American giving practices. Notions of giving informed by individualism and consumerist-based social giving, to differentiate social giving from remittances, discourage Filipino Americans from considering what they share with OFWs and with impoverished Filipinos in the Philippines. In such a case, frameworks of social need that impact that material realization of diaspora giving easily revert to the language of commodity and economic rationality. As succinctly described in an interview with one Filipino American association president, “In my simple thinking, it is a matter of buying more for less. Money goes a long way in the Philippines, so I’d rather spend money and give scholarships over there than here.”⁵¹ As is with the commodification of race-cum-culture where attention to the material implications of racialization and labor exploitation is subsumed by the fascination with “Asian culture,” for example, in popular culture, this mobilization of diaspora giving subsumes larger

⁵¹ Dionicio Dandoy [pseud.], interview by author, by telephone, November 5, 2007.

understandings of unequal access to education to the position of “buying more for less.” It is not merely that less money is required for an individual scholarship in the Philippines versus in the United States that the respondent suggests, which is objectively the fact of the matter. However, frameworks of diaspora giving reproduce individualized understandings of social need in the Philippines. Thus, it is also a matter of “less” of a critical social consciousness required when imagining the extent and shape of diaspora giving and of social relationships among Filipinos.

Where balikbayans and their consumer practices are to be envied, OFW consumer practices more often reveal OFWs as deviant giving subjects, an ideological construction that exists alongside their depiction as heroes. Official and popular discourses produce OFWs as heroes for their willingness to work abroad. Their sacrifice is in removing themselves from their homes and their families so that they can participate in remittance returns. However, in popular discourse, by government officials, and from academics, OFWs are also criticized for their “conspicuous consumption,” where they or their families to whom their earnings are remitted purchase consumer goods, it is described, at the expense of investments that may be more conducive to economic development. For example, sociologist Shu-Ju Ada Cheng writes, “Scholars and government officials have questioned whether the remittance [from OFWs] has been effective in facilitating national development, since the money sent home has often been used for “conspicuous consumption,” such as buying land, setting up small businesses, or purchasing consumer goods, rather than for investments conducive to economic growth.”⁵² Rephrasing

⁵² Cheng, *Serving the Household and the Nation: Filipina Domesticity and the Politics of Identity in Taiwan*, Lanham, MD: Lexington Books (2006): 32

“conspicuous consumption” as “excessive domestic consumption,” a Philippine government official also writes, “In some quarters, remittances are considered as an impediment to development because they drive the recipients to excessive domestic consumption, rather than savings and investment, and because of the ‘dependency syndrome’ which limits the productivity of the beneficiaries.”⁵³

The phrase “conspicuous consumption” was coined over a century ago by sociologist Thorstein Veblen in his *Theory of the Leisure Class*. The term “conspicuous consumption” is generally used, according to sociologist Colin Campbell, to present “a pattern of conduct that is intended to realize the goal of maintaining or enhancing an individual’s social position.”⁵⁴ Critically for the context at hand, enhancing one’s social position involves a process of emulation. In conversation with Veblen’s text, Campbell writes, “Veblen seems to have believed that making such comparisons inevitably lead to emulation: he writes, ‘Emulation [is] the stimulus of an invidious comparison which prompts us to outdo those with whom we are in a habit of classing ourselves.’”⁵⁵ Emulation, therefore, brings us to the production of OFWs and balikbayans in social and cultural relationship. It could be argued that balikbayans in their displays of excessive consumption and consumer-based returns to the homeland attempt to transnationally demonstrate the material achievements of the American dream. However, government officials lodge accusations of “conspicuous consumption” against OFWs and not

⁵³ Carmelita S. Dimzon, "Migration Policies, Remittances and Economic Development in the Philippines," 98.

⁵⁴ Colin Campbell, "Conspicuous Confusion? A Critique of Veblen’s Theory of Conspicuous Consumption," *Sociological Theory* 13, no. 1 (March 1995): 38.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 39; For the record, Campbell continues to complicate popular interpretations of Veblen’s theory in terms of emulation.

balikbayans because the state claims a hold in managing the economic returns of OFWs. Given how OFWs are produced in tense relationship to the figure of the balikbayan and given the discourse of “conspicuous consumers” that along with remittances mark the nature of their diaspora giving, it is the balikbayan that the OFW emulates and places herself in “invidious comparison.”

The overseas Filipino worker is distanced from the balikbayan, the subject of Filipino mobility who has the freedom to control and choose their economic returns, whose gifts are freely given. While balikbayans can also be criticized for flagrant materialism, family and friends in the Philippines welcome their consumerism. The OFWs, produced as heroes (and too often martyrs/martyred) for their sacrifice, are ideologically barred from excess. In a study commissioned by the Asian Development Bank, Idelfonso Bagasao describes a marked trend in the remittance literature on the Philippines that identifies excessive, consumer-driven giving practices of OFWs, who, as a result, are constructed as deviant diaspora givers:

Remittances have been used mostly for excessive consumption, not to increase the productive capacity of the sending country. Migration also is said to have perpetuated a culture of dependence on remittances on the part of beneficiary families, as well as on the migrant sending country. Propped up by large inflows of remittances, governments might conveniently postpone needed structural reforms to put the macroeconomic house in order. The compensatory nature of remittances presents a moral hazard, or dependency syndrome, that could impede economic growth as recipients reduce their participation in productive endeavors.

For those reasons, some researchers believe that unless governments are able to come up with policies that will induce migrants to invest productively, remittances are unlikely to be transformed into a significant source of capital for development.⁵⁶

The joy of receipt of consumer-driven balikbayan diaspora giving, which was earlier reviewed, is replaced by admonishment for the OFW. In these descriptions, OFW diaspora giving reveals the moral deficiency of the figure, whose giving creates a culture of dependency, screening once again any responsibility of the Philippine state save for the mandate to control the OFW's giving and its receipt by family in the Philippines. Written against this, giving from balikbayans with their mobility and their choice to remain loyal to the homeland represent a different value, a central value of popular narratives of development, and, integrally, what it means to be a modern, contributing element of the Filipino diaspora.

Philanthropy and the Moral Authority of Balikbayans

The Philippine state courts diaspora philanthropic and charitable giving and offers Filipino American balikbayans opportunities to be partners in development as opposed to a social problem needing development guidance. The Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO), the governmental agency that maintains links with Filipinos who are permanent residents or citizens of other countries, produces a balikbayan diaspora premised upon their ability to contribute to national economic development. In their literature, they ask, "What role does the CFO play in encouraging overseas Filipinos to promote national development?" To this, the Commission on Filipinos Overseas responds:

⁵⁶ Bagasao, *Enhancing the Efficiency of Overseas Filipino Workers Remittances*, 7.

Pursuant to its mandate, CFO develops and implements activities that facilitate the flow of assistance from Filipinos overseas to local communities in the Philippines. Through the CFO's *Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino* (LINKAPIL) or Link for Philippine Development Program, overseas Filipinos are able to support livelihood/micro-enterprise development, education, health and welfare, small-scale infrastructure, and technology and skills transfer. CFO also maintains active linkages with Filipino associations and other potential donors overseas, as well as local partners in the Philippines, to encourage investments and partnerships for development.⁵⁷

In 1991 Aquino made into governmental policy the national celebration of overseas Filipinos mostly from the U.S. and organizations that support philanthropic, humanitarian or developmental projects in the Philippines. This piece of legislation, Executive Order No. 498, calls for the Commission on Filipinos Overseas and the Department of Foreign Affairs to award plaques and medallions to select "Filipino individuals and organizations overseas who have contributed materially—or in the form of selfless programs and endeavors—to our country's relief, rehabilitation, and development programs" with the knowledge that "it is socially desirable and in the national interest to provide a permanent system of recognition for the valuable contributions being made to our developmental concerns by our countrymen and organizations abroad."⁵⁸ There are four categories of Presidential Awards bestowed for exceptional contribution to the reconstruction, progress and development in the Philippines and to Filipinos who "have brought the country

⁵⁷ Commission on Filipinos Overseas, "Primer" brochure (2009).

⁵⁸ "Executive Order No. 498: Institutionalizing the Presidential Awards for Filipino Individuals and Organizations Overseas," (December 19, 1991).

honor” through their work or profession. Of the four categories of Presidential Awards, there is one in particular that aligns with the objective of the Executive Order and that is the *Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino Award*, or Link for Philippine Development Award. *Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino* or LINKAPIL is also the name of one of the primary programs of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas designed to court and monitor the philanthropic and developmental projects of overseas Filipinos. Since 1991 when the Awards were conceived, thirty-seven *Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino Awards* have been conferred, thirty of which have been to Filipino Americans or Filipino American organizations.⁵⁹ For another example, the chairman of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas in a write-up of LINKAPIL’s success stories declares, “The overseas Filipinos behind these stories are exemplars of time-honored values of *pakikipag-kapwa* (compassion), *pagtutulungan* (cooperation) and *pagkagkaisa* (unity). How they have helped a community or aided fellow Filipinos in areas such as employment, infrastructure, business innovation, entrepreneurship, and reconstruction make us proud to be a Filipino.” A dozen pages later, different authors clarify that “most of the LINKAPIL donors are based in the United States of America.”⁶⁰ This government agency monitors and awards overseas Filipinos, most of whom are in the U.S., who take their own initiative to identify or develop projects in the Philippines that assist the poor.

⁵⁹ As of this writing, the now biannual awards were not yet awarded for 2010.

⁶⁰ Both quotations are a publication of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas. Separately the authors are Dante A. Ang, “Foreword,” in *Transnational Bridges: Migration, Development and Solidarity in the Philippines*, eds. Maruja M.B. Asis, et al. (Manila, Philippines: Scalabrini Migration Center and Commission on Filipinos Overseas, 2010), vii; Golda Myra Roma and Jose Edison Tondares, “*Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino: Two Decades of Transnational Solidarity and Partnership for Development*,” in *Transnational Bridges: Migration, Development and Solidarity in the Philippines*, eds. Maruja M.B. Asis, et al. (Manila, Philippines: Scalabrini Migration Center and Commission on Filipinos Overseas, 2010), 14.

It constructs balikbayans as a transnational safety net for the local population whose needs the government are unable to meet despite its programs for labor migration.

Another agency of the government, the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, which processes the contracts of overseas Filipino workers, also maintains a state sanctioned awards program for Filipinos abroad. The rhetoric begins in a similar fashion as the Commission on Filipinos Overseas does but shifts in its recognition of their modern-day hero, the OFW who labors abroad: “The awards seek to recognize and pay tribute to our OFWs for their significant efforts in fostering goodwill among peoples of the world, enhancing and promoting the image of the Filipino as a competent, responsible and dignified worker.”⁶¹ Not surprisingly, the awards are called the “Bagong Bayani Awards” (new heroes). OFWs receive awards from different categories including the “Bagong Bayani Award for Outstanding Employee,” whose criteria include “Manifested love for work, concern for the company and his or her co-workers,”⁶² displaying for the international community the diligence of its labor exports and rewarding its migrant citizens for internalizing the dictates of neoliberal and capitalist orthodoxy that promote their role as compliant labor.

The Philippine Overseas Employment Agency also awards a “Bagong Bayani Award for Community and Social Service,” which is reminiscent of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas’ Link for Philippine Development Award most often bestowed on Filipino Americans and Filipino American organizations. In contrast, however, recipients of the “Bagong Bayani Award for Community and Social Service” include

⁶¹ Philippine Overseas Employment Agency, “Bagong Bayani Awards,” 1, <http://www.poea.gov.ph/bba2011/The%20Bagong%20Bayani%20Awards.pdf>.

⁶² Ibid., 3.

those who “have performed heroic act or deed, or have saved life or property, the performance of which is beyond the normal call of duty.”⁶³ Larger discussions of community or social service, for which the award is named, generally reach beyond individual acts of heroism toward institutions of the social identified as in need of assistance, reform, or benefitting from sustained attention. Mobilizations of heroism, the dominant discourse of Filipino labor migration, however, require individual sacrifice for the nation,⁶⁴ reflected in the criteria for this nominal award for community and social where the individual’s sacrifice is articulated to the individual’s heroic protection of life or property. OFWs’ consumer-driven excess that benefits only immediate family in the Philippines signals their moral deficiency, yet their ability to perform heroically as individuals in their migrant-receiving countries of temporary residence are lauded as “social service” in that it supports the image of Filipinos as compliant laborers even when their “service” does not occur on an institutional level. Neither formulation of the OFW allows this figure to function as a knowing subject. Balikbayans are represented as partners in development and awarded for their inherent knowledge of how to develop and maintain projects for development. They are constructed as problem solvers, a valuation with its own implications of moral difference.

The narrative of Filipino Americans as development partners transnationally reconfigures U.S.-based narratives of immigrants as a burden or problem. This relationship between nationalism and mobility exceeds the U.S. as well as American-based racializations of the immigrant. To elaborate, consider the racialization of Asian

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ This characterization is echoed in Steven C. McKay, “Filipino Sea Men,” 72.

American as model minority who monitors those minorities and immigrants defined through their deviance. Asian Americans function in the U.S. imagination as its model minority just as Filipino Americans balikbayans through the meanings placed on their giving are written as exemplary diasporans, a construction premised on its “Other,” the deviant OFWs. Scholars such as Vijay Prashad intervene in the myth of the model minority by analyzing how at the same moment that the U.S. needed to demonstrate its adherence to racial equality and assuage the fears of Asian, African, and Latin American nonaligned nations in the cold war against communism, the model minority myth was born.⁶⁵ The U.S. found itself scrambling to compete in the technological battle ignited by the successful launch of Sputnik by the U.S.S.R. Together, these cold war pressures led to the relaxation of anti-Asian immigration laws as the U.S. actively courted engineers, scientist, and health professionals from Asia to fill its labor needs. As such, the Asian American success story in the narrative of American exceptionalism effectively masks the contradictions of racial liberalism. The country’s demand for foreign labor produced a professional Asian class celebrated for their economic achievements and held as proof America’s racial equality, obscuring the country’s investments in racial hierarchy, whiteness, and neocolonial military aggression against Asian nations and peoples.

The relationship of dominance over Asian immigrants and deviant (largely Latino) immigrants and Asian “ethnic” minorities and deviant (largely African American) minorities maintains white supremacy and is emphasized here to demonstrate how

⁶⁵ See Vijay Prashad, “Of the Origin of Desis and Some Principles of State Selection,” *The Karma of Brown Folk* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000): 69-82.

constructions of Filipino American balikbayans and overseas Filipino workers work in tandem to obscure the ongoing racialization of all Filipinos, Orientalist constructions of the Philippines, and the Philippine state's utilization of racialized global hierarchies. The tension between the figures of the balikbayan and the OFW—the racialized self allowed to maintain control over giving and the racialized other whose giving must be controlled—reveals itself when attention is given to global economics as well as to the politics of diaspora giving, which mediate their production and their relationship to each other and to the Philippine homeland. This relationship reveals the production of a kind of “transnational model diasporan” whose status is constructed against the diasporan whose giving must be monitored by the state. The Filipino American balikbayan, the migrant ideal, was produced through Marcos-era development policy as much as through structures put in place to augment the racist controls of U.S. colonialism and cold war demands for foreign labor. Dreams of becoming Filipino American held by overseas contract workers demonstrate how these global politics are obscured in American dream ideology and the Filipino Americans' ability to internalize their valuation. Drawing again from Vijay Prashad, he emphasizes how post-1965 Indian American professionals (83 percent of Indian Americans who entered the U.S. between 1966 and 1977 came under the professional preference) bemoan the more recent immigrants who arrive to the U.S. through the family reunification preference, exemplified by the New York taxi worker of South Asian descent: “These cabbies, noted one such professional, are ‘lowering the tone.’ They are ‘spoiling things for us,’ even ‘ruining our image’ in the United States. ‘In just five years they’ve undone all the good work.’”⁶⁶ Like the South

⁶⁶ Prashad, “Of the Origin of Desis,” 82.

Asian professionals, Filipino Americans differentiate themselves from other Filipinos in the Philippines and Filipinos laboring abroad, particularly through the ways that they imagine the exceptionalism of their diaspora giving.

Diaspora giving by Filipinos in the United States to the Philippines is in an integral aspect of their identities as migrants, reflecting the value-laden nature of diaspora. The following description of giving from one Filipino American hometown association goes so far as to imply that American-borne giving “returns” drive the desire to migrate out of the Philippines and to the United States in the first place:

The activities of the Angeleños in Southern California is simply not limited to religious and social function. To the Angeleños migrating to foreign land is not the end in itself but serves as a mean to pursue the common goodness of providing better future for their families. And in return share their blessings to the needy. The association provide educational assistance to deserving children of Angeleños back home impaired by financial difficulties. The Scholarship program is one of the greatest contribution of the Angeleños to their Kabalens.⁶⁷

So constructed, the idealized position of Filipino Americans is something justified by their interest in meaningful returns to the common good. Financial pressures to migrate, colonial and neocolonial fantasies of America, and the global economy’s racialization of Filipinos are supplanted by the purported desire to philanthropically give, an inherently moral characteristic. Differences in migration and socioeconomic mobility come to reflect their own proclivities toward giving to the common good, proclivities learned in

⁶⁷Kabalens meaning town mate or fellow countrymen in Kapampangan, one of the major languages of the Philippines. From the Angeleños in Southern California website. Website no longer up as of April 22, 2008.

America but created and naturalized in the transformation from Filipino to Filipino emigrant to Filipino American balikbayan. As stated by an active Filipino American organization president who, in fact, was one of the recipients of the aforementioned Commission on Filipinos Overseas' Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino Awards (Link for Philippine Development Awards):

I wasn't raised with exposure to volunteerism. *Bayanihan* [mutual assistance] is just a gimmick for us. There is just a trace of that. I only saw it once, moving the house of a squatter. At the end of the project there was rice soup with banana and *kamote*.⁶⁸ There is no such thing as volunteerism in the Philippines. We don't have that in our schools. Here in the United States, you can get extra credit [in school] if you volunteer more. [He then showed me a newspaper clipping of children being trained to help volunteer with tsunami relief]. When there was flooding [in the Philippines], no one helped each other. Either relatives helped them or no one did. The culture is that we don't know who to follow. If you are rich, then you think that is your place, so you don't help others. It's the crab mentality. If I'm not rich, I don't expect help. If family is rich, they wouldn't invite the poor relations.⁶⁹

The value to give outside of one's family characterizes the transformation from Filipino to Filipino American balikbayan, demonstrating how balikbayans are differentiated from other Filipinos, Filipinos who need their assistance. Consider the following description from a Filipino American hometown association newsletter whose

⁶⁸ In Tagalog, a sweet potato or yam.

⁶⁹ Hilario Gonzales [pseud.], interview by author, Los Angeles, CA, September 25, 2005.

rhetoric demands that recipients in the Philippines recognize their moral authority over the poor Filipino in the Philippines:

Here for a visit was Francis Dompur, erstwhile president and now one of the members of the board of directors of Bohol Circle of Eastern USA (BCEUSA). He flew in from New Jersey to attend the grand reunion of the Dompur Clan held May 23-28 in barangay Calunasan Norte, Loboc town... [D]uring his administration, Dompur launched the Foster Parents Program (FPSP) which aims to support Boholano students who are poor yet academically good to finish high school and college...Dompur shared his insights and reminded the scholars to be prayerful amidst challenges in life. He said, "*We are just the instruments of God to help you finish your studies. We have to break the chain of poverty. Be an example, make a difference in this world.*"⁷⁰

As a trope, the poor yet deserving Filipino in the Philippines positions Filipino Americans as the arbiter of social development, a position of authority that demands subservience from its benefactors. The rhetoric extends the "poor yet deserving" model utilized in a previous description of the philanthropic drive to migrate and the resulting desire for giving re-turn (or returns). As problems to be solved, OFWs are also figured in this relationship, demonstrating the implications of how the state courts, monitors, and celebrates the differentiated giving formations.

Moreover, the nation-state normalizes both balikbayans and OFWs, containing radicalism and revolutionary elements of the population by propping up the Philippines' particular role in neoliberal globalization as the world's supplier of cheap labor. In the

⁷⁰ <http://www.geocities.com/boholscholars/news.html>; italics added for emphasis.

Philippine context, in addition to masking the disastrous impact of its neoliberal policies, the production of docile Filipino migrant labor readily available for the international market operates to contain the threat of communism. Robyn Rodriguez highlights this direct link in the history of development of the state's shift to labor broker: "Marcos violently suppressed the growing communist movement, which was at the forefront of the struggle to depose his dictatorship. He saw the export of labor as an important measure to curb the political unrest likely to be exacerbated by un- and underemployment."⁷¹ Overseas employment contains radical political aspirations and organizing energies. Prolific scholar on the Global South, Walden Bello, similarly states how overseas workers "might otherwise have gone into radical or revolutionary solution and, in economic terms, an external employment mechanism in the absence of development."⁷² Overseas labor migration disciplines its subjects toward the economic interests of the state and in opposition to movements that would demand a sustained analysis of the Philippines' elite economic structure. Deviant citizens are reformed as OFWs who are ushered out of the country while Filipino Americans are cast as anointed for their capacity to uplift the less fortunate Filipinos still in the Philippines.

Ironically, the previously quoted former Labor Secretary, Patricia Sto. Tomas, reverses the state's disciplining of its migrant citizens, stating that Filipinos would revolt if you took away labor migration: "I've always viewed [overseas employment] as a safety valve...If you prevent them from going to Hong Kong or Saudi Arabia, you might

⁷¹ Rodriguez, *Migrants for Export*, 12.

⁷² Walden Bello, et al., *The Anti-Development State: The Political Economy of Permanent Crisis in the Philippines* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines, Department of Sociology and Focus on the Global South, 2004), 11.

have a revolution on your hands.”⁷³ Overseas labor migration, when constructed as a right, becomes rewritten as the will of the people. As a revolt, it is something *they* want; it is something that *they* are willing to fight for; it is something that *they* see as their fundamental right as humans or as Filipinos. However, as a stabilizing mechanism for social unrest, labor migration primarily benefits the state and its economic interests and allies. In Sto. Tomas’ reversal, Filipino migrants are then doubly contained: one, their potential for radical revolutionary movements is contained by the promise of overseas migration and two, their earnings are leveraged in the service of national development policies, thus emphasizing not the economic dimensions of remittances, but its political cultural implications where the overseas migrant worker is commodified by the state.

As stated earlier, the goal of radical containment impacts Filipino Americans in a parallel fashion. This can be seen in a conversation with a manager of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas, who describes how this department was initiated by the Marcos government as a way to monitor political exiles in the United States.⁷⁴ Since the overturn of the Marcos regime, the Commission on Filipinos Overseas transformed its objectives and now courts Filipino American donations to national economic development projects as partners with the state as development agents. This transformation can be traced from within Filipino America as well. During the Marcos regime, the anti-Marcos cause determined the tenor of political interests and political expression in Filipino America regarding life in the Philippines. In his detailed history of the *Philippine News*, for example, Filipino studies scholar and anthropologist Benito M.

⁷³ Quoted in George Wehrfritz and Marites Vitug. “Workers for the World.”

⁷⁴ Tina Santos [pseud.], interview by author, Manila, Philippines, January 5, 2004.

Vergara writes how this Filipino American community newspaper took on an important role in the struggle against the Marcos regime as copies of articles critical of Marcos were distributed in the Philippines, where journalistic expression was severely and violently curtailed.⁷⁵ In my examination of more recent issues of this same periodical, the most vivid expressions of Filipino American diasporic community dealt with association fundraisers and scholarships for needy recipients in the Philippines.⁷⁶ While the *Philippine News* was historically never a “radical” publication in itself, the curtailment of interest in radical elements in the Philippines is ushered through considerable attention to charitable, philanthropic, humanitarian, and other endeavors in the Philippines.

Conclusion: What’s So Great About Diaspora Philanthropy?

Let us turn to a final example of efforts to elide the differences between balikbayans and overseas Filipino workers, an effort made in the name of uniting all Filipinos but unable to contain the terms of their difference. In 2005, I had the opportunity to participate in an international conference on Filipino diaspora giving, Good News for the Poor: A Conference on Filipino Diaspora Philanthropy, organized by the Philippines’ most prolific writer and speaker on the subject, Jeremaiah Opiniano. In the conference program, Opiniano worked to bridge the differences between Filipino Americans and overseas migrant workers by highlighting representatives from donor organizations in Japan and Singapore in addition to those from organizations from the U.S., migrant organizations in the Philippines, and Philippine government offices who

⁷⁵ Benito M. Vergara, Jr., “Nationalism Without Guilt,” *Pilipinas* no. 32 (Spring 1999): 131.

⁷⁶ I looked at *Philippine News* editions published between 2003 and 2004.

monitor flows of people and remittances. In conversations and from his opening address to the conference, Opinano argues that Filipinos in the United States are unquestionably the largest group of philanthropic donors to causes in the Philippines. However, he argues, if we do not include Filipino donors working in other countries such as Australia, Nigeria, Hong Kong, and Yemen, then “the country might miss out on the fullest potential of diaspora philanthropy.”⁷⁷ Still reflecting the characterization of Filipino Americans as problem solvers, representatives from Filipino American organizations comprised the bulk of “experts” speaking on topics of creating and monitoring philanthropic and social development projects in the Philippines. Representatives from OFW organizations, meanwhile, were used as “human interest” examples of how even the poor want to “give back” to their hometowns in the Philippines. Opinano wanted to use the conference to bring the possibilities and issues surrounding Filipino American philanthropy together with what he and other experts believe is the next phase of remittances, which is the movement toward harnessing remittances *and* philanthropy from migrants toward sustained development projects in the homeland. From the World Bank and the United Nations to “civil society” organizations and think tanks, a perceptible yet inchoate movement to understand the relationship between “diasporas and development”⁷⁸ has emerged on the subject of the Philippines and other major labor-export countries. Titles such as “Enhancing the Efficiency of Overseas Filipino Workers’ Remittances” and “Worker Remittances as a Development Tool Opportunity for the

⁷⁷ Jeremiaah Opiniano, “Hope through Filipino Diaspora Philanthropy,” conference paper, June 9, 2005. University of Santo Tomas, Manila, Philippines.

⁷⁸ The phrase is also the name of one of the most distinguished examples of the academic efforts to understand the phenomenon. Barbara J. Merz, Lincoln C. Chen, and Peter F. Geithner, eds., *Diasporas and Development* (Cambridge: Global Equity Initiative, Asia Center, and Harvard University Press, 2007).

Philippines” work to capture best practices and advance expertise on what is emerging as a new global consensus⁷⁹ for the next stage of development. They speak to the massive force of Filipino remittances in the face of continuing poverty and economic disparity in the Philippines.

The conference, according to Opiniano, aimed to unite all “migrant donors,”⁸⁰ Filipino American philanthropists and overseas Filipino worker remitters alike. However, the tensions arising from their differentiated mutual construction emerge. Opiniano is a tireless champion of the possibilities of “Filipino diaspora philanthropy” and his work includes any kind of diaspora giving beyond one’s immediate family regardless of the status of the giver. His opening address to the conference focused on the hope and the enormous potential that migrant donors hold for the “beleaguered homeland.” In his opening address, he described the recipients of migrant philanthropy, especially poor communities in the Philippines, as “lucky” for their receipt of assistance from Filipinos overseas and more than once emphasized the benevolence of the donor migrants. During the question-and-answer session following the address, a woman, who I later found out worked for Center for Migrant Advocacy, an advocacy group in the Philippines that supports the rights of overseas Filipinos and their families, challenged the premise of the conference: “I am very concerned with the name, ‘Good News for the Poor.’ Why is this so much ‘good news?’” With palpable emotion, this woman asked Opiniano why he did not speak to questions of overdependence on remittances by the families of overseas workers. She described how ninety percent of what she hears from

⁷⁹ The phenomena, as recognized in the policy and academic literature is not “new”—I have one cite from 1992, but the emerging global “consensus,” which I what I’m calling it and what I’m arguing, is new.

⁸⁰ Jeremiaah Opiniano, “Hope through Filipino Diaspora Philanthropy”

her organization and from other migrant organizations is about problems with husbands of migrant Filipinos and their children and families “left behind” in the Philippines, problems of fidelity, incest, indolence, and abuse. To the audience, the nongovernment organization representations, and government representatives in attendance, she asked, “What can NGOs and the government do to help the families, especially those left behind?”

Earlier, the chapter used an excerpt from an Asian Development Bank report on overseas Filipino worker remittances to demonstrate the production of the OFW as a deviant giver. Like the conference attendee above, it drew attention to the “culture of dependence” created by labor migration process. However, the Asian Development Bank report pointed to the reform of remittance giving of labor migrants as the solution to the social costs of the Philippines’ labor migration program. It pointed to government responsibility but only so far as it is “able to come up with policies that will induce migrants to invest productively, [otherwise] remittances are unlikely to be transformed into a significant source of capital for development.”⁸¹ In opposition to this, the conference attendee called on NGOs and the state to “take the side of those harmed by globalization,” to borrow a phrase from Ligaya Lindio-McGovern,⁸² a demand for government responsibility that calls into the question the OFW’s willingness to accept her terms of sacrifice.

Opiniano, in collapsing the differences between Filipino Americans and OFWs in respective discourses of diaspora giving, refused to address the social costs of migration

⁸¹ See note 57 above.

⁸² Ligaya Lindio-McGovern, “Neo-liberal Globalization in the Philippines: Its Impact on Filipino Women and Their Forms of Resistance,” *Journal of Developing Societies* 23, no. 1-2 (2007): 15.

as a fundamental aspect of neoliberal globalization and the government's production of those costs in its participation in neoliberal globalization. Not only did the conference attendee insist on the different relationships to diaspora giving and challenge his conceptualization of diaspora philanthropy as merely "good news for the poor," her outburst demanded attention be paid to the devastating impact of neoliberal globalization. By refusing the rhetorical use of "good news for the poor" the woman who publicly questioned the terms of the conference title also intervened in the construction of Filipino American balikbayans as the agents of good in the Philippines, as if all Filipinos benefit from the select few who are able to transform themselves into balikbayans through their giving re-turns, returnees to nation being the literal translation of balikbayan. Given that the conference focused on this idea of diaspora philanthropy, the conference attendee's outburst points to the impossibility of Opiniano's will to ignore the mutual production of OFWs and balikbayans, which is based, at least in part, on what is perceived to be their identifying giving practices. Moreover, the outburst should be read as the movement to recognize that each iteration of balikbayan—as inherently motivated by benevolent giving or as the idealized diasporan—and OFW—as heroes of the nation or as deviant in their consumption—supports the current pattern of neoliberal globalization in the Philippines.

At issue in the government's harnessing of remittance giving and philanthropic giving is the problem that development "implies movement towards a goal."⁸³ These goals are not about labor equality or worker justice but the general support of Philippine participation in neoliberal globalization. In illustrations of philanthropic and charitable

⁸³ Karina Constantino-David, "Unsustainable Development--The Philippine Experience," 233.

behaviors, there is a tendency to release respective practitioners of culpability and responsibility when it comes to matters of justice. In the literature that focuses on philanthropic and charitable behavior and practices, issues of worker justice are often seen as outside the scope of the studies, thus leaving philanthropic discourse intact and outside of questions and causes of poverty. For the Filipino American donors and organizations, there is the tendency to say, “We are just a small organization just trying to do our part” or “We don’t operate with a lot of money and every little bit that we can provide really counts.” Practically, these refrains are understandable; surely, no one organization or donor is going to solve all the problems of poverty and uneven social development in the Philippines. However, the emphasis on solving the problems, an impossible task for any one organization, and balikbayans as the proposed problem solvers of the diaspora isolates the giving practices of Filipino American organizations from global economic processes and masks the balikbayan’s relationship to that “other” figure of Filipino migration.

CHAPTER III

“A Bridge Across the Seas”:

Corporate Dreams of Diaspora

Undeterred by all the challenges we face, we continue to dream of a world where Filipinos, wherever they are, are bound together by their common desire to effect positive change in the Philippines.

-- Diosdado P. Banatao, *Ayala Foundation USA Annual Report 2008*

These are people who have left the Philippines for different reasons but are still thinking kindly of their motherland and especially our beloved Filipino people... These are the people who kept on plugging, continued to hope against hope... who in spite of (negative) forces persevere ... so a lot more Filipinos have a brighter future today.

--President of the Philippines, Benigno “Noynoy” Aquino addressing Filipino Americans in a speech at a 2010 Ayala Foundation USA event in San Francisco

Introduction

The first epigraph that frames this chapter conjures a very hopeful author. With self-proclaimed bravery, the author dares to imagine a Filipino diaspora bound not by blood, culture or birthplace but by the desire for Filipinos to come together to effect a positive change in the Philippines. It proposes an idealized Filipino diaspora, a mode of imagining an active homeland belonging and the dynamic production of homeland space. This orientation of giving toward the Philippine homeland for Filipinos “wherever they are” exemplifies what diaspora studies scholars have described as “a repeated turning to the concept and/or the reality of the homeland.”¹ However, more than an orientation to

Diosdado P. Banatao writing as the Chairman of the Board of Directors, Ayala Foundation USA. President Aquino was the guest speaker at The Philippine Development Forum and Gala sponsored by the Ayala Foundation USA held at the Palace Hotel, San Francisco, CA, September 25, 2010.

the homeland through remittances to family members or overseas travel to one's country of birth, this diaspora ideal, though vague, compels the use of imagination as a call to action to collectively work toward a Philippines with less poverty and hunger—a “better” Philippines and a participatory Filipino diaspora that could be.

The quote is from the 2008 annual report of the Ayala Foundation USA, a U.S.-registered Filipino American nonprofit organization with offices in California, which describes itself as a “Bridge Across the Seas,” offering itself as a philanthropic passageway to the Philippine homeland for Filipino expatriates and migrants in America and opportunities for Filipino Americans to donate to its list of approved social development projects and nongovernmental organizations in the Philippines.² The Ayala Foundation USA was organized in 2000 to promote what is referred to as “diaspora philanthropy” by the Ayala Foundation, a corporate foundation in the Philippines which is one of only a few dozen Philippine-based foundations that offer funding to local nongovernmental organizations, and the “corporate social responsibility” arm of the Ayala Corporation, the Philippines’ oldest, largest and most powerful corporate entity. Corporate social responsibility programs, or the private sector’s response to the “externalities’ associated with economic globalization” (such as unsustainably low

¹ Khachig Tölölyan. “Rethinking Diaspora(s): Stateless Power in the Transnational Moment.” *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 5, no. 1 (1996): 14.

² In 2010, the Ayala Foundation USA changed its name to the Philippine Development Foundation USA, which they shorten to PhilDevUSA. Because the research for this chapter was completed when the organization still referred to itself as the Ayala Foundation USA, I have chosen to keep the former moniker for the analysis. PhilDevUSA maintains the tagline “a bridge of hope across the seas” and its organizational structure and partnerships. At least as early as 2005, the Ayala Foundation USA had considered changing its organizational name to the Philippine Development Foundation USA in order to distance itself from the corporate moniker in hopes of quelling criticisms that the foundation was just an extension of the corporation’s budgets and business goals and not its own social development entity. Even with the nominal changes, however, my analysis remains. See Tony Acoba [pseud.], interview by author, Makati, Philippines, June 17, 2005.

wages and unhealthy working conditions), are self-regulating programs “presented as a way to balance the interests of business and society *without* expanding government intervention in the global market place.”³ Within corporate social responsibility logics, the market sector holds the motivation and the responsibility to address the “externalities of economic globalization” such as the dismal state of labor protection in Philippine export processing zones and the extreme fact of poverty—forty-five percent of households fall below the one-dollar-a-day threshold.⁴

To give a sense as to the extent of the Ayala Corporation, the business entity that actualized the foundations under study, the five companies that together form the conglomerate that is the Ayala Corporation account for around one-third of the market capitalization in the Philippine Stock Exchange.⁵ Founded as a distillery in 1834 by Spanish aristocrats in the Philippines, what evolved to be the Ayala Corporation⁶ remains a family holding company, though one that is publicly traded, and owns the Bank of the Philippines, the country’s largest and most profitable bank,⁷ and holds interests in Globe Telecom, a major Philippine telecommunications company, the Manila Water Company,

³ James Rowe, *Corporate Social Responsibility as Business Strategy* (Santa Cruz, CA: UC Santa Cruz Center for Global, International and Regional Studies, 2005): 2; italics in original.

⁴ See Karin Schelzig, *Poverty in the Philippines: Income, Assets, and Access* (Mandaluyong City, Philippines: Asian Development Bank, 2005), 15.

⁵ Victoria P. Garchitorena, *Diaspora Philanthropy: The Philippine Experience* (Boston: The Philanthropic Initiative, Inc. and The Global Equity Initiative, Harvard University, 2007), 16.

⁶ The different components that comprise the Ayala Corporation were initiated or purchased over the 175 years of its existence. Its earliest ventures, including a distillery, manufacturing, trading, banking, and insurance, were initiated during Spanish colonial times. For example, Ayala’s involvement in the banking industry began in 1851, when the first bank of the Philippines was established by Spanish royal decree with Antonio de Ayala installed as director. See Ayala, “Past and Present,” <http://www.ayala.com.ph/viewRich.php?id=1>.

⁷ “BPI has the distinction of being the Philippines’ most consistently profitable bank. It holds the record as the largest bank in market capitalization (P150.91 billion, or U.S.\$3.14 billion, as of May 15, 2009).” See Ayala, “Investing in Tomorrow,” http://www.ayala.com.ph/about_ayala_interests_financial_services_landing.php.

the Ayala Insurance Holdings Corporation, and various contract assembly, electronics manufacturing, export processing, air charter service, food and agri-business, and automotive companies. The Ayala Corporation owns the Ayala Land, Inc., which includes hotels, real estate development, management companies, and the Ayala Malls, one of the country's largest shopping mall chains. Its companies extend internationally with activities in countries including Hong Kong, Japan, Malaysia, Australia, Singapore, Macau, Thailand, Indonesia, and the United States⁸ in such fields as property development, property investment, investment holding, trading, and fund management. Its presence in the Philippines—through advertising, university endowments, development partnerships, newspaper and magazine articles, political appointments and connections, public goods projects, and aristocratic Spanish-era family largesse—is almost without peer. As described in a high-volume Philippine newspaper, for its philanthropic and business reach, the Ayala Corporation garnered “top honors as the Philippines’ best managed large-capitalization company in *Asiamoney*’s Annual Best Managed Companies Awards, [and] a spot among the top ten Philippine companies in *The Wall Street Journal Asia*’s ranking of the region’s 200 most admired public companies.”⁹

In their description, the Ayala Corporation’s “philanthropic fervor” began in the 1860s when the “first Filipino woman philanthropist” Margarita Roxas de Ayala, the

⁸ The Ayala Corporation, for example, bought Grail Research, a research and decision support firm in the United States, in late 2009.

⁹ In terms of income, the “Ayala Corporation recently reported a consolidated net income of PhP9.6 billion for the first nine months of 2006.” See Doreen G. Yu, “Meet the New ‘Philanthropreneur’: Ayala Corporation Chairman Jaime Augusto Zobel De Ayala,” *The Philippine Star*, January 21, 2007, <http://www.philstar.com/Article.aspx?articleId=381098&publicationSubCategoryId=90>.

daughter of a wealthy Spanish Filipino exporter and a Spanish lady, helped establish a school for *indios*¹⁰ in the Philippines.¹¹ In 1961, the Corporation established what would become the Ayala Foundation, whose mission today as a corporate foundation is “to improve the quality of life of the Filipino by contributing to the eradication of poverty in all its forms.”¹² Among its projects, the Ayala Foundation works with local governments to connect elementary and high schools to the internet, and it operates the Ayala Museum, the Filipinas Heritage Library, two of its own schools in the Philippines, and the Ayala Foundation USA (AF-USA) in California. The U.S.-based foundation does not pursue social development projects in the United States but, rather, is a mechanism for raising funds among Filipino Americans to support the Foundation’s projects and its many partner nonprofit and charitable organizations in the Philippines.¹³

Many of the Philippines’ largest businesses, like the Ayala Corporation, support and develop corporate-initiated programs for diaspora charity or philanthropy, opportunities for Filipino Americans to collectively donate to designated projects or organizations in the Philippines. For example, ABS-CBN, a broadcasting corporation in the Philippines and purveyor of the popular Tagalog-language The Filipino Channel in

¹⁰ Term used by Spanish colonists in the denigration and control of native Filipinos.

¹¹ Margarita Roxas de Ayala “wanted to establish a school. Hence, she invited nuns from Cadiz, Spain to come to Manila to handle it. In 1862, 15 sisters of Charity and some priests embarked from Cadiz to Manila. She paid all expenses for the trip. When they arrived, she provided them with lavish accommodations. She donated to the Sisters her lot in Paco on which a building was constructed to serve as an exclusive school for girls.” See National Historical Institute, “Filipinos in History,” <http://www.nhi.gov.ph/downloads/bz0020.pdf>.

¹² Ayala Foundation, “Mission,” <http://www.ayalafoundation.org/mission.asp>.

¹³ In the pages that follow it may seem that I use “Ayala Foundation” and “Ayala Foundation USA” interchangeably. However, I purposely use “Ayala Foundation USA” when referring to this nongovernmental organization’s website and its direct efforts to raise money among Filipino Americans. While Ayala Foundation USA has only one or two employees in California, the Ayala Foundation employs dozens (if not more) in the Metro Manila area and is the central corporate social responsibility organization of the Ayala Corporation. The Ayala Foundation primarily deals with social development and cultural projects and partnerships in the Philippines.

North America, operates a widely recognized charitable project called Bantay Bata 163 with funds going to “sick and abused children” in the Philippines.¹⁴ The Red Ribbon Bakeshop, a fast-food and bakery company with stores in the Philippines and the U.S., has in the past raised money through its U.S.-based stores to fund the Educational Research and Development Assistance Foundation in the Philippines. However, the Ayala Foundation with the Ayala Foundation USA reaches the widest among the corporate social responsibility diaspora philanthropy programs, building partnerships with government agencies, the Philippine Embassy in the U.S., and national, regional, and local groups of Filipino American associations and organizations. For an example of its connections in the upper echelons of Filipino society, recently-elected Philippine president Benigno “Noynoy” Aquino served as the guest of honor at the organization’s gala for the launching of its name change,¹⁵ where he endorsed the Foundation’s project of diaspora philanthropy at the event in San Francisco to an audience of philanthropists, business executives and Filipino American community and national organization leaders.¹⁶

President Aquino’s praise of the Foundation’s leadership role in institutionalizing diaspora philanthropy reflects the Ayala Foundation’s very purposeful contributions to a larger conversation on Filipino American involvement in Philippine national development, its leaders having produced dozens of articles, books, speeches, and

¹⁴ Bantay Bata 163 (“protecting the child”) is an international donation program of the Philippine-based ABS-CBN Corporation, an entertainment and media group with television affiliates in the Middle East, Europe, Asia, and North America that provide the avenue for their global call for donations, whereas the Ayala Foundation focuses its international philanthropic/charitable work in the U.S. and Philippines. See ABS-CBN Foundation, “Bantay Bata Homepage,” <http://www.bantaybata163.com>.

¹⁵ See note 2 above.

¹⁶ See Cherie M. Querol Moreno, “Aquino Lauds ‘Diaspora Philanthropy,’” *Philippine News*, October 1, 2010, <http://www.philippinenews.com/article.php?id=9769>.

conferences specifically on the subject of Filipino American diaspora philanthropy. This chapter examines the self-representation of the Ayala Foundation and the Ayala Foundation USA and its engagement with diaspora philanthropy as a discourse and as a practice through its organizational publications and websites; public statements by the president, chairman, and directors regarding the goals and vision of the foundations; interviews with directors and consultants; and participation in conferences and workshops supported and designed by the Foundations. Rather than evaluating the success or failure in meeting their stated goals through their various social development projects and partnerships, a technical approach outside the scope of this dissertation, this chapter contextualizes the ideological work performed by the corporate foundations as they claim for themselves a prominent place in the emerging world of diaspora philanthropy and considers the material implications of its ideals and practices regarding the politics of Filipino American diaspora giving. Just as consciously as the Ayala Corporation contributes to the discourse on diaspora philanthropy, so must we examine the premises upon which they stake their claims and its attendant consequences.

Corporate social responsibility in its simplest form, as the phrase suggests, is the belief that corporations have a responsibility to society. Every major multinational corporation touts their commitment to social responsibility and similar codes of conduct in their websites, annual reports, and other shareholder literatures, where the institutionalization of their corporate social responsibility programs take many forms and guises but with general claim of “integrating public interest into the corporation’s

mission”¹⁷ with attendant significance of corporate-drive missions in the production of public space. Under its corporate social responsibility agenda, programs of the Ayala Foundation include assistance to schools and hospitals, the development of leadership programs for Filipino youth, the creation of museums and green spaces, and opportunities for grants to existing nongovernmental organizations in the Philippines. Rather than a perfunctory response to one of the Philippines’ most successful profit-making corporations, the chapter interrogates how the Ayala Corporation’s voluntary commitments to social issues become representational practices determining the extent and context of their mobilization of Filipino American diaspora philanthropy and organizing toward a homeland with less hunger and poverty but with starkly unequal access to resources. To a certain extent, the Ayala Foundation USA sets the terms of national conversations around Filipino American diaspora philanthropy. Consequently, the discourse of corporate social responsibility refracts the terms upon which Filipino Americans participate in diaspora giving, binding diaspora attention to the pervasiveness of poverty in the Philippines and the degradation of Filipino workers in certain sectors to the interests of profit. An interrogation of this public integration is a starting point for how corporate social responsibility programs like the Ayala Corporation’s contribute to the discussion of diaspora philanthropy, a realm of giving that unites corporate foundations and the priorities of the market with ethnic/racial mobilizations and homeland imaginings. Giving practices are an integral component of how Filipino Americans imagine their diasporic and ethnic identities, orientations toward the

¹⁷ Robert A. Senser, “Corporate Social Responsibility: A Fledgling Movement Faces a Crucial Test,” *Dissent* (Winter 2007): 77.

Philippine homeland and other modes of diaspora, and productions of diaspora-homeland space. Diaspora is not taken as merely a descriptor to refer to the movement of Filipinos to the United States and almost every country in the world or to the multiple border crossings that occur when Filipino Americans support philanthropic, development, and environmental projects and issues in the Philippines. Rather, diaspora is a social and cultural formation expressed through discourses of giving and belonging, the processes and imaginings that structure those categories, and the terms upon which they are claimed.

The Ayala Foundation USA and the Filipino American Market

At its inception, the Ayala Foundation depended on large grants from external sponsors such as the Ford Foundation in addition to the portion of their operating money received from the Ayala Corporation. Beginning in the post-Cold War 1990s, the directors and managers of the Ayala Foundation noticed a decreasing trend in funding from external sponsors and state-sponsored development agencies, particularly from the United States, Canada, and Japan. To maintain support for its projects and the nongovernmental organizations in the Philippines it sponsors, the Ayala Foundation turned its energies toward Filipino America. As an Ayala Foundation manager revealed in an interview:

The Ayala Foundation USA was created in 2000 mainly because in Ayala Foundation, we realized that the money that we get for social development activities from the different funding agencies is getting smaller every year, so we thought that it would be good to tap the Filipino Americans. Because about, I

think, the estimate is about sixty percent or more of the remittance comes from the U.S., the U.S. becomes your logical market for looking for funds. Previously, most NGOs in the Philippines would only depend on writing and submitting proposals to these funding agencies, but now that [funding] transferred to other countries, we had to find a better way of mobilizing funds for social development.¹⁸

This larger international shift would prove to be important for how the Ayala Foundation figured Filipino Americans and the Filipino diaspora into its social development projects in the Philippines.

Initially, the Ayala Foundation USA intended to raise money from within Filipino America to go toward a general development fund that they would control and disperse to Philippine-based social development projects and nongovernmental organizations. They had hoped, said Acoba, that Filipino Americans “would just give, would entrust their money to the Foundation and... assume that we would give it to certain development needs, the greatest needs of our country.” As they discovered through experience with

¹⁸ Tony Acoba [pseud.], interview by author, Makati, Philippines, June 17, 2005. Acoba was at the time of the interview a manager of the Ayala Foundation. His description of the shift in funding is echoed by Gisela Velasco: “A major cause of concern among NGOs nowadays is the issue of sustaining the work that has flourished in the face of declining foreign assistance. It should be noted that the majority of the support for all social development work came from overseas assistance... The size of this funding dramatically rose during the Corazon Aquino government and led to a rapid increase in the number of NGOs. As the country moved from the dark days of repression and the glorious days of democratic uprising, donors shifted their attention to other countries in Eastern Europe and Africa. The problem of over-dependence on external funds has prompted some forward-looking NGOs to start building other sources of funding through endowments and investment management, undertaking business ventures and providing fee-based technical services.” See “Corporate Philanthropy in Asia: The Philippine Case: An Overview of East and Southeast Asian Philanthropy,” (New York City: The Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society: CUNY Graduate Center, 1996), 9, http://www.philanthropy.org/publications/online_publications/asia.pdf.

donors and through their own research with Filipino-American-targeted focus groups¹⁹ most Filipino American donors wanted, instead, to have more control and direct their gifts to particular organizations and be able to attach a specific organization or project name to their monetary donations. As a result, the Ayala Foundation began to foster direct and more sustained relationships with nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations in the Philippines deemed “worthy of public support”²⁰ by the Foundation, compiling them in order to market, to use their language, the organizations to the Filipino American donor pool. Filipino American donors could then choose their recipients through of list of organizations with projects approved and monitored by the Ayala Foundation.²¹

Nongovernmental and nonprofit organizations are “imagined to be expressions of community,” describes Miranda Joseph in *Against the Romance of Community* where she proposes that “both the rhetorical invocation of community and the social relationships that are discursively articulated as community are imbricated in capitalism,” prompting an argument “against the idealization of community as a utopian state of human relatedness.”²² In this study of the Ayala Foundation and its invocation of diaspora philanthropy, the relationship between nongovernmental organizations and this idea of

¹⁹ The Ayala Foundation hired a consultant to conduct interviews and focus groups with Filipino Americans as a “pre-marketing study” in order to better understand the giving motivations and patterns of Filipinos in the United States. The study was written up as J. Robbie Fabian, “Ayala Foundation USA Pre-Marketing Study: Research on the Philanthropic Patterns and Inclinations of Filipino Americans,” unpublished report, April 15, 2003.

²⁰ Ayala Foundation USA, “Guidelines for Partnership,” http://www.af-usa.org/guidelines_for_partnership.asp.

²¹ The Ayala Foundation USA, the California-based sister organization to the Ayala Foundation, does not carry out its own projects but works to raise money from Filipino Americans to support those nongovernmental organizations and the Ayala Foundation’s own projects in the Philippines.

²² Miranda Joseph, *Against the Romance of Community* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 70, viii-xi.

community discursively appears in two ways: in the production of the Philippine homeland and of the Filipino American diaspora. The nongovernmental organizations partnered by and listed on the Ayala Foundation USA website for the perusal by the intended Filipino American market are, collectively, the Ayala Foundation USA's expression of the imagined community of the Philippine nation. The Ayala Foundation portrays the Philippine national community, recalling that the Ayala Foundation USA very recently renamed itself the Philippine Development Foundation USA,²³ an evocation of its self-appointed responsibility for national development, through their assemblage of nongovernmental organizations in the Philippines worthy of Filipino American support, or, as the sanctioned routes toward diaspora-sponsored national development. It claims this responsibility and legitimizes its role in leading a diaspora philanthropy movement in large part through the financial successes and economic vision of its parent company, the Ayala Corporation, shaping and defining the giving practices available to the Filipino American diaspora.²⁴ To reiterate Pres. Nonoy Aquino's praise from the second quotation of the chapter's epigraph, Filipino American diaspora as enabled by the Ayala Foundation USA provides the motherland with "hope against hope" and a "brighter future" for Filipinos in the Philippines.

The community invoked by the Ayala Foundation's promise of social responsibility extends to Filipinos in America as partners in national development. This framework provides insight into Miranda Joseph's position against the "idealization of community as a utopian state of human relatedness," particularly regarding the

²³ See note 2 above.

²⁴ See the second quotation of the epigraph that frames this chapter.

idealization of diaspora and its relationship to homeland. Corporate social responsibility and other corporate codes, voluntary efforts to address societal needs, come at a cost. As a corporate social responsibility program, the Foundation's institutionalization of diaspora philanthropy limits the Filipino American diaspora's framework for engaging social inequality and labor exploitation in the Philippines. In his history of corporate social responsibility initiatives, James Rowe argues "that the primary reason for business's trenchant interest in corporate codes is that they are an effective means of quelling popular discontent with corporate power and the political change that discontent might impel."²⁵ The Ayala Foundation's extensive commitments to institutionalizing their idea of diaspora philanthropy as a corporate social responsibility program, which the CEO of the Ayala Corporation describes as "align[ing] profit making with national development goals,"²⁶ informs its mobilization of diaspora giving discourse, institutionalizing Filipino American relationships to and diasporic orientations toward homeland in opposition to radicalized labor and deeper political economic analyses. As quoted above from an interview with manager Tony Acoba, the Ayala Foundation claims the ability to identify "the greatest needs of [the] country," thereby defining solutions to human and social needs as complementary to the business of profit making. The Ayala Foundation enables networks, spaces, identities, forms of giving, and approaches to national development infused with profit-making values and neoliberal logics. Because of their high-profile status with connections to presidents, the Philippine embassy in the

²⁵ Rowe, *Corporate Social Responsibility as Business Strategy*, 4.

²⁶ As stated by Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala, chairman and CEO of the board of the Ayala Corporation and co-vice chairman of the board for the Ayala Foundation, quoted in Doreen Yu, "Ayala on Solid Ground after 175 Years," *Philippine Star*, March 9, 2009, <http://www.philstar.com/Article.aspx?articleId=446936&publicationSubCategoryId=207>.

United States, business heads in the Philippines and among wealthy Filipino Americans and Filipino American community and political leaders, the Ayala Foundation extends their vision and greatly impacts the course and current-day institutionalization of Filipino American diaspora giving.

To illustrate, consider their representational practice regarding programs for diaspora philanthropy. The homepage of the Ayala Foundation USA (AF-USA) website describes the organization as working to “create opportunities for Filipinos in the U.S. to help the Philippines by facilitating meaningful contributions to social development initiatives.”²⁷ The website goes on to describe that because it partners with over one hundred nongovernmental organizations in the Philippines, “AF-USA is able to address the country’s greatest needs. We assist Filipinos committed to helping the homeland in supporting projects closest to their hearts.”²⁸ Ideas such as “meaningful contributions” and “the country’s greatest needs” are circumscribed by the dual commitment to profit and the market in attempts to limit the nature of the giving relationship between the Filipino American diaspora subject and the Philippine homeland and of the space of the homeland as disconnected from the economic conditions that structure its greatest needs. To this end, the Ayala Foundation USA emphasizes the *ease* with which Filipino Americans can belong to the Filipino diaspora and therefore to the Philippine homeland by donating through their system, an ease that stands in contrast to the fraught associations and accusations of betrayal that often mark this relationship between Filipino Americans and the homeland. For Filipinos in the United States in particular, “leaving

²⁷ Ayala Foundation USA, “Home,” <http://www.af-usa.org>.

²⁸ Ibid.

the Philippines is tantamount to a betrayal of sorts, a nonfulfillment of an obligation to contribute to the nation.”²⁹ While remittances support one’s family, the Ayala Foundation USA offers an opportunity to easily fulfill larger national obligations through donor participation in their program. The Ayala Foundation USA offers the following “Donor Flowchart” to encourage the Filipino American diaspora written as their Filipino American donor market, strategically emphasizing the simplicity of “making a difference” in the Philippines:

Making a donation to the Philippines can be as easy as 1-2-3! Step 1. Determine where your donation will go. Step 2. Determine how you want to make your donation. Step 3. Enjoy the satisfaction of making a difference in the Philippines.³⁰

Inequality, social needs, and the creation and maintenance of poverty disappear in this model of giving, still the Ayala Foundation USA offers a sense of homeland belonging through “the satisfaction of making a difference in the Philippines,” personalizing and depoliticizing collective problems in the Philippines.

The Ayala Foundation’s public materials do not describe the qualifications necessary for inclusion as one of their partner organizations in the Philippines except that it must be a “legitimate” nonprofit organization and implement projects with “direct impact on the country’s areas of greatest needs” and “are worthy of public support by donors in the United States.”³¹ By “legitimate” organization they mean an organization

²⁹ Benito M. Jr. Vergara, “Betrayal, Class Fantasies, and the Filipino Nation in Daly City,” *Philippine Sociological Review* 44, nos. 1-4 (1996): 143.

³⁰ Ayala Foundation USA, “Flowchart,” http://www.af-usa.org/forms/Donation_Flowchart.pdf.

³¹ Ayala Foundation USA, “Guidelines for Partnership.”

that has been granted Donee Status by the Philippine Council for NGO Certification,³² underlying the bureaucratic and corporate nature of the nonprofit industry and its hold on social change.³³ While many of the organizations describe the services they provide to their communities in the Philippines on the Ayala Foundation USA website, there is no discussion by the Ayala Foundation as to how areas of need are initially judged. As for organizations that are “worthy of support by donors in the United States,” earlier-referenced Tony Acoba describes the process as involving the organization’s marketability and not its politics of social change or need, further contributing to the decontextualization of the complexity of social struggles and the politics of giving. Acoba states:

So, the operation involves the U.S. side and the Philippines side. On the Philippine side, over the years we’ve been recruiting partner NGOs thinking that that’s the only objective—to recruit NGOs. But later we learned that we should also be selective in inviting NGOs to partner with us... We should look at organizations, we should invite organizations to partner with us if they have the capacity to number one, do a fundraiser in the U.S. Do they have contacts in the U.S.? Are the projects of this particular organization *marketable in the U.S.*?³⁴

³² According to their website, the Philippine Council for NGO Certification is a “service organization whose main function is to certify non-profit organizations that meet established minimum criteria for financial management and accountability.” The director of the Ayala Foundation’s Center for Social Development, Mario Deriquito, is a member of the Philippine Council for NGO Certification’s Board of Trustees. See Philippine Council for NGO Certification, “About Us,” <http://www.pcnc.com.ph/about-us.html>.

³³ For an elaboration of this idea, see INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence, ed., *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex* (Boston: South End Press 2009).

³⁴ Tony Acoba (pseud.), interview by author; italics added for emphasis.

The marketization of Filipino America reduces diaspora giving to a monetary exchange. According to the Ayala Foundation, because Filipino Americans provide the bulk of remittances to the Philippines, they become the “logical market” for partners in social development. While it is a fact that Filipino in the United States collectively contribute the largest percentage of remittances compared to im/migrants of other countries, at least as far as it is measurable through formal channels, constructing Filipino Americans as a market holds implications for how the Ayala Foundation approaches ideas of giving and diaspora. Remittances may signal the possibility of diaspora philanthropy programs to fundraise in Filipino America, but remittances do not fulfill national obligations for Filipino Americans, which the Ayala Foundation connects to making a donation and “the satisfaction of making a difference in the Philippines.”³⁵ Because there is no context for how the Ayala Foundation USA identifies or historicizes the “greatest needs” of the Philippines, they encourage its market to believe that each of the organizations listed contribute to national development or frame need and poverty equally and interchangeably. The projects are not valued for political or economic commitments, but for emotional ones (“we assist Filipinos committed to helping the homeland in supporting projects closest to their hearts”), furthering a disconnect among sources of economic problems in the Philippines, diaspora-homeland belonging, and proposed solutions and frameworks for addressing such slippery concepts of inequality and need.

If the Filipino Americans are the market, then the various nonprofit organizations listed on the Ayala Foundation USA are the commodities, chosen for their marketability to Filipino Americans and their emotional appeal, producing a homeland that, perhaps,

³⁵ See note 30 above on the Ayala Foundation USA Flowchart.

extends a narcissistic fulfillment more so than avenues for social transformation. The website, which is their primary market campaign, creates products that are legible for and “saleable”³⁶ in the Filipino American market, their potential donor pool. The organizations and projects presented through the Donate Now link of the Ayala Foundation USA website become interchangeable, equivalent in this process of commodification. The commodification of social needs occurs as each Philippine-based nongovernmental organization loses its particularity, obscuring the ways that organizations envision and politicize transformation in the Philippines. The different qualities of specific organizations are transformed into a common unit of measurement—they are all now merely “approved partners” of the Ayala Foundation USA—even if the politics or goals of their organizations may be fundamentally at odds, thus signaling to the diaspora a depoliticized Philippine homeland community. Organizations are partnered with the Ayala Foundation USA based on their personalized and emotional appeal to the Filipino American market. Its institutionalization of diaspora philanthropy produces a Filipino American subject in relationship to the depoliticized Philippine organizations, promoting a pluralist, multicultural diasporic connection where the Filipino American subject identifies with “women,” “health,” or “education” founded upon personal feelings and identifications.³⁷ The website interface of the Donations Page

³⁶ For example, the Ayala Foundation believes that the “most saleable,” to quote Tony Acoba, projects are “projects about education and about health. From donating second hand medical equipment to rural health units in the Philippines, to donating actual cash for health programs like health-related programs like feeding program for malnourished children.” See Acoba [pseudo.], interview with author.

³⁷ Cf. Catherine E. Walsh and what she refers to as “neoliberal multiculturalism” such that the “cultural logic of global capitalism comes to serve as a modern-day form of colonization that obfuscates and at the same time maintains the colonial difference through the discursive rhetoric of multiculturalism.” See Walsh, “The (Re)articulation of Political Subjectivities and Colonial Difference in Ecuador: Reflections on Capitalism and the Geopolitics of Knowledge,” *Nepantla: Views from South* 3, no. 1 (2002): 83.

supports a lack of differentiation among the organizations, which is echoed by the Ayala Foundation's approach to diaspora philanthropy overall. Essentially, they promote the idea that Filipino Americans should *just give*, that it does not matter what kind of organization you give to, that your own quest for understanding poverty, labor inequality and need should not be connected to actual instances of poverty. While one can argue that philanthropy as it has been institutionalized has been depoliticized so that, at the least, it merely encourages donations to no other transformative end or, at its worst, stabilizes the social system and enables the violence of the market, the Ayala Foundation is significant in its contributions to the discourse on "diaspora philanthropy," necessitating a critical transnational analysis. What matters according to the rhetoric of the Ayala Foundation is that Filipino Americans should simply give and that they should give to the Foundation's own approved list of recipient Philippine-based nongovernmental organizations. As narrated by Mario Deriquito, director of the Ayala Foundation's Center for Social Development:

Like a murder mystery, Filipino Americans have motive, resources, and opportunity. Incomes are high in a culture where the spirit of philanthropy is high. Most in the U.S. are new immigrants so there are still strong emotional ties. The Philippine needs to benefit from these ties. Giving is usually to relatives, small infrastructure projects in hometowns and school renovation and scholarship. The potential is in redirecting giving and new donors. It's this potential that AF-

USA hopes to unlock. It is the Ayala Foundation USA's goal to redirect current giving practices. Wean them from their localized ways of giving.³⁸

It is not my objective here to rank the partner organizations or argue that some are more worthy of support than others. However, differences among the partner organizations appear even from the short descriptions of the partner organization listed on the Ayala Foundation USA website, ideological differences that we have been trained by the media to either gravitate toward or have a knee-jerk reaction against, depending on our politics and histories. The chapter does not examine specific case studies of the organizations listed as partners of the Ayala Foundation and may not grasp the implications of perceived ideological differences among the partner organizations. While terms used by the partner organizations on the Ayala Foundation website to describe their organizational politics such as “family values,” “fighting injustice,” “the empowerment of women,” and “alternative” may be emptied of significance, they operate as political shorthand nonetheless.³⁹ Rather than a detriment of contradictions, the Ayala

³⁸ This quote is from a presentation given by the director of the Center for Social Development at the Ayala Foundation. Mario Deriquito, conference paper presented at Good News for the Poor: A Conference on Filipino Diaspora Philanthropy, University of Santo Tomas, Manila, Philippines, June 9-10, 2005.; from author's audio-taped field notes.

³⁹ For examples of how some projects appeal to certain potential donors along these lines, compare the names and descriptions of the following organizations from the Ayala Foundation USA Approved Projects list: 1) “Defending Family Values Foundation is a non-stock, non-profit organization that aims to initiate, develop, support and sponsor all forms of programs and projects geared toward the development and preservation of family values and the dignity of human life”; 2) “Third World Movement Against the Exploitation of Women (TW-MAE-W) Direct services for sexually exploited women. An on-going rehabilitation program for sexually abused women and children seeks to develop the self-worth of the beneficiaries as they go through the process of self-healing and renewal via education, medical and legal assistance and guidance and counseling”; 3) “Lola Grande Foundation for Women and Children, Inc. is a start-up organization that aims to advance women empowerment by promoting activities geared towards women's rights, gender responsive governance, equal human rights for women in the workplace, prevention of trafficking of women and reintegration of returning women migrants”; and 4) “North Negros Community Development Foundation, Inc. is an organization that aims to provide alternative income generation options to hundreds of sugar central and sugar farm workers in the northern part of Negros

Foundation benefits from the perceived ideological range of partner organizations, a perception that supports the illusion that the Ayala Foundation represents the homeland in its entirety and in all of its political ideological leanings. The range of organization choices supports the Ayala Foundation's claims that suggest that their list of approved partner organizations stand in metonymically for not just the Philippine nation but the opportunity for homeland belonging at large. Therein lies the danger as this foundation, this corporation, and this practice of hierarchical community obscure other methods of organizing the homeland and other narrations of homeland belonging that would contradict their claims of totality. The Ayala Foundation has a vested interest to not support organizations critical of the Ayala Corporation, thus controlling the range of organizations available for this version of the Philippine homeland community. For example, the Ayala Foundation USA does not and likely would not include the IBON Foundation in its list of projects. The IBON Foundation of the Philippines had been vocal in the anti-privatization of water movement in the Philippines, which was unable to stop the Ayala Corporation's 1997 purchase of the water distributor, Manila Water, Inc., a previously public service.⁴⁰ However, the point is not to encourage Filipino Americans to find the "correct" organization, either to a certain politics or to their own sense of self, to which they can donate. Rather, the focus is on the implications of diaspora giving through an intermediary foundation that *actively* isolates society from history and political economy, the separation of which serves to maintain the global hierarchies that, for example, position and construct the Philippines as the feminized labor exporter for the

Occidental and to promote their general well-being through livelihood, education, health and nutrition programs." Ayala Foundation USA, "View Approved Projects," <http://www.af-usa.org/projects.asp>.

⁴⁰ This case is discussed below.

world. Given the status of this corporate foundation coupled with the ease of the internet in facilitating Filipino American diaspora giving re-turns, attention must be paid to the linkages among consumer society and the politics of diaspora giving. As Paul Gilroy describes, “Identity has even been taken into the viscera of postmodern commerce, where the goal of planetary marketing promotes not just the targeting of objects and services to the identities of particular consumers but the idea that any product whatsoever can be suffused with identity. Any commodity is open to being ‘branded’ in ways that solicit identification and try to orchestrate identity.”⁴¹ Even as the internet produces transnational linkages, it enables the production of diaspora giving formations premised on the individualized support of commodified organizations “closest to their hearts.” Implications, commitments, and political ideals detach from the giving relationship aside from the maintenance of diaspora-homeland links and consumerist community. Because giving is so central to the lives of Filipinos in the United States, the implications are no less than the possibility of imagining a different world to which they can belong. As a corporate foundation, the Ayala Foundation erases whatever harms its parent business may cause Filipinos in the Philippines. As a business-oriented mediator that claims to ensure that donations by Filipino Americans “make a difference in the Philippines,” the Ayala Foundation creates a gap between Filipino Americans and the realities of poverty in the Philippines, thus emptying their diaspora giving of the possibility of its potential for transformation.⁴²

⁴¹ Gilroy, *Against Race: Imagining Political Culture Beyond the Color Line* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2000), 98.

⁴² Cf. Patricia Mooney Nickel and Angela M. Eikenberg, “A Critique of the Discourse of Marketized Philanthropy,” *American Behavioral Scientist* 52 (2009): 975.

Diaspora Dreams

Giving and return are inexorably linked for migrants. Revisiting the two quotes of this chapter's epigraph, these statements are not merely used to point out the irony given reference to the country's largest corporate foundation of one the country's richest business families and its celebration by the president of the Philippines, but to theorize how the claim of a "*dream* of a world where Filipinos, wherever they are, are bound together by their common desire to effect positive change in the Philippines" and the agency of Filipino Americans participating in diaspora philanthropy to provide "*hope against hope*...so a lot more Filipinos [in the Philippines] have a brighter future today" should not be understood apart from the Ayala Corporation's position in the political economy of the Philippines.⁴³ The Foundation's dream is not a passive wish but imagined in their narratives of diaspora belonging and enacted and institutionalized through their projects, the organization of its corporate foundation, and its partnerships with Philippine government agencies. The logics that sustain their position in the Philippine political economy and the Philippines' role in the global economy transmit to and in their discourse on diaspora philanthropy, shaping their dreams for a better Philippines. The Ayala Corporation's use of a corporate social responsibility platform and the subsequent organization of their two corporate foundations are also forms of imagining but of a social order where the externalities of transnational industry do not contradict the choices presented to Filipino American donors or impede the freedom for profit making.

⁴³ Emphasis added.

My use of imagining here is indebted to the critical work of Neferti Xina M. Tadiar. In her work, *Fantasy-Production: Sexual Economies and Other Philippine Consequences for the New World Order*, Tadiar argues that “dreams are the concrete work of imagination”⁴⁴ and that “imagination, as culturally organized social practice, is an intrinsic, constitutive part of political economy.” She continues,

Capitalism and state rule, and not only nationalism, are suffused with imagination. Unless we think that political and economic structures are the sole invention of those in power, it makes important sense to see the social force of imagination at work in these ‘structural realities’ before its expression in recent, more visible ‘culturalist’ forms such as ethnic nationalism and the active construction of new diasporic identities through electronic media.⁴⁵

For the context at hand, corporate social responsibility and philanthropy are products of the imagination as are diaspora and the nation. These are the narrations of diaspora philanthropy. In accordance with Tadiar, the Ayala Foundation’s evocations of diaspora philanthropy cannot be understood as distinct or separate from the fantasy of the Free World in which the Philippines participates in its export of racialized, sexualized, and gendered Filipino bodies as labor, and its regimes of accumulation and standards of “free trade,” “development,” and “corporate citizenship” in which the Ayala Corporation participates. To understand the Ayala Corporation’s “desires”—again, harkening back to the chapter’s epigraph—as universal, as every Filipino’s wish for a Philippines with less hunger and poverty, is to ignore the extent that such dreams “fuel and further the logics

⁴⁴ Neferti Xina M. Tadiar, *Fantasy-Production: Sexual Economies and Other Philippine Consequences for the New World Order* (Manila, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2004), 6.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

of the dominant global order.”⁴⁶ Furthermore, from the epigraph’s initial clause, they, the Ayala Foundation, are “undeterred by all the challenges” they face, a positioning that raises crucial questions for the study of homeland giving: How are those “challenges” contextualized within the terms of corporate philanthropy? How might organized giving by Filipino Americans contribute to the maintenance of inequality in the Philippines? In other words, how does the fantasy of corporate philanthropy—“the shared ground upon which the actions and identities of its participants are predicated,”⁴⁷ to again borrow from Tadiar—organize the space of diaspora and homeland as well as diaspora-homeland connection imagined by the Foundation? International NGOs recognize the Ayala Foundation as a leader in promoting the ideals of corporate social responsibility and for developing an international model for diaspora philanthropy.⁴⁸ For example, Senior Fellow at the John F. Kennedy School of Government Simon Zadek writes, “And of course particular corporations from around the world offer celebrated cases of good

⁴⁶ Tadiar, *Fantasy-Production*, 7. Earlier in the introduction, Tadiar writes, “When I speak of dreams, I use the term loosely to indicate that our actions are also wishes, the expression of which is constrained by the unconscious or, more accurately, imaginary structures and logics of organization of our material realities. In my usage, fantasies are the hegemonic forms of expression of our desiring-actions. Dreams are the concrete work of imagination while fantasies are the abstract forms into which this work becomes subsumed within the world-system of production. Fantasies are, on this view, alienated means of production, while the desiring-actions in dreams are living labour.” See Tadiar, *Fantasy-Production*, 6.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁴⁸ As I will develop later in the chapter, the Ayala Foundation is held up as *the* model for diaspora philanthropy. Organizations internationally have invited the president of the Ayala Foundation and the Ayala Foundation USA, Victoria Garchitorena, to present on the Foundation’s approach to diaspora philanthropy. For example, Garchitorena was a featured speaker for two separate United Nations-sponsored conferences as an expert on diaspora philanthropy and was the lead researcher for a case study on the Philippines that examined the relationship between diaspora and development. For a view of Garchitorena’s presentation to the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, see *Migration and Development: Philippine Diaspora Philanthropy* (New York City: United Nations Institute for Training and Research, 2007), For the Asian Development Bank example, see Clay Westcott and Jennifer Brinkerhoff, eds., *Converting Migration Drains into Gains: Harnessing the Resources of Overseas Professionals* (Asian Development Bank. Manila, Philippines, 2006).

corporate citizenship, such as...the Ayala Corporation in the Philippines.”⁴⁹ As far as the Ayala Corporation defends its status in the Philippine politically economy, the diaspora dreams of the Ayala Foundation obscure the extent to which its very existence depends on the protection and elaboration of global capitalism. The Ayala Corporation has had no small impact on the Philippine economy, and it, notably grew during the Corazon Aquino presidential administration, which coincided with the height of neoliberal structural adjustment polities. For example, the Ayala Group was central in implementing the strategy of developing export processing zones for semiconductors and agribusiness,⁵⁰ which the government pursued in order to abide by the guidelines of neoliberal multilateral lending agencies, contributing to the international division of labor and feminization of “cheap” labor. Moreover, the Ayala Foundation exists, in part, to control more radical demands than can be encapsulated by its list of “legitimate organizations” for the Filipino American market, offering itself as the solution to systemic inequalities and unequal access to resources. The resulting program of diaspora philanthropy, this chapter argues, while serving a range of populations with often dire and immediate needs, functions to contain anti-capitalist threats in the Philippines and promotes a Filipino American diaspora in opposition to radical transformation of inequality in the Philippines.

The Privatization of Human Need and Social Responsibility

⁴⁹ See Zadek, *The Civil Corporation: The New Economy of Corporate Citizenship* (Sterling, VA: Earthscan Publications, 2001), 55.

⁵⁰ Kenji Koike, “The Ayala Group During the Aquino Period: Diversification Along with a Changing Ownership and Management Structure,” *The Developing Economies* 31, no. 4 (Dec. 1993): 444-5.

The chapter now turns to a specific example of the bifurcated approach to development by the Ayala Corporation in order to consider the implications for diaspora philanthropy and the possibilities for social transformation. In 1997, the Ayala Corporation participated in the water privatization program for the area surrounding the Metro Manila capital area through its company, Manila Water, Inc., a business transaction that became the largest water privatization program in the world. The World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and the Philippine administration all agreed that the deal would ultimately serve the public, an argument based on the belief that the private sector is better equipped to deliver the service more efficiently than the state, at least as described by the reigning neoliberal logic of the multilateral institutions, and with less corruption. Twelve years later, under the control of Ayala Corporation's Manila Water, Inc., reports concede measurably greater access to higher quality water and water services than there had been before. While private sector participation by the Ayala Corporation through its subsidiary Manila Water, Inc. did indeed increase efficiencies in the distribution of water resources and Manila Water's corporate social responsibility programs increased water access in extremely impoverished communities, there are other definitions of success and more critical measurements that we must consider. As stated by Philippine-based economist Jude Esguerra, the ultimate result of the privatization of water was a "corporate muddle," ultimately making "the Manila experience a failure" as it was made "primarily into a tool for advancing and preserving private, not public, interest."⁵¹

⁵¹ Jude Esguerra, *The Corporate Muddle of Manila's Water Concessions: New Rules, New Roles: Does PSP Benefit the Poor?* (Middlesex and London: WaterAid and Tearfund, 2003), 8-9.

The privatization of water in the Philippines cannot be understood without bearing in mind the ascendancy and rule of neoliberal programs through the conditions set by multilateral institutions.⁵² The road to water privatization in the Philippines began during Ferdinand Marcos' period of martial law⁵³ when the Philippines agreed to move toward the privatization of state-owned assets as a condition for a \$300 million loan from the World Bank. In efforts to dismantle monopolies controlled by Marcos' cronies and support a doomed strategy of debt repayment to international lending agencies, Marcos' successor President Corazon Aquino (president from 1986-1992) issued Presidential Proclamation 50, mandating a "program for the expeditious disposition and privatization of certain government corporations and/or the assets thereof, and creating the committee on privatization and the asset privatization trust." Corazon Aquino's successor Fidel Ramos (president from 1992-1998) solidified the process, ushering a deal with the IMF that specified the privatization of water as one of its conditions for a structural adjustment⁵⁴ agreement.⁵⁵

⁵² Walden Bello, et al., *The Anti-Development State: The Political Economy of Permanent Crisis in the Philippines* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines, Department of Sociology and Focus on the Global South, 2004), 189-90.

⁵³ Ferdinand Marcos was elected president of the Philippines in 1965, declared martial law in 1972, and was impeached and later removed from office, 1985-1986.

⁵⁴ Structural adjustment in the Philippines, or the implementation of free-market policies as imposed by multilateral lending agencies, occurred in three phases that roughly corresponded with the presidencies of Marcos, Aquino, and Ramos. The emphasis during the early 1980s was on trade liberalization, the emphasis from the last years of martial law and for the Aquino administration was on debt repayment, and the emphasis through Ramos' term was on deregulation and privatization. See Walden Bello, et al., *The Anti-Development State*, 12.

⁵⁵ While a severe drought in the Manila area and severe ongoing water shortages prompted Congress to grant Ramos emergency powers to enter into contracts with private corporations to address the severe lack of water access supplied by the government company the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, the stage was clearly set for the move toward privatization by the previous three administrations. See Walden Bello, et al., *The Anti-Development State*, 195, 197. Additionally, for a description of the Asian Development Bank's strategies for forcing the Philippines toward water privatization through the leveraging of loans and funds, see Freedom from Debt Coalition-Philippines, "ADB and the Privatization of Metro Manila's Water Distribution System: Corporate Greed takes Over Public Welfare," (paper

Soon after Ramos agreed to privatize water, the deal with the Ayala Corporation was made. The state-owned water utility, the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, would be divided into two service areas and awarded to two separate contracts as recommend by consultants from the International Finance Corporation of the World Bank who claimed that regulators could better monitor the performance of two corporate entities offering services even if those services were offered in separate locales. The Ayala Corporation was awarded the East Zone of the country's capital area and the Lopez group of companies was awarded the West Zone.⁵⁶ While critics and skeptics of water privatization in the Philippines at times group their critiques against both corporations and at other times find specific criticisms with the operations of each, the focus for this project is of course with the dealings of the Ayala group of companies.⁵⁷ To be clear, however, government and multilateral circles herald the Ayala Corporation's Manila Water, Inc. as a model of privatization success and the Lopez-controlled company, Maynilad, as a failure with the company attempting to back out of its contract with the state after their endeavor became untenable and unprofitable.⁵⁸ The "success" of one organization and the failure of another is clearly an important distinction, and it illustrates

prepared for the Regional Conference on the Asian Development Bank Water Policy, Quezon City, Philippines, November 13-15, 2005.

⁵⁶ The bid made by Ayala Corporation was a joint bid with the transnational United Utilities who was itself partnered with Bechtel, the large multinational construction, financial, and technology corporation. Manila Water, Inc. is now a publically traded corporation controlled by the Ayala Corporation. Recently, the Ayala Corporation bought out the United Utilities' 81.9 million common shares and economic interest in the Manila Water. See Reuters, "Ayala Corp Buys United Utilities' Stake in Manila Water," November 12, 2009.

⁵⁷ For separate critiques of the companies' processes of privatization, see Walden Bello, et al., *The Anti-Development State*, 200, 206.

⁵⁸ For more on the extraordinary failure of the Lopez company Maynilad see Jocelyn C. Cuaresma, "Pro-Poor Water Services in Metro Manila: In Search for Greater Equity," Centre on Regulation and Competition Institute for Development Policy and Management, University of Manchester Working Paper No. 81, <http://ageconsearch.umn.edu/bitstream/30635/1/cr040081.pdf>.

the risks of privatization; however, focus remains on the commodification of water in a country where the majority are poor, and not solely with the dynamics and interpretations in which the state and multilateral institutions deem privatization successful.

As designed by the International Finance Corporation, privatization would occur through concession contracts where the private companies would manage existing infrastructure to provide water services and have opportunity to charge users' fees for their services.⁵⁹ In exchange for this control, the concessionaires, Manila Water, Inc. and Maynilad, agreed to a series of provisions intended to protect the consumers. The contracts were quickly granted with very little discussion from legislators, underlying the lack of a democratic process, and to a great amount of celebration by President Ramos and the multilateral institutions. It soon became clear, however, that the bidding process was extremely flawed. The Ayala Corporation won their concession by claiming that through their efficiency they would only have to charge their customers Php2.61 per cubic meter of water, which was considerably less than the Php8.78 rate offered by the state-controlled Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System at the time.⁶⁰ The amount that the Ayala Corporation would have to pay the government for control of water services, the concession fee, depended largely upon the projected amount it would cost them to deliver water services, and the projected profits would be a controlled percentage on top of actual costs. Since their proposed rates were so low, it helped to ensure that their resulting low bid would be accepted by the government, and it would

⁵⁹ Freedom from Debt Coalition-Philippines, "ADB and the Privatization of Metro Manila's Water Distribution System," 5.

⁶⁰ See Violeta Perez-Corral, "Monitoring MWSS-Water Rates," NGO Forum on ADB Briefing Paper 01-35, October 2001, <http://www.forum-adb.org/BACKUP/pdf/Briefers/0135.pdf>; and Walden Bello, et al., *The Anti-Development State*, 200.

follow that their projected percent of profits would be similarly kept in check. In the years to follow, however, toward their profit-making ventures, Manila Water has been allowed to pass along the actual costs, capital investment expenditures, and even tax responsibilities to their customers.

The Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System and the Ayala Corporation promised their consumers that rates would decrease as a result of privatization, but rates have grown by almost 1000 percent by 2006.⁶¹ The Ayala Corporation's Manila Water achieved this rapid rate of increase for the consumer through arbitration as the terms of the initial contract disallowed such an incredible increase. As per the charter with the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, the "fair rate of return for concessionaires" was not to exceed twelve percent of the rate base.⁶² Through their persuasion with the regulatory office, Manila Water was able to reclassify their agreement so as to exceed this percentage.⁶³ Even before the regulatory office assented, Manila Water enjoyed a 40.92 percent profit return in 1999, far exceeding the twelve

⁶¹ See Freedom from Debt Coalition, "On the 10-Year Privatization Scheme of MWSS," Committee on Natural Resources House of Representatives, 14th Congress Position Paper, August 13, 2008. One 2001 report cited the increase to be from PhP2.32 (the initial bid) to PhP295. See Violeta Perez-Corral, "Monitoring MWSS-Water Rates," 2.

⁶² Arlene B. Inocencio and Cristina C. David, "Public-Private-Community Partnerships in Management and Delivery of Water to Urban Poor: The Case of Metro Manila," Philippine Institute for Development Studies Discussion Paper Series No. 2001-18, August 2001, 8.

⁶³ This process as described is greatly truncated for the sake of brevity. Initially, the handover of water services was not complete privatization as the government essentially agreed to a twenty-five year lease of assets to the private companies. Manila Water insisted that it not be held to the limitations of profit placed on private utilities and have a greater ability to increase their returns. See Freedom from Debt Coalition, Jubilee South, and Asian Pacific Movement on Debt and Development, "Profiting from People's Lives: Metro Manila's Water Privatization Saga," a joint publication by the Freedom from Debt Coalition, Jubilee South, and Asian Pacific Movement on Debt and Development, 2006, 7. Additionally, this not the only example of how Manila Water was able to retroactively rework the terms of their bid in their favor. For more on Manila Water's challenges to its initial bid in order to increase profit margins through collection mechanisms such as the Extra-ordinary Price Adjustment and the Currency Exchange Rate Adjustment, see Jude Esguerra, *The Corporate Muddle of Manila's Water Concessions*.

percent their agreement allowed.⁶⁴ Since then, the Manila Water ballooned in terms of profits and property. In 2004, Manila Water brought in PhP4.164 billion in revenue with PhP1.332 in profits, which rose to PhP8.913 billion in revenue and PhP2.788 billion or over \$58 million in profits in 2008.⁶⁵ Additionally, the company continues to expand to other areas and provinces in the Philippines and has started providing water service operations in India and Vietnam.⁶⁶

On top of the profit allowances, the initial charter allowed a six-year income tax holiday for the concessionaires.⁶⁷ Manila Water petitioned the government for extensions to their tax holiday and did not pay any corporate income tax until 2007, depriving the national budget of millions of pesos. Even so, Manila Water began recovering what they theoretically would pay in taxes by increasing the consumer base rate as a proportion of their expected tax payments as early as 2005.⁶⁸ Of note, Manila Water posted a fifty-one percent increase in profits from 2005 to 2006, the year that it successfully extended its tax holiday. As described by one reporting organization, “By doing so, the [former president] Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo administration has forgone around PhP 650 million (approximately \$12.5 million at current exchange rate of PhP52:U.S.\$1), which could

⁶⁴ See Freedom from Debt Coalition, *Lessons from a Failed Privatization Experience: The Case of the Philippines' Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS)*, Organization Publication (Quezon City, Philippines: Freedom from Debt Coalition, January, 2005), 6.

⁶⁵ Manila Water, “Financial Highlights,” *Annual Report 2008*, 1. Keep in mind that the Ayala Corporation’s initial cash equity investment was \$67 million in 1997.

⁶⁶ Manila Water, “Venturing Beyond Our Borders,” *Annual Report 2008*, 31.

⁶⁷ Arlene B. Inocencio and Cristina C. David, “Public-Private-Community Partnerships in Management and Delivery of Water to Urban Poor,” 7.

⁶⁸ Manila Water was given license to pass on the cost of their taxes to the customer with an additional PhP1.55 fee to costumers. See Freedom from Debt Coalition, “On the 10-Year Privatization Scheme of MWSS,” 2; and Freedom from Debt Coalition-Philippines, “ADB and the Privatization of Metro Manila’s Water Distribution System,” 11.

have helped plug its budget deficit.”⁶⁹ What is more, when Manila Water petitioned for the extension, it saw no contradiction in boasting that the amount that would have gone toward the national budget would instead be used for service expansion in Metro Manila’s neighboring province of Rizal.⁷⁰ The customers and employees of the company fundamentally pay for the corporate expansion and capacity for profit of Manila Water through higher rates and growing profits, emphasizing how these groups are not “shareholders,” as described in the corporate material, but are subjects to the corporation.⁷¹ The people of the Philippines subsidize the endeavor through the loss of corporate tax monies, and Manila Water enjoys risk-free business as the expenditures of financial activities are subsidized using public money, passing the costs of corporate income taxes to their customers.

Neoliberalism and Development

The Ayalas, along with the other elite families who control the economy of the Philippines, greatly benefitted from the neoliberal, free market policies adopted by the state that continue to limit any real social transformation or development in the Philippines.⁷² The privatization of water reflects only one of the ways in which the Ayalas have benefitted from neoliberal policies, but it perhaps most clearly demonstrates how visions of development are degraded when attached to fundamental adherence to the ideal of the free market. Critics of this kind of poorly regulated privatization argue that

⁶⁹ Freedom from Debt Coalition, Jubilee South, and Asian Pacific Movement on Debt and Development, “Profiting from People’s Lives,” 2.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Cf. Marjorie Kelly, *The Devine Right of Capital: Dethroning the Corporate Aristocracy* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2001), 3.

⁷² In particular, the lack of effective land reform, which was within President Corazon Aquino’s grasp but undermined due to her family’s extensive agricultural interests, maintains the ruling elite’s hold on the Philippine economy.

water is an essential component for human life and not a commodity for profit sold by a company that fundamentally holds the right to “refuse to extend their services to anyone within their service area.”⁷³ The issue is whether water is a commodity and can be sold for profit or if it is “for the people,”⁷⁴ a social good rather than an economic good or, in international legal discourse, a human right that is outside of the market.⁷⁵ Manila Water attempts to resolve this tension in the company’s 2008 annual report, which displays with apparent seamlessness the relationship between life and profit promoted by neoliberalism and the free market:

Water has always been essential for life; and as time progresses, its value has significantly escalated. Supplying clean and potable water has been increasingly difficult, primarily because of the depletion of various water resources as well as the growth in the world’s population. Thus, water has been perceived as the ‘new gold rush’ and has become an increasingly scarce commodity. Manila Water sees this situation as an opportunity to grow.⁷⁶

⁷³ Freedom from Debt Coalition, “On the 10-Year Privatization Scheme of MWSS,” 2.

⁷⁴ Walden Bello, et al., *The Anti-Development State*, 195.

⁷⁵ In an example of the movement to recognize water as a human right, Nils Rosemann argues the following:

The advantage of the human rights approach to basic needs, such as water, is that needs must be satisfied while human rights must be respected, protected and implemented by legal means and institutions. It is not absolutely necessary for basic needs to be satisfied by means of (legal) human rights. However, by recognising the access to safe and affordable drinking water and sufficient sanitation as a human right to water, decision-makers and state actors, whose decisions have an impact on the access and accessibility of water, are responsible for satisfying this need to the greatest possible extent... The human rights approach deconstructs power relationships, such as economic and political interests, that hinder the satisfaction of basic needs. By recognising a basic need as a human right, political power is legitimized if its objective is the fulfilment of human rights, and economic power is legitimized in so far as it does not obstruct the individual or collective satisfaction of human rights.

See “Financing the Human Right to Water as a Millennium Development Goal,” *Law, Social Justice & Global Development Journal* 1 (2005), under “Rights-based Approach to Access to Water as Development Objective,” http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/law/elj/lgd/2005_1/rosemann.

⁷⁶ Manila Water, “Venturing Beyond Our Borders,” 30.

As with some of their other companies, the Ayala Corporation looks for these “opportunities to grow” in profits and capital by creating products that can be sold to the very poor, who for this case in the Philippines, are referred to as the “emerging market.” In another example, the Ayala Corporation also took advantage of President Ramos’ determination to deregulate⁷⁷ the telecommunications industry and purchased what would become Globe Telecom, the family’s “cash cow.”⁷⁸ Globe Telecom instituted pre-paid cellular phone technology, a popular system utilized in large part by people who may afford only to purchase small amounts of phone use, say, fifty cents’ worth of phone time and text messages at a time, and they saw their profits soar. I attended a conference hosted by the Ayala Foundation for the Association of Foundations in the Philippines where they touted this low-cost, pre-paid “load” technology as one of the businesses’ most promising forms of corporate social responsibility. While representatives from the Ayala Foundation were a prominent presence (president of the Foundation Victoria Garchitorena gave the key note address and others from the Ayala Foundation organized and presented in the workshops), there were other corporate foundations sharing their “best practices” for corporate social responsibility, including the packaging of shampoo

⁷⁷ While I do not have the space to elaborate on the trade-offs that Ramos was willing to take for economic development and the continued support of the multilateral lending agencies, I would be remiss to not mention that there was an explicit connection between economic development and the suppression of human rights. As described by Robert Weissman: “[E]lements of Ramos’s economic plan have pitted the government against local communities in a struggle for control over land, natural resources, and factories. Government forces have conducted large-scale military operations against villagers who have opposed plans to construct hydroelectric dams that would have flooded and displaced their communities; soldiers have harassed small-scale gold miners who have worked to prevent multinational mining companies from taking over their land; paramilitary forces have killed and abused labor organizers. These economically-rooted conflicts, in combination with an ongoing insurgency, provide the backdrop for the government’s war on the countryside and the corporate and governmental suppression of workers. See “Recent Development: ‘Development’ and the Denial of Human Rights in Ramos’s Philippines,” *Harvard Human Rights Journal* 7(1994): 252-3.

⁷⁸ Michael Shari, “The Philippines: The Ayala Touch: How the Nation’s Star Business Clan Stays on Top,” *BusinessWeek*, April 28, 2003.

in twenty-five cent sachets. The creation of a technology that could profit from people with very limited access to wealth, “suited our emerging market perfectly,” claimed Ayala Corporation CEO Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala.⁷⁹ The prevailing form of global capitalism enables vast corporate profits made from products sold to a dense population of often extremely low-waged earners. However, what are the implications if these practices and definitions of the poor extend to the Ayala Foundation whose “vision is to be a leading foundation committed to national development?”⁸⁰ What are the implications for Filipino Americans and the politics of diaspora philanthropy if the Ayala Foundation USA jostles to be the “best known foundation within the Filipino community in the U.S. with a reputation for excellence and integrity?”⁸¹

Manila Water is in business and the Ayala Foundation is in operation because they claim that they can do their work more efficiently than the state. This is the privatization of water services and the protection of citizens-cum-consumers. Each time the Ayala Corporation or the Ayala Foundation touts their “efficiency,” they make an implicit reference to the ability of the market to solve society’s problems and the endemic corruption of the Philippine state. Structural adjustment of the 1980s and 1990s and neoliberal policies of privatization, deregulation, and trade liberalization are based on the same argument: growth and development are by-products of efficiency, and the market achieves efficiency through market-oriented policy and not through the empowerment of the state.⁸² The World Bank and the Asian Development Bank imposed privatization as a

⁷⁹ Doreen Yu, “Meet the New ‘Philanthropreneur.’”

⁸⁰ Ayala Foundation, “Vision.”

⁸¹ Ayala Foundation USA, Annual Report 2008, 3.

⁸² Walden Bello, et al., *The Anti-Development State*, 12.

condition of funds because they believed neoliberal policies to be the solution to visible and widespread corruption in the Philippines. Neoliberalism and free market policies, as marketed by its proponents, are *fantasies* of social change: economic growth, produced through a market that operates with minimal interference from the state, itself produces peace and prosperity. Witness, for example, former U.S. president George W. Bush's response to the most recent financial crisis from a speech given in November of 2008, an address given at a moment when economists and everyday Americans were working to understand the extent and potential effects of the loss of wealth. He used this opportunity during his final months as president of the United States to guard the free market policies, even though they, as it had become clear, intensely failed:

Capitalism is not perfect. But it is by far the most efficient and just way of structuring an economy... The free market provides the incentives to work, to innovate, to save, to invest wisely, and to create jobs for others. And as millions of people pursue these incentives together, whole societies benefit... The record is unmistakable: *If you seek economic growth, social justice and human dignity, the free-market system is the way to go.*⁸³

It follows, then, that strong regulation of corporations from the state would only impede a vision of social change that values "social justice," "human dignity" and the general economic advancement of society, a platform that, once again, assimilates profit making to the goals of struggles for social transformation and in opposition to any real economic reform or to radical democratic organizing efforts. It also follows that with the growth

⁸³ George W. Bush, "The Surest Path Back to Prosperity," *Wall Street Journal*, November 15, 2008, Op-ed excerpted from speech, Opinion section; emphasis mine.

of corporate social responsibility programs, the market becomes more and more responsible for setting the social development agendas as the state compromises its responsibilities either through the decline of the welfare state as in the U.S. or through conciliatory partnerships with neoliberal multilateral institutions as in the Philippines. Because major corporations “give back” to the communities through their large-scale corporate social development programs, it becomes more difficult to intervene in global capitalism itself. These are the terms offered by its “dream” for Filipinos and for Filipino American diaspora philanthropy.

Corporations such as the Ayala Corporation uphold the logics of the market that attempt to undermine democratic impulses, and they additionally restrict the powers of the state to deliver social services and act as a strong regulator of business by not only actively fighting taxation, controlling the water regulating body and passing on tax costs to their consumers, but by creating foundations as tax shelters. Redistributive monies that should go toward state budgets to aid social welfare in the country remains concentrated in the hands of the business elite. The Ayalas are entrenched in the unchanging class structure of the Philippines that thwarts any real social change. The Ayalas are an oligarchic family, spanning seven generations of business ownership in the Philippines, and have become *billionaires*⁸⁴ (in U.S. dollars) as capitalist titans in the Philippines. The capital needed to expand the family holdings came from land in the Philippines inherited through the generations, holdings originated during the era of Spanish colonization in the Philippines. Although the Ayalas exponentially grew their family holdings through their real estate development empire during the time that

⁸⁴ *Forbes*, “Special Report: The World’s Billionaires,” March 8, 2007.

Corazon Aquino was president, “there is an essential difference in the margin of profit from the development of these properties compared with that of the inherited Makati land purchased more than 140 years ago”⁸⁵ when the Ayalas were part of the ruling Spanish elite. The Ayalas have since remained part of the ruling class in the Philippines, whose concentration of wealth keep so many in poverty.⁸⁶

As described in Chapter 1, Filipinos cite corruption as the number one obstacle to development in the Philippines; it is the “common sense” explanation for why the Philippines fall behind so many of its regional neighbors. However, corruption discourse maintains individual public officials who use their positions for private gain to be the source of widespread inequality and conditions of poverty, leaving little attention to larger political economic critique. Economist and vocal critic of corporate-driven globalization Walden Bello argues that this common sense serves to maintain the neoliberal policies that support the ruling power elite.⁸⁷ Calling attention to the implications of corruption discourse is not tantamount to discounting the reality of corruption in the Philippines, which I am compelled to address particularly in light of the horrific, politically motivated slaughter of the Mangudadatu family and accompanying lawyers and journalists by the Ampatuan political family, whom most articles describe as

⁸⁵ Kenji Koike, “The Ayala Group During the Aquino Period,” 447.

⁸⁶ For a recent comment on the costs of billionaire industrialists in countries such as the Philippines, Mexico, Indonesia, Malaysia, and India, who become billionaires by passing on costs to the poor, journalist Andrew Bast describes in a *Newsweek* editorial how the richest industrialists of those countries have created monopolies that “have been able until now to count on cheap capital from abroad and inexpensive labor at home. But costs of both are rising.” For example, he writes, “Monopolies are forcing Mexicans to pay a 40 percent premium for everyday goods and services.” See “Why Tycoons Are Costing Mexico,” *Newsweek*, August 9, 2010, 7.

⁸⁷ Walden Bello, et al., *The Anti-Development State*, 243.

former president Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's closest allies in the southern provinces.⁸⁸ It is not to say that corruption does not have a deleterious effect on the political stability, economic growth, and individual lives in the Philippines or that, for example, that justice should not be sought for the Mangudadatus, lawyers and journalists,⁸⁹ but corruption alone does not offer the empirical evidence of the Philippines' economic stasis. As stated by Bello, "While corruption definitely needs to be condemned, it is not the reason behind the country's stagnation. A more adequate explanation lies in the state being subjugated by a succession of ruling elite factions to serve narrow interests instead of the larger goals of sustainable development and social justice."⁹⁰ Moreover, the ruling elites incorporate these "narrow interests" into their corporate social responsibility programs, extensions of their business philosophies, which, in the case of the Ayala Corporation and its foundations, circumscribe their institutionalization of diaspora philanthropy that compel identification with the homeland.

While Bello's argument hinges upon the inabilities of a weak state controlled by alternating factions of the business/political elite, the Ayalas are not as politically active as most of the Philippine oligarchic clans even though, Jaime Zobel de Ayala, chairman emeritus of the Ayala Corporation and chairman of the board and Executive Committee of the Ayala Foundation, was appointed Philippine Ambassador to the Court of St. James

⁸⁸ The assassinations occurred on Monday, November 23, 2009. Most world reporting agencies will have articles on the event in the days that followed.

⁸⁹ The Arroyo administration was troubled by rightful and ongoing accusations of corruption; its willingness to prosecute the assassins because of political ties, even when played out on a global stage, remained in question by critics of the president. As one congressman proclaimed day(s) after the murders, "It appears that the government is handling the Ampatuans of Maguindanao with kid gloves. Lesser mortals would have been arrested and disarmed by now." See Carlos H. Conde and Normitsu Onishi, "Suspect in Philippine Election Killings Surrenders," *The New York Times*, November 25, 2009.

⁹⁰ Walden Bello, et al., *The Anti-Development State*, 244.

England and the Scandinavian countries from 1970 to 1975, a period that spans Marcos' transition from president to martial law dictator. The Ayalas publicly supported Corazon Aquino's run for presidency against Marcos in the 1986 "snap election," ushering in what economist Kenji Koike calls the "honey moon period between the Aquino government and the Ayala family" that set up the family corporation to be the extensive conglomerate that it is today.⁹¹ The Ayalas also vigorously lobbied for the resignation of President Joseph Estrada, the self-proclaimed president of the poor who voted for him en masse. States current CEO Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala:

As a group, we try to keep business and politics separate, which is not particularly easy to do in a country like the Philippines. But while we try to help out behind the scenes in pushing for reform, there were two notable occasions when we expressed our concerns quite vocally. The first was in 1986, when the original People's Power movement succeeded in deposing then-President Marcos, and the second was during the impeachment proceedings against then-President Estrada, early last year. In both instances, we felt strongly that the public trust had been violated to such an extent that the continuation of these men in power would almost certainly have plunged our country into economic and social chaos.⁹²

As such, the Ayalas act only in the name of protecting the public good, legitimizing their ability to lead transparent efforts toward national development. Yet, the Ayalas did not convince even mainstream news outlets. According to *AsiaWeek* reporters in regard to the family's vocal protest against Estrada, "Jaime Augusto expressed concern that the

⁹¹ Kenji Koike, "The Ayala Group During the Aquino Period," 442.

⁹² Ken Gibson, "A Case for the Family-owned Conglomerate," *McKinsey Quarterly* 4 (November 2002). <http://www.mckinseyquarterly.com>.

populist president might stir up a class war to rally his supporters, pitting rich against poor. That could lead to public disturbances in tony Makati, an exclusive residential and business district that Ayala Corp. developed.”⁹³

Elite factions of the political and economic structure of the Philippines align with each other and fight to maintain power to maximize potential economic gain. Writes Walden Bello, “It became fashionable in line with the reigning neoliberal ideology to speak about the state suffocating the creativity of the market, but the fundamental reality that linked the Marcos period, the Cory Aquino period, and the post-Cory Aquino period was *the existence of an unchanging class structure, in which asset and income distribution was one of the worst in the developing world.*”⁹⁴ Bello specifically includes the Ayalas as a vital part of this “ruling elite,”⁹⁵ a bold move given the virtually “untarnished”⁹⁶ reputation to which the Ayalas are accustomed. While the Ayalas, namely Jaime Zobel de Ayala and his two sons, Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala⁹⁷ and Fernando Zobel de Ayala,⁹⁸ are consistent and dedicated advocates of “corporate citizenship,” their corporate dealings dictate the reach of their social responsibility programs, including those of the Ayala Foundation USA.

Empirically, Bello argues that there are numerous other countries that suffer from as much as or even more widespread political corruption than the Philippines but have

⁹³ Alejandro Reyes and Kristina Luz, “The Elites Vs. Estrada,” *Asiaweek.com Magazine* 26, no. 45 (November 17, 2000).

⁹⁴ Walden Bello, et al., *The Anti-Development State*, 9, my emphasis.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 287.

⁹⁶ As Ken Gibson describes the Ayala Foundation in “A Case for the Family-owned Conglomerate.”

⁹⁷ Among other positions, he is the director of Manila Water, chairman and chief executive officer of Ayala Corporation and co-vice chairman of the board and Executive Committee of the Ayala Foundation.

⁹⁸ Among other positions, he is the chairman of Manila Water, president and chief operating officer of the Ayala Corporation and co-vice chairman of the board and Executive Committee of the Ayala Foundation.

greatly surpassed the Philippines in reducing poverty.⁹⁹ Politicians, multilateral institutions, and reporting agencies hold, almost universally, corruption as the source of poverty in the Philippines. As argued by Walden Bello, corruption discourse serves the interests of the free market and neoliberal enterprise: “The discourse is also very useful for those who gain from the policy agenda of neoliberalism, the theoretical foundation of which will crumble without the threat of corruption.”¹⁰⁰ It is “one of the lynchpins that hold the neoliberal discourse together.”¹⁰¹ The discourse of corruption allows the ruling elites to blame the extensive poverty of the Philippines on the government and to present themselves as the solution through their purported adherence to self-imposed corporate codes. As argued by David Harvey, “There exists a curious penchant to pursue ‘corruption’ as if it is easily distinguishable from the normal practices of influence-peddling and making money in the marketplace.”¹⁰² The neoliberal discourse of anti-corruption guides the U.S.-backed World Bank’s involvement in the Philippines and the UN’s dealings with the Philippines,¹⁰³ and it impacts the corporate and foundational rhetoric of the Ayalas. The Ayala Corporation and Foundation’s links to anti-corruption

⁹⁹ Walden Bello, et al., *The Anti-Development State*, 244. Their most significant comparison is with South Korea. The authors also cite Thailand, Indonesia, and Malaysia, which have all reduced poverty in their countries despite ferocious corruption.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 244.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 298.

¹⁰² David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 166.

¹⁰³ For several examples of the ongoing investment of the United Nations, the World Bank, and the Philippine administration in anti-corruption and their anti-corruption discourse, see “UN Philippines: Corporations must fight corruption,” <http://pbspvro.blogspot.com/2008/02/fight-corruption-poverty.html>; World Bank and Philippine government and support of Philippines anti-corruption activities http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_hb5243/is_200410/ai_n19925049/?tag=content;coll1; Arroyo speech on how she will not tolerate corruption:

http://www.op.gov.ph/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=975&Itemid=38

reform programs are numerous¹⁰⁴ as is their record for commodifying natural resources and approaches to social change.

Corporate Citizenship and Diasporic Belonging

Through the partnerships we have created, we believe that somehow, we inspired a sense of patriotism and generosity among Filipinos in the U.S. With their help, they provided opportunities in education, health, microfinance and other basic services for Filipinos in the Philippines. When we started Ayala Foundation USA seven years ago, our main goal was to reverse the negative effect of the Philippine diaspora on the social and economic conditions of the country. We hoped to do that by reviving the strong attachment of Filipinos abroad to the homeland so that they might be encouraged to go back, to give back, to reach out.

--Diosdado P. Banatao, current chair of the trustees of Ayala Foundation USA¹⁰⁵

The best way to show our appreciation for your support is to be even more steadfast in our efforts to pursue our common mission. AF-USA will continue to serve as a conduit between Filipinos in the U.S. and in the Philippines. We urge you to continue helping uplift the lives of the underprivileged, even beyond times of calamity. For as long as there is an individual deprived of his or her rights, there will always be work for us to do.

--Victoria Garchitorena, president of Ayala Foundation and AF-USA¹⁰⁶

As reflected in the preceding rhetoric, more so than individual or regional transnational giving, the institutionalization and rise of transnational corporate social responsibility programs in the Philippines provides an opportunity to examine how giving and philanthropic practices in our contemporary moment are structured by global capital, and how global capital and the logics of neoliberalism impact diaspora formation, the

¹⁰⁴ For example, the president of the Ayala Foundation, Victoria Garchitorena, is Senior Adviser of the World Bank's Asia-Pacific Advisory Council Against Corruption. The brothers Zobel de Ayala are signatories for the Partnering Against Corruption of the World Economic Forum. The influential Makati Business Club was initiated by Enrique Zobel, chief executive officer of the Ayala Corporation until 1983 and first cousin of Jaime Zobel de Ayala, and leads The Coalition Against Corruption in the Philippines. The list goes on.

¹⁰⁵ Ayala Foundation USA, *Annual Report 2007*, 3. He is the current chairman of the trustees as of 2009.

¹⁰⁶ Ayala Foundation USA, *AF-USA e-bulletin*, January 2005. <http://www.af-usa.org/ebulletine.asp?Issue=January+2005>.

interactions of diaspora-homeland-market, and the framing and politics of Filipino American diaspora giving. Corporate philanthropy is a very specific form of giving, and it is one that is leaving a significant mark on Filipino American communities through diaspora philanthropy endeavors in which Philippine-based corporations put calls to Filipinos in the United States to “help the motherland.” Yes, there is widespread poverty and hunger in the Philippines, and yes, there are many Filipino Americans that have the desire and resources to help. This chapter hopes to move beyond these sentiments and the recognition of these facts, which thwart critical discussions of the contradictions of globalization, transnational capitalism, and corporate philanthropic giving. Such sentiments encourage us to accept the de-historicization of poverty and development. Such sentiments abet the naturalization of processes of neoliberalism in an area such as philanthropy, which is often seen as outside processes of commodification or as a “purer” alternative to the market, and diaspora, which is often seen in essentialist relationships of culture, identity, territory, and belonging. As a nonprofit organization (the Ayala Foundation USA) operated through the social responsibility programs of a corporation (the Ayala Corporation) would attest, nonprofits are not necessarily outside of capitalism or anti-capitalistic in their nature.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, the resulting diaspora of philanthropy deployed by the Foundation “lowers the consciousness” of the process of vast accumulations of wealth, inequality, and hierarchy within the involved group.¹⁰⁸

Corporate social responsibility’s ability to articulate moral concerns together with profit-oriented business goals produces a difficult terrain to navigate. The Ayala

¹⁰⁷ Joseph, *Against the Romance of Community*, 70.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, xxiv.

Foundation's corporate social responsibility goals are discursively produced as informed by its commitment to community, the public, and business ethics. Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala, the chairman and chief executive officer of the Ayala Corporation as well as the co-vice chairman of the board and executive committee of the Ayala Foundation, believes that "corporate social responsibility is a strategic management tool that all companies must learn to integrate into their operations if they are to develop a sustainable model of 'trust' with the many communities they serve." He continues:

We all pay for poverty and unemployment and illiteracy. If a large percentage of society falls into a disadvantaged class, investors will find it hard to source skilled and alert workers; manufacturers will have a limited market for their products; criminality will scare away foreign investments, and internal migrants to limited areas of opportunities will strain basic services and lead to urban blight. Under these conditions, no country can move forward economically and sustain development...It therefore makes business sense for corporations to complement the efforts of government in contributing to social development.¹⁰⁹

Elsewhere, he continues his view of what is an easy alliance between social development and profit:

We have always realized that there is a strong link between broad social development and the potential for longterm corporate profitability...Investors are increasingly sophisticated nowadays and we believe that they are acutely aware that CSR [corporate social responsibility]/corporate citizenship and the fortunes

¹⁰⁹ Global Giving Matters, "Q & A with Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala II," Synergos Institute, April-May 2003, <http://www.synergos.org/globalgivingmatters/features/0305zobeldeayala.htm>.

of companies in the private sector are inextricably linked, especially in emerging or developing markets such as the Philippines. This is because broad social development will effectively be able to expand the current market boundaries that companies in emerging markets face, therefore increasing the size of the pie in the long term.¹¹⁰

As his descriptions show, individual and corporate profitability underscore the business case for corporate social responsibility. Zobel de Ayala strips the reality of poverty of everything except its potential to cause the business sector loss in profits and foreign investment. While those that are actually poor may “pay for” it through lack of housing, water, or education, Zobel de Ayala argues that the true victims of poverty would be the business and manufacturing sectors. As a result, to again borrow from Neferti Tadiar, “the moral concern for Filipino society translates into an economic concern for its competitive advancement.”¹¹¹

Development Specialist for the Ayala Foundation, Mariel Q. de Jesus, encourages the Philippine public to trust the Ayala Corporation’s fundamental morality:

While some critique [Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)] as mere marketing or public relations ploys, some companies have taken CSR to heart, incorporating the principles of CSR into their corporate mission and values, and finding ways to integrate these into their business operations. Some corporations take the long-term view when it comes to CSR. Recognizing that it takes time for investments

¹¹⁰ Jane Nelson and Caroline Bergrem, *Values and Value: Communicating the Strategic Importance of Corporate Citizenship to Investors* (Geneva, Switzerland: World Economic Forum and The Prince of Wales International Business Leaders Forum, 2004), 29.

¹¹¹ Tadiar, *Fantasy-Production*, 127.

in social development to bear fruit, these companies bank on the moral bottom line: doing good because it's the right thing to do.¹¹²

Corporate social responsibility programs are produced as a morality of the economic order.¹¹³

However, the central mandate of corporations, to be accountable to its shareholders, is out of step with democratic ideals.¹¹⁴ “Doing good” because it is “right” generates a rhetorical and moral tautology that refuses the connection between doing good and the historical extent and production of poverty and inequality. While Zobel de Ayala links the Philippines’ need for social development to the corporate social responsibility “and the fortunes of companies in the private sector,” he does so with an eye toward creating new markets among the poor and without attention to the maintenance of the poor’s life in poverty. The rhetoric of Ayala celebrates the corporation’s ability to excel financially, producing billions in wealth, and, simultaneously, to deliver the country from underdevelopment. As described on their website, the Ayala Corporation believes that by doing well as a business and by engaging proactively with its stakeholders, it does not only create value for its shareholders but also make a lasting and positive contribution to national development.”¹¹⁵ Such rhetoric mirrors what Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff describe as triumphant or “millennial capitalism”: “We seek...to draw

¹¹² Mariel Q. de Jesus, “Can Business ‘Do Good’ in Bad Times?” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, January 17, 2009.

¹¹³ Cf. Donileen R. Loseke, “‘The Whole Spirit of Modern Philanthropy’: The Construction of the Idea of Charity, 1912-1992,” *Social Problems* 44, no. 4 (November 1997): 433.

¹¹⁴ See Kelly, *The Devine Right of Capital*, xi. Note, however, that in Kelly’s text, from which I borrow here, she argues that the incredible wealth accumulated by corporations is a result of the fundamental and historical design of the corporation and of the misnamed “free market.” The mandate to maximize profit for shareholders is also out of step, she argues, with market ideals.

¹¹⁵ Ayala, “Corporate Social Responsibility,” <http://www.ayala.com.ph/CSR.php>.

attention to, to interrogate, the distinctly pragmatic qualities of the messianic, millennial capitalism of the moment: a capitalism that presents itself as a gospel of salvation; a capitalism that, if rightly harnessed, is invested with the capacity wholly to transform the universe of the marginalized and disempowered.”¹¹⁶

Consider another quotation from CEO Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala, who parallels, uncritically however, the messianic facility of the corporation. He states:

The economic sources of philanthropic wealth have likewise changed from, say, railroads, mines, steel mills, car production, explosives or war material in the 20th century, to software, food production, finance, energy, shipping, retailing or real estate in the 21st century. But the ethical standards and moral expectations governing the acquisition of wealth backing philanthropies are now demanding stringent adherence to the highest levels of good governance. Corporate social responsibility emerged and flourished as an idea that encompasses philanthropy but includes the moral purposes that businesses serve on the way to generating the profits that will eventually finance philanthropic giving. Business, more than ever, is expected to operate ethically in the market.¹¹⁷

Jaime Zobel de Ayala refers to wealth as “philanthropic wealth,” as if the ability to give back to the poor motivates his multinational corporation’s drive for profits and new markets. He argues that in this post-Fordist economy, the social contract has changed such that successful businesses must on account of their success already be inherently

¹¹⁶ Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, “Millennial Capitalism: First Thoughts on a Second Coming,” *Public Culture* 12, no. 2 (Spring 2000): 292.

¹¹⁷ Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala II, “The Challenges of Asian Philanthropy in the 21st Century” (speech presented at the third global meeting for the Worldwide Initiatives for Grantmaker Support, Bangkok, Thailand, November 16-18 2006), http://www.wingsweb.org/programmes/forum06_plenary_zobel.cfm.

moral and beyond reproach. Correspondingly, consider his brother's, Fernando Zobel de Ayala's, recent speech to the Philippine Advertising Congress, describing what Ayala has to offer corporations of the future:

We need to fundamentally reorient this economic paradigm towards a more “responsible and enlightened form of capitalism,” one that seeks long-term sustainability and balance, one that uses the mechanisms of the free market, but recognizes the needs of the broader community. If we don't, I'm afraid we will continue on a path that leads to more frequent natural disasters and the resulting toll on human suffering and poverty... This is capitalism that uses market forces to address the needs of the poor, those at the base of the economic pyramid, who in the past were not considered a profitable market. This is capitalism that looks at greening the supply chain, that minimizes environmental footprint, that seeks more efficient use of natural resources and replaces those it has used.¹¹⁸

Fernando Zobel de Ayala communicates the anxieties of a rampant capitalism that contributes to natural disasters and human suffering, possibly referring, for example, to the disastrous impact of earthquakes compounded with practices of widespread deforestation that produce landslides. He addresses unenlightened capitalism's (as opposed to his platform of enlightened capitalism) contribution to the suffering of the poor who are unevenly impacted by such natural disasters. However, he cannot link even unenlightened capitalism's role in the production and perpetuation of poverty. His enlightened capitalism uses the same market forces that would lead unenlightened

¹¹⁸ Fernando Zobel de Ayala, “Enlightened Capitalism,” Speech given at the 21st Philippine Advertising Congress, November 19, 2009, <http://www.ayala.com.ph/viewArticle.php?id=151>.

business toward irresponsible deforestation and the suffering of the poor, for example, but toward meeting the needs of the poor. Corporate social responsibility, therefore, can transform suffering into the satisfaction of needs. A triumphant capitalism this surely is.¹¹⁹

According to the leaders of corporate social responsibility, the link between social development and profit is especially important in countries like the Philippines because the poor are so lacking in resources that any advancement they can make will increase their potential as consumers. At the same time, the advancement of Filipinos overall increases their pool, and the world's pool, of laborers. Corporate-based social development creates opportunities for the expansion of overseas labor migration. For example, one of the major projects coordinated and funded by the Ayala Foundation is the Gearing up Internet Literacy and Access for Students or GILAS. A program implemented in cooperation with both the Philippine national and local government officials, it aims to put computer labs with internet access in all 6,350 public high schools in the country. States Victoria Garchitorena, president of the Ayala Foundation and Ayala Foundation USA:

As of the end of September 2008, GILAS has connected 2,000 public high schools, thereby benefiting about 1 million underprivileged youths from Batanes to Basilan...It has a tremendous impact on the ability of our youth to find jobs

¹¹⁹ To implicate the government of the Philippines in this relationship and to extend my interpretation of Zobel de Ayala's discussion of natural disasters and capitalisms' responsibility for human suffering, consider how the Philippine government was aware of pending landslides due to irresponsible deforestation and corporate "environmental predators." Though aware of pending disaster, the government failed to warn the village of Guinsaugon, Philippines, of the instability of their environment. It was estimated that more than one thousand people were buried in the mudslide. See Carols H. Conde, "Danger of Philippine Landslides Often Ignored, Critics Say," *New York Times* (February 21, 2006), http://www.nytimes.com/2006/02/21/international/asia/21filip.html?_r=1.

when they leave school, as computer and Internet literacy skills are now basic requirements for any type of employment, whether they stay in the Philippines or go abroad.¹²⁰

While the Foundation provides an, arguably, important service to the youth of the Philippines with a program and partnership that is internationally lauded, the youth are discursively produced as another resource in which the country and corporation should invest, and on the symbolic level, not entirely unlike the commodities that Ayala produces for export in their export processing zones. As argued earlier, the “Filipino American market” configures Filipino Americans as consumers. Participating nongovernmental organizations in the Philippines are stripped of their political and ideological particularities, resulting in a pool of Ayala Foundation USA partner organizations equivalent in their commodification. At the same time, the Ayala Corporation addresses poverty in the Philippines through the poor’s potential to become consumers and exports, commodifying human potential for creative political and economic change in their vision of social development and corporate citizenship.

This is not cynicism, as proponents and apologists for the free market would have it, considering the extent to which some business executives describe their social responsibility practices. Within the fantasy of corporate social responsibility, giving practices such as diaspora philanthropy enable the material relations between the corporation, their pools of labor, their emerging markets, otherwise referred to as Filipinos in the Philippines living in poverty, and the Filipino American diaspora. Hence,

¹²⁰ Malou Liwanag-Aguilar, “Ayala Foundation-USA: Creating Better Opportunities to Serve Others,” *Asian Journal*, October 12, 2008.

the unabashed tone in which one (non-Ayala) CEO expresses his corporate social responsibility vision as described in a Philippine newspaper: “‘I need people to have money so I can take it away from them, so I can sell them something,’ he quipped to much laughter.” It is significant that the title of the article from which this quotation was found is “Philanthropy Has a Place in the Financial Crisis” and is from a major Philippine newspaper, signaling the media’s role in the discourse. The author of the article continues the description of the poor by this same CEO: “[The CEO] advocated ‘innovative philanthropy and capitalism’ that should be based on a ‘paradigm shift.’ ‘We have come to accept poverty,’ he said. Because of its prevalence in most countries in Asia, the poor one sees in the streets from within the confines of one’s car have become little more than an ‘annoyance.’ Instead, the poor should be seen as a market that can be empowered and developed. ‘Make money, but make a difference,’ he said.”¹²¹ While this particular CEO’s bluntness might make us cringe at his crudeness, the rhetoric parallels what is displayed on the Ayala Corporation’s “Corporate Social Responsibility” website: “It is when business does what it does best - finding solutions to the needs of the community - that corporate social responsibility can be truly strategic and sustainable. By using our strengths, we can have a greater impact on development and become real agents of changes in improving the quality of life of the less privileged.”¹²² Corporate social responsibility is surely a grand dream where everyone can make more money and get a slice of the pie, which instead of smaller and smaller pieces for the poor, becomes

¹²¹ Doreen Yu, “Philanthropy Has a Place in the Financial Crisis,” *The Philippine Star*, December 6, 2009.

¹²² The quote is attributed to Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer. Ayala, “Corporate Social Responsibility,” <http://www.ayala.com.ph/CSR.php>.

bigger for everyone to enjoy. It is ultimately, however, a dream devoted to the even bigger dream of global capital.

In a special issue of *International Affairs* on corporate social responsibility (CSR), co-editor Michael Blowfield makes the case for a more critical perspective of corporate social responsibility and how it understands the poor and marginalized in “developing” countries: “The most clearly apparent limitations to the approaches typical of contemporary CSR relate to the fundamental values and tenets of the capitalist enterprise,” to which Blowfield includes the right to make a profit, “the commoditization of things including labour,” and “the privileging of companies as citizens and moral entities.” “It is surprising,” he continues, “that so little is made of these basic values in the supposedly values-oriented world of CSR.”¹²³

Let us return to the epigraph a final time for a consideration of the Ayala Foundation’s contributions to the diaspora giving discourse given its position as a corporation invested in maintaining the expansion of capitalism and the institutionalization of its “dreams,” considering the implications of their ideas of “responsibility” in their diaspora giving programs. Once again, as the first epigraph states, the Ayala Foundation dreams of a world in which “Filipinos, wherever they are, are bound together by their common desire to effect positive change in the Philippines.” This desire for the homeland that constitutes this diaspora of philanthropy is narrated or “symbolically structured” in the “ideological fantasy” of corporate social

¹²³ Michael Blowfield, “Corporate Social Responsibility: Reinventing the Meaning of Development?” *International Affairs* 81, no. 3 (2005): 520.

responsibility.¹²⁴ This concept of ideological fantasy allows us to view the work of imagination in the seemingly objective practices and structure of political economy that comprise much of the social life and modern history of nations. The fantasy of corporate social responsibility regulates the Ayala-produced mode of giving, and the allegedly “obvious” nature of the Filipino American market appropriates the desire for re-turn to a Philippine homeland made better through donations from overseas Filipinos. This chapter argues that the discourse of corporate social responsibility obscures the cultural politics of diaspora giving by emphasizing the “easiness” of “helping” and by the flattening out and neutralization of the various ways that social change and struggle are imagined in the Philippines.

Initially, it was through a pre-marketing study commissioned by the Ayala Foundation that encouraged the Ayala Foundation to explicitly articulate development, corporate social responsibility, philanthropy, and the Filipino American diaspora. In 2003 the Ayala Foundation USA contracted consultant J. Robbie Fabian to perform “a pre-marketing study of Filipino American donors and their philanthropic patterns, inclinations and interests.” Fabian presented in his report an analysis of “the current philanthropic involvement and practices of Filipino Americans in the United States [and] their linkages with and perceptions of nonprofit causes and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working directly in the Philippines.”¹²⁵ Continuing with the self-description of the study:

¹²⁴ Tadiar, *Fantasy-Production*, 9.

¹²⁵ J. Robbie, Fabian, “Ayala Foundation USA Pre-Marketing Study: Research on the Philanthropic Patterns and Inclinations of Filipino Americans,” 3.

Ayala Foundation USA was conceived and developed by the Ayala Corporation as an initiative to encourage Filipino American philanthropic giving directly to Philippine causes, as a strategy to bolster the nonprofit sector of the country... The incorporation of the Ayala Foundation USA was based in part on the assumption that Filipino American donors markets are potential sources of major funding for Philippines causes... We assume that the potential of the Filipino American market to support Philippine causes is not fully tapped due to the lack of comprehensive fundraising strategies and campaigns in the United States.¹²⁶

The Ayala Foundation creates the “truth” of the Filipino American market¹²⁷ and, therefore, the extent of diaspora philanthropy. Their mobilization of diaspora giving transforms Filipino Americans into a market, and its analysis reveals the relationships among neoliberal globalization, capitalist logics, diasporas, giving practices, and homeland. However, “major funding” and even philanthropic donations do not encapsulate the extent of giving practices among Filipino Americans. As is made clear by the author J. Robbie Fabian, the Ayala Foundation pursues the Filipino American

¹²⁶ Ibid., 4.

¹²⁷ In a different context, Arlene Davila works to historicize the “truth” of the Latin American market in the United States with a critique of the relationship between the “Hispanic market” and dominant definitions of Latinidad: “I start from the premise that the reconstitution of individuals into consumers and populations into markets are central fields of cultural production that reverberate within public understanding of people’s place, and hence of their rights and entitlements, in a given society. Looking at Hispanic marketing is therefore particularly revealing of the relationship between culture, corporate sponsorship, and politics, and moreover can illuminate how commercial representations may shape people’s cultural identities as well as affect notions of belonging and cultural citizenship in public life.” See *Latinos Inc.: Marketing and the Making of a People* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 2. While her work deconstructs the mobilization of corporate-defined racial categories within the racial/ethnic hierarchies and landscape of the United States—Latinos have “come of age” because advertising is paying attention—this is quite different from the use of the “Filipino American market” by the Ayala Foundation. The Ayala Foundation does homogenize the Filipino American market as people who have “made it” economically, erasing continued racial and ethnic discrimination (especially in the post-9/11 climate) and economic disparities. However, their marketing campaigns stay largely outside of “mainstream” venues and, hence, outside of the discourse on “celebrations” of diversity.

market in efforts “to bolster the nonprofit sector” of the Philippines. The nonprofit sector, with its safety mechanisms and its nominal and effective relationship to the profit industry, is not the only space for social change in the Philippines or elsewhere. Moreover, this nonprofit sector is anointed by the state, multilateral institutions and corporate social responsibility programs like the Ayala Foundation as the legitimate arbiters of development, obscuring other forms and demands for social transformation particularly given the Ayala Foundation’s role in identifying what are considered legitimate causes and organizations for their Filipino American market.

Even though Ayala describes itself as a “people’s organization”¹²⁸ with a platform of “systemic change”¹²⁹ toward the “alleviation of poverty”¹³⁰ in the Philippines, corporate social responsibility programs came about in response—as an alternative—to political activism and international protests of the 1960s and 1970s. Historically, business leaders created corporate social responsibility as a business paradigm to build trust for their companies and within the communities they effected in the face of Third World organization and emerging radicalism. Take for example the following description of the history of corporate social responsibility in the Philippines:

Discontent in the countryside and in factories led to massive protest demonstrations that came to be known as the riotous period of ‘First Quarter Storm’ [in the Philippines].¹³¹ As businessmen began to witness demonstrations

¹²⁸ Ayala, “History,” <http://www.ayala.com.ph/about/history.asp>.

¹²⁹ Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala II, “The Challenges of Asian Philanthropy in the 21st Century.”

¹³⁰ Ayala, “History,” <http://www.ayala.com.ph/about/history.asp>.

¹³¹ After Marcos imposed Martial Law in 1972, the government launched a massive attack on the communist New People’s Army, forcing more than 50,000 people into concentration camps. Guerilla warfare units of the New People’s Army ignited a radical response of national democracy among students, the church, and peasants resulting in what is referred to as the First Quarter Storm of 1972. See Dev

within the financial district where they worked, some progressive leaders began to reassess the role played by business in the country's development. Their conclusion was that while business had been supporting various charitable activities on a sporadic, fragmented and uncoordinated basis, there was a growing need for organized, professional and continuing assistance.¹³²

As a direct result of radical social agitation, business leaders developed and extended their corporate social responsibility programs to funnel and address discontent through organized, formal development and corporate philanthropy. Corporate social responsibility programs continue attempts to hold sway over political activism particularly through self-initiated sustainability programs so that advocacy groups will not organize in the political arena.¹³³ Through diaspora philanthropy, companies like the Ayala Corporation re-orient Filipino Americans in their homeland commitments.

Scholar James Rowe argues that corporate social responsibility and self-imposed corporate codes are an "effective means" of subduing "popular discontent." He believes that, globally, organized responses like the World Business Council for Sustainable Development are good business strategy on the part of corporate heads in controlling demands for more regulation of corporations.¹³⁴ Notably for the present moment, both Jaime Augusto and Fernando Zobel de Ayala are active in the World Business Council for Sustainable Development and are signatories for the organization's Global Corporate

Nathan, "Armed Struggle in Philippines," *Economic and Political Weekly* 22, no. 51 (December 19, 1987): 2201.

¹³² Gisela Velasco, "Corporate Philanthropy in Asia," 14.

¹³³ Todd M. Henderson and Anup Malani, "Corporate Philanthropy and the Market for Altruism," *Columbia Law Review* 109 (2009): 578.

¹³⁴ James K. Rowe, "Corporate Social Responsibility as Business Strategy," 132.

Citizenship initiative. It is imperative to unpack the business interests of corporate social responsibility—particularly for Filipino Americans concerned with social transformation. Corporate-based diaspora philanthropy with the attendant strategies of commodification and accumulation attempt to control the range of Filipino American giving practices. By capitalizing on Filipino American orientation toward a Philippine homeland, the Ayala Foundation and Corporation integrate Filipino American subjectivity into their platforms of national development and neoliberal order, controlling the nature of an orientation of re-turn through giving.

The Ayala Corporation naturalizes the discourse on corporate social responsibility, removes it from its history, and presents a clearly business-oriented solution to poverty. As stated by Jaime Zobel de Ayala, “CSR is a *natural impulse* of people to adjust to the social development needs of their environment...I am proud of all the projects that Ayala Foundation has undertaken. They have always looked for innovative solutions to the problems of poverty through effective and efficient programs.”¹³⁵ However, corporate social responsibility is not an inevitable phenomenon but a strategic incorporation of marketized subjectivities. Corporate social responsibility, as the business influence of development,¹³⁶ is multiply implicated in the neoliberalization of donor subjects. The hegemony of neoliberal common sense concerning the power and the good of the market has controlled public debate for decades. The questions that we ask about the possibilities of corporate-sponsored diaspora philanthropy—and therefore Filipino American diaspora subjectivities—are

¹³⁵ Quote is attributed to Jaime Zobel de Ayala in Nic Legaspi, *BizNews Asia* Vol. 2, No. 20 (June 28-July 5, 2004); emphasis.

¹³⁶ Cf. Blowfield, “Corporate Social Responsibility: Reinventing the Meaning of Development?” 515-524.

limited by the extent to which neoliberal thought has set the terms of the debate. Given that practices, frameworks, and discourses of giving contribute to the shape of Filipino America, this chapter points to the extent to which neoliberal thought shapes the cultural politics of Filipino American diaspora giving.

Conclusion

What we at Ayala find so exciting about these developments is that we truly feel that we may have found viable business solutions to the problems of poverty.

--Fernando Zobel de Ayala¹³⁷

The Philippine-based Ayala Foundation created the Ayala Foundation USA, the California-based nonprofit organization, to offer potential Filipino American donors the opportunity to feel safe that their donations would go to legitimate, Ayala Foundation-approved organizations in the Philippines. My intention is not to belittle the work of the individuals behind the Ayala Foundation and the Ayala Foundation USA. To the contrary, I acknowledge the dedication of scores of people that facilitate their programs and recognize the relative poverty of the Philippines to the United States and the desire of Filipinos in the United States to maintain an orientation to the Philippines through diaspora giving projects and activities. This does not, however, remove the imperative to examine frameworks and the institutionalization of diaspora giving that mask or even reinscribe the structures that perpetuate poverty in the Philippines. Through the presentation and reiteration of ahistorical, apolitical fictions of homeland and belonging, the complexity and implications of diaspora giving are lost.

¹³⁷ Fernando Zobel de Ayala, "The CFO Challenge to Sustainable CSR." Reprint of speech, Ayala Foundation News. September, 23, 2009. <http://www.ayalafoundation.org/news.asp?id=100>.

This is not to suggest that the market interrupts what would be a pristine relationship to the homeland such that without its interference Filipino Americans could avoid the difficulties and complexity of transnational diaspora giving relationships. However, market logics work to prevent a politics of giving and a politics of diaspora community that undertake the contradictions of global capitalism, thus undermining the possibilities of giving and diaspora as critical spaces with the potential for coalition and the fostering of an anti-imperialist politics. Thinking through diaspora formations through the politics of giving allows a critical analysis of social practices that support normalized, marketized forms of Filipino and Filipino American racial and ethnic formations, but it also searches for those moments and possibilities for ethnic/racial diasporic arrangements based on critical giving practices.

The Ayala Corporation supports its global corporate citizenship programs and the Ayala Foundation, while simultaneously expanding the neoliberal project through the privatization of water and the Philippines' exploited position in the global capitalist economy. The Ayala Foundation partners with a range of nongovernmental organizations in the Philippines, incorporating the differences among the organizations through their commodification, concealing the implications of the organizations' differences in terms of frameworks of need and social transformation. Corporations deal with the contradictions of public goods, public infrastructures, and public interests in the service of private profit through their corporate social responsibility programs. Rooted within this understanding is a logic grounded in a system that supports the expansion of capital, the containment of alternative subjectivities, the racialization and gendering of

the Philippine labor force, and the belief that profit-driven projects will solve society's ills.

The Ayala Corporation and Foundations offer solutions and programs for problems in the Philippines, but their solutions and programs can mask the historical context and economic conditions of the problems as well as other practices of giving by Filipinos in America. There are, for example, progressive organizations in the United States that “resolve to raise the consciousness of, organize and mobilize Filipinos in the U.S., linking their basic issues of rights and welfare to the National Democratic struggle.”¹³⁸ The Ayala Foundation constructs the Philippine nation in opposition to radical platforms, extending its desire for a diaspora and homeland that would erase such struggles, and conceals the transformative possibilities of those who would imagine a diaspora of giving that could maintain a critique of the ruling elites and the stratified distribution of land that maintain inequality in the Philippines.

¹³⁸ Bayan USA, “About Bayan USA,” http://bayanusa.org/?page_id=2.

CHAPTER IV

“Overcoming Extraterritoriality”:

Transnational Environmental Justice and the Production of Filipino Diaspora Spaces and Subjects

How can we organize these huge, randomly varied, and diverse things we call human subjects into positions where they can recognize one another for long enough to act together, and thus to take up a position that one of these days they might live out and act through as an identity. Identity is at the end, not the beginning, of the paradigm. Identity is what is at stake in political organization. It isn't that the subjects are there and we just can't get to them. It is that they don't know yet that they are subjects of a possible discourse. And that always in every political struggle, since every political struggle is always open, it is possible either to win their identification or to lose it.

--Stuart Hall, “Subjects in History: Making Diasporic Identities”

Introduction

This project explores multiple categories of affiliation and purpose within a larger context of the politics of diaspora giving. The institutionalization of “diaspora philanthropy” and the “nexus of migration and development” examined in previous chapters involve the cultivation of unities where alliances for Philippine national economic development emanate from migration, kinship and affinity in ways that present themselves as absolute in their national, filial, homeland, and ethnic presumptions. Such constructions of diaspora and giving demonstrate how certain narratives of Filipino American diaspora giving produce Filipino American benevolence and the space of homeland as separated from transnational historical and economic conditions that bind the Philippines and the U.S.

Within narratives and productions of Filipino American diaspora giving, both the “diaspora” and the “giving” of diaspora giving maintain the potential to extend or challenge, to mask or to force into the open, hierarchies of difference and power. Thus, diaspora and giving reference projects of responsibility toward others, social obligations harnessed in infinite ways to maintain status, to imagine new ways of community belonging, or to complicate the hegemonic terms of identity. This work analyzes multiple forms of domination and explores possibilities of critical homeland orientations and diaspora giving discourse. Through attention to race and the materiality of diaspora, the preceding chapters analyze how diaspora giving frameworks and practices mobilized through the reification of belonging and development in the homeland operates in tension with larger goals of equality and without attention to the respatialization of justice under globalization.¹

This chapter prioritizes group formations attendant to associations of responsibility based on solidarity *and* difference.² While “diaspora philanthropy” and the “nexus of migration and development” addressed in earlier chapters also produce associations of responsibility, narrating Filipino migrant and Filipino American re-turns toward a Philippine homeland, this present chapter examines mobilizations of solidarity—or relationships of diaspora giving “fueled by our capacity to discern how the

¹ See Nancy Fraser, “Reframing Justice in a Globalizing World,” *New Left Review* 36 (November-December 2005): 1-19.

² I reference Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak who emboldens us to “express solidarity, but as difference.” See “Bonding in Difference, Interview with Alfred Arteaga (1993-1994)” in *The Spivak Reader: Selected Works of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak*, eds. Donna Landry and Gerald Maclean (New York: Routledge, 1996), 25.

interests of others are connected to our own,”³ to borrow from ethicist Mary Hobgood — with those working against the racial, labor, environmental, gender, and sexual exploitation of Filipinos in the Philippines. Filipino American diaspora giving—its frameworks and narrations—founded upon the explicit avowal of the differences produced by the contradictions of global capitalist, statist, and cultural nationalist modes of belonging and transnational reproductions of inequality speak to a larger politics of responsibility and accountability imagines counter-hegemonic ways of giving to homeland that address the inequalities that diaspora giving in general purportedly sets itself.

This project argues that responsibility must be taken for the subjectivities produced in giving relationships, “recipients,” “philanthropists,” “the needy,” “the expert,” “the giver,” and the like. Relationships of giving founded upon the preservation of wealth for individuals, nation-states, regions or an imaginary global North and South divide are particularly limiting, especially as these relationships have implications for how racialized ethnic groups such as Filipino Americans actively situate themselves in transnational spaces, as diasporans with connections to a Philippine homeland. Many Filipino American foundations and organizations maintain social hierarchies and divisions in their frameworks and projects of diaspora giving, drawing on class status, privileged mobility and narratives of American exceptionalism to legitimate their projects in the Philippines and claims to homeland. Filipino Americans who claim a particular responsibility to notions of justice or equality in the Philippines must do so with the

³ Mary Elizabeth Hobgood, “Solidarity and the Accountability of Academic Feminists and Church Activists to Typical (World-Majority) Women,” *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 20, no. 2 (Fall 2004): 137.

capacity to avoid the ruse of merely speaking for those “others” in the Philippines by recognizing the mutual historical, cultural, spacial and material constitution and production with those they seek to “help.” Other Filipino Americans and Filipino American organizations build giving relationships that acknowledge the complexity of their subjectivity and complicate their separateness from the recipients of giving. Attending to the politics of diaspora giving opens the possibilities of diaspora belonging in and to a homeland space and works not through common origins but toward the cultivation of counter-hegemonic critique, expanding our giving imaginations to wider reaching coalition building and partnerships.

Such a critique demands a wariness of taking too much responsibility. Taking too much responsibility as used here refers to unilateral efforts for “improving” the Philippines or paternalistic giving projects to alleviate the symptoms of poverty, resulting in projects that, while driven by a deep desire to help the Philippines, emphasize our separateness and reinforce economic and power imbalances. Taking too much responsibility thwarts the possibilities of solidarity because the solutions are individualized, stunting visions of social change and positioning Filipino Americans as wholly outside the maintenance of inequality in the Philippines. Individualized solutions, as argued earlier, link to neoliberal logic, which denies labor protections even as it demands the circulation of racialized, gendered, Third World workers in the name of market freedom.

This work proposes contemporary diaspora giving as a site to examine the negotiations that occur around the changing, multiple, and uneven borders of “Filipino

America,” “diaspora,” and “homeland.” In particular, this chapter examines the cultural construction of the Philippine homeland through the giving practices of Filipino American organizations and the identities produced through diaspora giving. In general, this project remains mindful of the homeland nationalisms, memories, and relationships that orient a Filipino American toward her country or region of origin as well as the movements, investments, politics, histories and hierarchies that inform how Filipino Americans envisage their giving strategies to the Philippines. As the object of development for diaspora giving projects, competing meanings of homeland emerge at the intersection of individual, community, and national interests and forces, meanings that delineate the terms of belonging and responsibility for Filipino Americans and with larger reverberations for the possibility of critical contestations available for Filipino American diaspora giving. How the space of the homeland, its history, economy, and culture as well as its “problems,” “solutions,” and complexity, is framed by giving draws attention to the significance of philanthropy, development, and social movements in enacting diasporic identities. To draw out the connections between associations of responsibility and the construction of homeland, this chapter pays particular attention to a specific organization, Filipino/American Coalition for Environmental Solidarity (FACES), a U.S.-based environmental justice organization originally founded to bring attention and reparations to the environmental devastation wrought by the former U.S. military bases in the Philippines. An examination of the programs, mission, and politics of FACES demonstrates how the contingent politics and relationships of diaspora giving produce meaning in the space of homeland. An analysis of the identities produced

through their organization's politics of giving demonstrates the possibilities of Filipino American diaspora giving relationships built upon ideas of solidarity and difference with Filipinos in the Philippines who protest the conditions of their working and everyday lives.

Often mistakenly perceived as the provenance of the "political left," environmentalist politics in general as well as diaspora-based environmentalist politics remain subject to contingencies, particularly as homeland conceived as an environmental space can lend itself to any politics that then dictates its discourse and control. Calls, for example, for the preservation of the beauty of the homeland, the resuscitation of pre-colonial or indigenous vegetation, or for justice for communities that bear the uneven environmental costs of militaristic dominance or industrial growth all draw on and contribute to their own sets of knowledge regarding the environment of the Philippine homeland and how Filipino Americans should participate in struggles over the environment. Bringing a transnational diasporic analysis to the Philippine environment unsettles romanticized sentiments of the Philippine island paradise through the prospect of re-turning to the Philippines not as a tourist eager to (re)experience the beauty of the Philippine homeland but as one engaged in critical environmental politics where the unmooring of the Philippines-as-paradise parallels the troubling of absolute belonging to an originary homeland detached from colonial histories, U.S. militarism and the "differentiations of culturally, racially, and gender specific forms and operations of work"⁴ by transnational capitalism. Addressing this idea of critical environmental

⁴ Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), 172.

politics in his excellent book on forest politics in British Columbia, radical geographer Bruce Braun discusses how most accounts of forest politics in British Columbia assume the forest to hold an “unproblematic identity” thus producing solutions to conflicts over the forest in terms of how it should be preserved or restored. His book, in contrast, “asks how something called the ‘forest’ is made visible, how it *enters history* as an object of economic and political calculation, and a site of emotional and libidinal investment.”⁵ Transnational diasporic Filipino environmental politics make visible the discursive construction of the Philippine environment and the Philippine homeland as well as their overlap, the site of competing economic, political, emotional, and libidinal investments. For Filipino Americans, the emotional and material investments in one’s “environmental homeland” are directed at a space always already economic and political in nature, a position that confronts the ideological investments of representations that insist upon its eternal beauty. Braun argues that his investigation into the forest in British Columbia situates an environmental critique “in a wider field of cultural and historical practices—and relations of power—through which these forests have been invested with layers of cultural and political meaning. It is to suggest that the natures we may seek to save, exploit, witness, or experience do not lie external to culture and history, but are themselves *artifactual*: objects made, materially and semiotically, by multiple actors...and through many different historical and spatial practices.”⁶ In this, Braun’s framework lends itself to an analysis of transnational environmental justice politics in

⁵ Bruce Braun, *The Intemperate Rainforest: Nature, Culture, and Power on Canada’s West Coast* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 3; italics from original.

⁶ *Ibid.*, italics from original.

terms of the social and cultural construction of the Philippine environment-cum-*homeland* as a particular form of diaspora giving.

Examining the politics and projects of the Filipino/American Coalition for Environmental Solidarity (FACES) environmental justice organization, I consider how the environment is a productive and dynamic space with implications for the study of homeland and diaspora, and, markedly, how their organizational politics negotiates one example of diaspora giving centered upon critical responsibility and accountability. To be sure, the focus on the environment is not incidental to the larger consideration of diaspora giving with which this dissertation is concerned. As critical studies of nature and the environment have shown, ecological projects are social projects that link ideas of difference, gender, race, and nation and as such, are inseparable from power relations.⁷ While projects and politics dealing with the environment readily conjure the “natural” space or landscape of the Philippine homeland perhaps more readily than other development schemes or social movements, it is crucial to recognize the cultural construction of the environment in its specific iterations. FACES’s transnational environmental justice politics complicates both dominant environmentalist discourse that draws on the preservation of nature and essentialist Filipino American diaspora identity formations that re-turn to a romanticized Philippine homeland by rearticulating Filipino/American⁸ identities, responsibilities, and spaces with corporate exploitation,

⁷ There are two edited volumes by geographers Bruce Braun and Noel Castree that are particularly cogent: Bruce Braun and Noel Castree, eds., *Remaking Reality: Nature at the Millennium* (New York: Routledge, 1998); and Noel Castree and Bruce Braun, eds., *Nature: Theory, Practice, and Politics* (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 2001).

⁸ My use of the solidus here reflects the Filipino/American Coalition for Environmental Solutions (FACES) organization’s own usage in their name. Theoretically, it operates similarly to David Palumbo-Liu’s convention in his book *Asian/American* in their acknowledgment of the historical and cultural relationship

militarist destruction, and the dominant racialization, gendering, and sexualization of Filipinos. FACES provides a relevant example of how diaspora giving is an important site for theorizing the constructedness of homeland and the “de-naturalization” of the environment, particularly as it pertains to transnational diasporic environmental justice politics.

The Philippine Environment as Paradise

To elaborate on the constructedness of the environment and the consequence of space for environmental and diaspora politics, the chapter turns to the iconography of the Philippine environment extensively displayed in travel guides, the marketing of cultural and environmental particularity,⁹ and its reverberations from within Filipino America in its influence on the politics of diaspora giving. The Philippines is not at the top of the list of premier destinations for Western and wealthy adventurers, a fact of eternal concern for the country’s Department of Tourism and travel agencies. The relatively low rates of tourism, especially when compared to other Southeast Asian countries, is often seen as a result of the country’s weak infrastructure and the unfavorable press regarding reports of Islamic terrorism on the southern island of Mindanao by the Abu Sayyaf of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. The following is a typical travel guide description of what

between “Filipino” and “American” as well as the movement between the two, an unsettling of essentialist “Filipino American” identities:

In this study, I argue that the proximity of Asian Americans to [the “American”] ideal should be read as a history of persistent reconfigurations and transgression of the Asian/American “split,” designated here by a solidus that signals those instances in which a liaison between “Asian” and “American,” a *sliding over* between two seemingly separate terms, is constituted. As in the construction “and/or,” where the solidus at once instantiates a choice between two terms, their simultaneous and equal stats, and an element of indecidability, that is, as it once implies both exclusion and inclusion, “Asian/American” marks *both* the distinction installed between “Asian” and “American” *and* a dynamic, unsettled, and inclusive movement.

See David Palumbo-Liu, *Asian/American: Historical Crossings of a Racial Frontier* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 1.

⁹ See Bill Readings, *The University in Ruins*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 121.

tourists can expect to find in the Philippines. Because it reflects what one can recognize in almost every popular travel description of the Philippines, I quote it at length below:

The Philippines archipelago of more than 7,000 islands is sandwiched between Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam and Thailand, flanked by the South China Sea. All her neighbours have magical tourist appeal to various degrees, but the Philippines, even though the sea is just as blue and clear and the myriad coral islands just as alluring, seems to have missed the boat when it comes to marketing its attractions.

Bad press in recent years, after some high-profile terrorism and kidnapping incidents, have not helped matters. The country has also laboured under a turbulent political reputation and is still overcoming the effects of martial law. Its poor infrastructure, dilapidated roads and unsafe ferries, have also all played a role in deterring potential travellers and the country has been overlooked as an eco-tourist destination because of local disregard for the natural resources (such as fishermen dynamiting coral reefs). While resources are being channelled into education to prevent such practices a great deal of damage has already been done to the environment.

The good news is that Filipinos themselves are warm and welcoming – as underscored in the country's tagline – 'where Asia wears a smile'. Apart from some beautiful, remote tropical islands and legendary scuba diving spots, the archipelago's best resource is the friendliness and laid-back attitude of the

Filipino people. Their hospitable and embracing attitude is enough to put a smile on any visitor's face; this is even more the case in the rural areas. The Philippines has some superb all-inclusive luxury resorts spread around the islands which cushion visitors from the general degradation and safety-risks of the cities and towns, and a major plus is that the country is amazingly good-value. Also, the food is delicious, and English is widely spoken.¹⁰

This travel guide represents the Philippines as on the verge of being a premier travel destination—that it *could* be a staple of eco-tourists' dreams for its requisite blue seas, coral reefs and beaches if not for the press it receives. Reported threats of Islamic terrorism and political upheaval scare away would-be tourists and their tourist dollars, and the environment exists so far as it is made available to meet consumer tourist demand for paradise-like conditions, thus producing implications for the kinds of interventions made on its behalf. Destruction or abuse of the environment is mourned not for its effects on the health, quality of life, and livelihoods of Filipinos but for its arrest of an eco-tourism industry, resulting in what Samuel P. Hays describes as the “elaboration of environmental consumer demand.” From this perspective, “Environmental affairs are new consumer demands that can be understood as part of the history of consumption.”¹¹ Prioritizing consumption within environmental affairs circumscribes the possibilities of environmentalism. This produces an agent of such an environment as either a person outside of the Philippines (a privileged visitor), a privileged Filipino returnee, or a

¹⁰ Globe Media Limited, “Philippines Travel Guide,” <http://www.wordtravels.com/Travelguide/Countries/Philippines>. Globe Media Limited a self-described “leading online travel guide” based in the U.K.

¹¹ Samuel P. Hays, *Explorations in Environmental History: Essays* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998), 396, 395.

member of the country's elite. While consumer-based identities can be necessary, for example, for the construction of place for racialized ethnic minorities in the U.S. context,¹² consumer-based identities deny alternative constructions of the environment and co-opt critique and the demands of local Filipino communities.

Access to livelihoods and widespread poverty is of concern in this vision of the environment only as far as it impedes the development of an eco-tourism industry for travelers, written as non-Filipino, to enjoy. Those Filipinos that bear the weight of “underdevelopment” are taken out of the context of the global economic order, their labor and bodies serving the needs of Western consumer demands and made into part of the landscape itself (“apart from some beautiful, remote tropical islands and legendary scuba diving spots” Filipinos themselves are “the archipelago’s best resource”), their human subjectivity erased. The refrain from travel agencies—Filipino and non-Filipino alike—generally celebrate the people of the Philippines and their positive attitudes, making the long flight to the islands worth the price of the airfare. The landscape as paradise envelops the native Filipinos, who are represented as a capital investment or resource to promote the beauty of the environment and worthiness of eco-tourist dollars, diverting attention from complex plays of power and privilege. While there may be Islamic terrorists and political uprisings, the warmth, hospitality, and smiles of the Filipinos work to mitigate the inconveniences a tourist might encounter because of the conditions of poverty and infrastructural deterioration. As such, the Philippines’ own identity as the

¹² This draws upon Karin Aguilar-San Juan’s *Little Saigons*, which argues that marketplace multiculturalism is at times a necessary component of place-making for communities such as the Vietnamese American community of Little Saigon of Orange County, California. In particular, see Aguilar-San Juan’s chapter, “What’s Good for Business Is Good for the Community: Packaging and Selling Vietnamese America,” in *Little Saigons* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 91-122.

place “where Asia wears a smile” performs ideological work beyond the masking of widespread poverty and exploitation on the global assembly line. The smiles do the ideological work of containing political protest and dissent, presenting the people as essentially content and harmless and advocating a most toothless environmentalism defined *against* movements for social change. It is additionally possible, from this formulation, to link this particular environmental imagery to the inception and sexualization of the country’s tourism industry developed during the martial law-era of Ferdinand Marcos. As stated by Cynthia Enloe in her influential *Bananas, Beaches and Bases*: “Marcos and his advisors, with encouragement from foreign banks and technical consultants, had viewed tourism as a primary building block of development. The regime had used the reputed beauty and generosity of Filipino women as ‘*natural resources*’ to compete in the international tourism market.”¹³ As discussed below, sexual tourism in the Philippines is part and parcel of the environment as island paradise.

Travel guide descriptions such as this produce the Philippine environment as essentially an island paradise, albeit one tainted by bad PR, a deteriorating infrastructure, and the poor use of natural resources by the indigenous population. In its essentialism, the environment exists outside of politics, its timeless beauty unmarred by violent struggles over resources, land use, and ownership. It is through the representation of nature’s separation from politics and culture that enables lamentations of the deterioration and “general degradation” of the country only insofar as it depreciates the value of its beauty but not its island paradise essence, which stands separate from the poverty that

¹³ Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989): 38; italics added for emphasis.

taints it but may return to it, its essentialness, under the appropriate care. The power of the discourse of the Philippines as beauty and paradise is in its displacement of the realities of poverty even in its acknowledgement and onto the country's ability to maintain an eco-tourist industry. Calling attention to the environment's construction disrupts this essentialist representation, and, more so, brings to surface the ideological work of particular iterations of nature and the environment in "buttressing certain beliefs, warranting actions, justifying forms of society, and naturalizing hierarchical social relations," to borrow from critical environmental studies scholars Kevin DeLuca.¹⁴ If the mainstream representation of the Philippine environment is of an island paradise, its attendant environmentalism confers authority to the preservation of nature not for the local fisherman, whom the travel guide references, but for the elite consumer, whose needs eclipse those of the Filipinos themselves. This dominant representation of the Philippine nature is steeped in colonial interpretations and demands regarding the utility of the Philippines, its environment and its people. Therefore, to intervene in colonial investments in the environment one must take seriously the conditions and opportunities of the people who live and work in the socially- and politically-produced environment. As opposed to the presentation of an island paradise, which thrives in the popular imagination and caters to consumer demands within the global market economy, this is a politics that recognizes the environment as a site of contestation.

The tendency to narrate the environmental space of the Philippines through its beauty and the simultaneous declaration and dismissal of the harsh conditions of life for

¹⁴ Kevin DeLuca, "In the Shadow of Whiteness: The Consequences of Constructions of Nature in Environmental Politics," in *Whiteness: The Communication of Social Identity*, ed. Thomas K. Nakayama and Judith N. Martin (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1999), 219.

many Filipinos belongs not only to the marketing industry. In his work, Filipino studies scholar Rick Bonus observes a tendency among first generation Filipinos in the U.S. to describe the Philippine homeland as “pure, natural, and paradise-like.”¹⁵ “That’s how we want to remember the Philippines,” they say. Bonus considers their reaction as an expression of the difficulties of immigrant life, a coping mechanism in the face of harsh or unexpected circumstances. Building on this analysis, I argue that this description of Philippine paradise holds significant reverberations for the extent and politics of Filipino American diasporic giving. The idealization of the space of the Philippines as paradise by Filipino Americans, even though produced as coping mechanisms stemming from the difficulties of the racialized ethnic immigrant experience in America, draw upon narratives or fictions of the beauty and innocence of the homeland, dismissing the complexity of struggle in the Philippines through romanticized nostalgia and producing a politics of diaspora giving that fails to comprehend the conditions of their racialization. Consider the following description of Filipino American diaspora giving by Angelo Alaan, an active leader in the Filipino American community in his area and a current and past president and board member of multiple Filipino American associations and organizations, most of which engage in programs of diaspora giving:

As I said, we do a lot of charitable giving to the Philippines. It shows the good heart of Filipinos. Filipinos in the U.S. can help Filipinos in the Philippines in many ways. One is keeping our pride and honor in being Filipino Americans, because if they hear us saying we’re proud to be a Filipino or I’m proud that I

¹⁵ Rick Bonus, *Locating Filipino Americans: Ethnicity and the Cultural Politics of Space* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000),153.

originated from the Philippines, they hear that in the Philippines, especially those hard-up people, then morale goes up and they become proud of themselves. They have problems in the Philippines, but we should emphasize more the good things in the Philippines like what we do find good, especially Filipino characteristics. We have a great Filipino character, and we are beautiful as a people. We are a beautiful and hospitality-minded people, and the Philippines is very beautiful. I always mention that to my friends. We have a beautiful country, the Philippines, and lots of great natural resources. So, what I'm saying is talk positively about the Philippines and the people because that's us, actually.¹⁶

Notably, Alaan's personal involvement in philanthropic, social development, and charitable projects in the Philippines explicitly framed the interview questions, but his response insists upon individual attitudes and patriotic pride. Even from within the context of addressing social needs and inequality in the Philippines, Alaan primarily concerned his responses with communicating the positive characteristics of Filipinos and the Philippines. Alaan celebrates Filipino culture wholly outside of a social and political economic critique, an affirmation that works to prevent such critique.

Recognizing the beautiful homeland of the Philippines becomes the extent of giving in itself. Ironically, Alaan witnesses the effects of the gendering and racialization of Filipinos as exploitable labor, degraded in the public imagination as efficient yet cheap and valued for their mobility, in his gesture toward the difficulty of "keeping our pride and honor in being Filipino Americans" and of the racialized space of the Philippines ("because that's us, actually"). He confronts his racialization with a commitment to

¹⁶ Angelo Alaan [pseud.], interview by author, San Francisco, CA, April 4, 2005.

diaspora giving, but, he argues, the greatest charity would be for Filipino Americans to have pride in themselves, encouraging even the most impoverished in the Philippines toward psychic and ostensibly material betterment. There are “problems” in the Philippines but of greater concern even for homeland giving is that Filipinos be recognized for their hospitality and the country for its beauty. Marketing the Philippine environment to elite consumers and romanticizing homeland overlap in the narration of the Philippines as a beautiful paradise, separating the environment or the homeland, respectively, from relations of power and eliding the material realities that set off descriptions and memories of beauty and fantasy from degradation, poverty, and political unrest. As such, for Filipino Americans like Alaan, the racialization of Filipinos and diaspora giving imaginations that rearticulate that racialization “reveal *race* to be that material evidence that cannot be dissolved.”¹⁷

To further elaborate, let us deal with the imagery of Philippine nature forwarded by another leading travel guide, the Lonely Planet Company, again considering the description at length for its striking similarities to the aforementioned, emphasizing the ubiquity and currency:

First and foremost, the Philippines is a place of natural wonders – a string of coral-fringed islands strewn across a vast expanse of the western Pacific. Below sea level, the Philippines boasts some of the world’s best diving and snorkelling, including wreck diving around Coron and swimming with the whale sharks off Donsol. Above sea level, it has a fantastic landscape with wonders enough to stagger even the most jaded traveller: the Chocolate Hills of Bohol, Banaue & the

¹⁷ Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts*, 26.

Rice Terraces and fascinating reminders of the islands' history in places such as Samar & Leyte and Vigan. And if you're after palm-fringed, white-sand beaches, try laidback Sipalay or flat-out party town Boracay.

Of course, any traveller who has been here will tell you that it's the people and their culture that makes the Philippines unique. Long poised at the centre of Southeast Asian trade, colonised by a succession of world powers, the Philippines is a vivid tapestry that reflects its varied cultural inheritance. And despite the poverty that afflicts much of the nation, the Filipinos themselves are among the most ebullient and easygoing people anywhere. The Philippines truly qualifies as one of the last great frontiers in Southeast Asian travel. Cross whichever ocean you need to and see for yourself.¹⁸

Again, the description is not unfamiliar. Similar to other countries in the Global South, these excerpts represent the Philippines as a paradise, catering to those both calm and wild, while poverty is brightened by the ebullience of the native population. The landscape of the Philippines is "first and foremost" a place of beauty and wonder, a characterization that isolates nature in the Philippines from social and cultural forces that make the space of the Philippines available to neocolonial imagery. Significantly for this description, Lonely Planets describes a fantasy that rewrites the legacy of colonization into a cultural tapestry, where past colonization is celebrated for increasing the islands' value as a tourist destination, itself made possible by neocolonial discourse, referring to

¹⁸ Lonely Planet, "Introducing Philippines," <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/philippines>; spelling from original.

the Philippine environment as “one of the last great frontiers.” Such a description connects the contemporary Philippine as landscape-for-tourists to the Philippines as the final frontier during U.S. expansion into the Pacific, a place for masculine renewal when rugged Americans mourned the taming of its western boundary by the late 1800s.¹⁹ In both iterations, the Philippine landscape is a playground for a Western interloper, colonizer, or tourist, an environment that erases its peoples, its wars, and its history, facilitating an environmentalism that parallels those elisions.

Romanticizing colonial relationships, today’s environmental tourist industry updates the mandate of colonizers from the century past, containing militancy and protest in depoliticized relationship resonant of the “benevolent” taming of the “Filipino insurrection” of the forgotten Philippine American War.²⁰ Recalling previously described observations of the tendency among first generation Filipinos in the U.S. to describe the Philippine homeland as “pure, natural, and paradise-like,” I concede to Rick Bonus’ analysis that relates this (environmental) homeland imaginary to the difficulties of immigrant life in the U.S. Furthermore, more than longing for a homeland left behind, these statements of an essentialized homeland paradise express racialized exclusions and the difficulties of racialized, immigrant subjects in the U.S. However, essentializing the Philippine as an island paradise produces the Philippine environment as a commodity for

¹⁹ Asian American studies historian Gary Okihiro writes of the racialization of manliness as it was played out militarily in the American West and overseas, including in the Philippines: “Expansion and conquest, ‘the white man’s burden’ in the words of British author Rudyard Kipling, surely helped to reconstitute a robust white masculinity. As Kipling put it in his famous poem of that title, ‘The White Man’s Burden,’ published in 1898 to prod the United States to take up the ‘burden’ of empire in the Philippines.” See *Common Ground: Reimagining American History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 68.

²⁰ See Paul A. Kramer, “Race-Making and Colonial Violence in the U.S. Empire: The Philippine-American War as Race War,” *Diplomatic History* 30, no. 2 (April 2006): 169-210.

privileged, white, non-Filipino eco-tourists, an environment produced by discourses of timeless paradise that envelopes the compliant (smiling) native Filipino. DeLuca describes how a concept of nature as apart from humanity “is an essentializing move that universalizes and naturalizes whites and white culture as humanity and civilization.” He writes:

Such an essentializing practice perpetuates a white nature that limits what can be considered an environment deserving of protection, narrows what can be counted as environmental politics, and blocks necessary coalitions across race and class lines. To assume and require an essentialized ideograph as the unquestioned and unquestionable foundation for a politics is an authoritarian move used to silence political possibilities.²¹

The environment of the Philippines, as widely represented, naturalizes hierarchal social relations, supporting an environmentalism that silences the colonial “other,” not necessarily by presuming to speak for the “other,” but by fusing the Filipino with the environment. Therefore, calling into question the environment’s status as “given” and as “timeless” constructs the Philippine homeland environment as a site of political struggle, a move that parallels the unsettling of homeland, the other theme of this present chapter, and points to environmental *justice* politics as intervening in racial projects in their political struggles over racially-structured access to resources.²²

²¹ DeLuca, “In the Shadow of Whiteness,” 223.

²² For an excellent example of the application of Michael Omi and Howard Winant’s racial formation theory to the project of environmental justice, see Lisa Sun-Hee Park and David N. Pellow, “Racial Formation, Environmental Racism, and the Emergence of Silicon Valley,” *Ethnicities* 4, no. 3 (2004): 403-423.

Homeland, Environmental Justice, and Critical Associations of Responsibility and Accountability

Recognized as challenging dominant representations of the environment, environmental justice politics gained popularity in part because it developed important critiques of mainstream environmental organizations such as mainstream environmentalism's inattention to the marginalization of people of color and working peoples in policy debates and environmental decision making.²³ Whereas many critique mainstream environmentalism for its primary investments in conservation and preservation projects, environmental justice movement politics insist on emphasizing how racialized populations, working and poor communities, and women have had to carry the burden of "progress," living and laboring in areas in proximity to waste facilities and industrial pollution. The environmental justice movement relates these issues to larger struggles for participatory democracy and access to health care, education, safe housing, nontoxic food, and social services.

This work understandings environmentalist programs concerning the Philippines and initiated by Filipino Americans as forms of diaspora giving. Filipino American environmental organizations, including those with an environmental justice focus, engage in fundraising for the implementation of designated projects and programs in the Philippines and narrate their projects and organizational visions toward finding general and economic support from potential Filipino American donors, yet general

²³ For more on what is for some a surprisingly hostile history between the environmental movement and the environmental justice movement, see Phaedra C. Pezzullo and Ronald Sandler, "Introduction: Revisiting the Environmental Justice Challenge to Environmentalism," in *Environmental Justice and Environmentalism: The Social Justice Challenge to the Environmental Movement*, ed. Ronald Sandler and Phaedra C. Pezzullo (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2007), 1-24.

understanding of giving do not include activist or social movement organizations for the explicit political and ideological positions they take. An organization's politics and projects reveal their understanding of social relationships and therefore their vision of social change. Moreover, as Filipino American organizations supporting projects in the Philippines, the social context of concern is imagined as homeland, which facilitates particular ideologies and relationships of diaspora belonging and responsibility. Analyses of the narratives of diaspora giving disrupt "philanthropy," "charity," or "humanitarianism" as discreet social goods onto themselves and situate the ideological investments of particular mobilizations of "the moral Filipino American benefactor" and the "unfortunate" or "reprobate poor Filipino on the Philippines" in the Philippines.²⁴ Filipino American environmental justice organizations, as do those associations, organizations, and foundations addressed in previous chapters, contribute to diaspora formations through their frameworks of giving, more typically addressed in this context as activist platforms or position statements, and their particular giving (of time, money, talents, partnership) programs. In particular, Filipino American environmental justice organizations provide perhaps the most vivid example of how the *space* of homeland and what it means to belong to such a homeland is given meaning through the politics of diaspora giving.

Filipino/American Coalition for Environmental Solidarity (FACES), the environmental justice organization under study, intercedes in dominant diaspora giving discourse that would maintain a natural, obvious and timeless connection between Filipinos in America and the Philippine homeland, and does so through its environmental

²⁴ As referenced in Chapter 1 of this dissertation.

justice politics, raising important questions about responsibility, accountability and the terms of giving to the Philippines by defining the homeland environment within its social and political economic context. In this iteration of diaspora giving, Filipino Americans maintain a critical responsibility to the Philippine homeland by positioning their identity formation in relationship to the maintenance of inequality in the Philippines, complicating dominant giving relationships in their framework of giving, narrating environmental (homeland) devastation in the Philippines tied to the preservation of U.S. military power, the inviolable reach of transnational industry, and the organizing efforts of racialized and poor communities in the United States and abroad. Their production of “Filipino/American” identity unsettles the binaries of giving in the recognition of the mutual historical, cultural, spacial and material constitution and production with those they seek to “help” by confronting the contradictions of global capital, statist, and cultural nationalist modes of belonging. This example of Filipino American environmental justice projects and politics in the Philippines redefines the Philippine homeland environment and the possibilities of homeland belonging by rearticulating homeland through the colonial histories and political economies that impact the Philippines’ particular location in the global community generally and vis-à-vis the United States specifically, sustaining a discussion of the challenges and possibilities for a critical diaspora giving politics.

The programmatic objectives of FACES include educational programs for Filipino Americans on the Philippines and on environmental justice struggles worldwide. Their education curriculum includes the history of colonization and race- and labor-based

imperialism in the Philippines, including the U.S.-Philippine neoimperialist relationship, the history of peasant and labor resistance in the Philippines, and present day organizing by communities fighting for environmental justice around the world. As emphasized by Mary Hobgood, the politics of solidarity must be “deeply rooted in the intellectual struggle to understand the economy.”²⁵ FACES shapes its diaspora giving politics through this educational politics as it frames the Philippine homeland as a site of critical contestation and connects Filipino American diasporic identity to global and transnational movements for social and environmental justice. From its website, the organization demonstrates its commitment to diaspora giving relationships that eschew the paternalism and moralism of dominant relationships of giving:

By educating our membership, FACES would deepen our notion of ‘solidarity’ and recognize the reciprocity of our relationship with Philippine partners.

Kamalayan, which translates to *consciousness*, is the internal education program of FACES. Through Kamalayan, FACES members will engage in a series of discussions and activities around the meaning of transnational environmental justice and solidarity in relation to our work. We hope that raising our levels of consciousness will ultimately sharpen our work as a U.S.-based environmental justice organization, working with communities and struggles both here in the U.S. and in the Philippines.²⁶

²⁵ Mary Elizabeth Hobgood, “Solidarity and the Accountability of Academic Feminists and Church Activists to Typical (World-Majority) Women,” 139.

²⁶ Filipino/American Coalition for Environmental Solidarity (FACES), “Kamalayan” www.facessolidarity.org.

For FACES, developing a Filipino American consciousness of social justice in the Philippines connected to relevant issues and related struggles in other spaces defines the process of Filipino diaspora orientation. In their diaspora giving framework, diasporic subjectivity builds on the education component for it does not presume the knowledge of what is best for the people of the Philippines without working to understanding how the people of the Philippines organize themselves and define their needs and struggles. Ignoring Filipinos in the Philippines in the development of Filipino American diaspora giving projects situates America as the apex of civilization and progress. As opposed to a diaspora giving politics steeped in the romanticized nostalgia of the Philippine homeland-as-paradise, a psychic orientation ironically begotten in response to the racialization of Filipino Americans as degraded immigrant Americans, the environmental justice politics of FACES produce a Philippine homeland environment peopled by communities struggling in conditions disparately shaped by U.S. militarism and global capitalism. The construction of the Philippine homeland is connected to the framing of diasporic Filipino identity, mindful in elaborating on that which connects Filipino Americans to the Philippines is a politics based not on the timelessness of “being Filipino” but on material and political realities, justice-based organizing and giving, and solidarity. That is, solidarity but as difference.

Homeland Politics as Destination in Difference

This chapter posits a politics of diaspora, a critical politics initiated in the “dialectic between the politics of identity and the politics of difference,” to borrow from

Asian American cultural theorist Lisa Lowe, “a politics whose vision is not the origin but the destination”:

This dialectic between the politics of identity and the politics of difference is, I would argue, of utmost importance, for it opens a terrain on which to imagine the construction of another politics, one which engages with rather than suppresses heterogeneities of gender, class, sexuality, race, and nation, yet which is able to maintain and extend the forms of unity that make common struggle possible.”²⁷

This work considers diaspora giving not simply in terms of the best avenues for Filipino Americans to help the Philippine homeland but in the possibility of diaspora giving to organize Filipino American subjects so as to arrive at contingent Filipino American and diasporic identities produced in relationship to social struggles and understandings of social needs impacted by the racial, gender, class, and national differentiations of the Philippines and of Filipinos. While this position aligns with arguments that complicate an “originary homeland” as the source from which springs an authentic culture that determines the meaning and immediacy of a diaspora, it does not mean to merely substitute “destination,” in terms of “diaspora” as the desired point of arrival, for “origin,” in terms of the source of life, birth, or national culture in its politics, per my usage of Lowe. To borrow from Avtar Brah, “the concept of diaspora offers a critique of discourses of fixed origins, while taking account of a homing desire which is not the same thing as desire for a ‘homeland.’”²⁸ I do not see “destination” in this sense as an arrival to an already defined place or politics inside or outside of a real or imagined

²⁷ Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts*, 153.

²⁸ Avtar Brah, “Diaspora, Border and Transnational Identities,” in *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 180.

homeland. Scholars of diaspora push our understanding of the context and experiences of im/migrants away from merely the fact of dispersion and the etymological rooting of the term diaspora. Rather than working only to capture the experiences of peoples scattered from an originary homeland through force, exclusion and violence; economic necessity and aspirations; or even a search for adventure, diaspora studies complicates the formation of the nationalisms and subjugation of the people under study, the significance of movement and mobility in their scattering or dispersion, and the deconstruction and displacement of the centrality and ahistoricity of an original homeland. Diaspora as an analytic as opposed to a descriptive categorical term of human organization forwards critiques of the uneven benefits and violences of globalization and historically situated global hierarchies that divide and order peoples and spaces through processes of racialization, gendering, sexualization and development. The question becomes how Filipino American organizations and associations might develop giving practices not rooted in a timeless Filipino identity and stagnant memories of the Philippines so as to arrive at a critical politics of association and responsibility.

Destination in the politics of diaspora envisaged here refers to the grounds upon which commitments to equality and the situated critique of the commodification, exploitation, and imperialism brought upon Filipinos through the imbrication of gender, race, sexuality, class, and nation forge solidarity. Most Filipino American organizations and associations with projects for giving and development in the Philippines do not organize in solidarity. Solidarity, however defined, is not their goal, and it is not my

place or intention to impose this as a goal for all instances of social organization.²⁹ As discussed in Chapter 3, however, the corporate institutionalization of diaspora philanthropy creates discourses of giving and belonging that mask the ways that giving and belonging are tied to a hierarchical, neoliberal global order. To intervene in the commodification of diaspora giving imaginations and opportunities, this chapter looks to how a particular organization, Filipino/American Coalition for Environmental Solidarity (FACES), imagines a diaspora politics that confronts the propriety of the global order. I do not hold FACES as the only model or even as the most important model of giving (of time, resources, and knowledge) and of giving up (of commodified definitions of identity and community, the hegemony of progress and development, and imperialist access to resources) for Filipino Americans working toward social and economic justice in the Philippines as politics are always situated and specific. Rather, I point to the complex implications of giving “just to give” (as an individual with the economic capacity to give something or as a Filipino American) and to imagine diaspora and homeland as critical spaces of engagement. In this imagination, diaspora politics orients toward a homeland destination that rewrites homeland as originary or as nostalgic return, eschewing bounded notions of Filipino identity and space.

²⁹ Monisha Das Gupta confronts a similar tension in *Unruly Immigrants*. Her book examines South Asian transnational organizations in the United States, and it describes how her involvement with one organization, SAWA or South Asian Women for Action, impacted her analysis of other organizations as she found herself aligned with and invested in the politics of this particular organization: “My daily involvement during a six-year period in the details as well as the overarching concerns of women’s organizing made it at times difficult to question the philosophies, methods, and commitments that I had come to value through SAWA. I had to teach myself to listen to those activists who, for example, advocated providing services, or who, in the case of queer activists, felt that their organizations were primarily social spaces that did not screen members for their politics.” See *Unruly Immigrants: Rights, Activism, and Transnational South Asian Politics in the United States* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 8.

Before turning to the case study that grounds this chapter, the chapter considers more closely a Filipino American orientation toward homeland, drawing on the lessons of feminist scholars engaged in transformative politics and praxis in order to expand on a Filipino diasporic political identity/diasporic identity of giving founded upon critical associations of responsibility and accountability.³⁰ Pursuing these ideas confronts questions regarding the nature of this orientation toward homeland. Does not this inclination of Filipino American organizations and associations to give to the Philippines presuppose some kind of ingrained connection to the Philippines aligned with bounded and stable understandings of ethnic and national identity? Even beyond personal connections to projects and organizations in the Philippines through members' relationships to family, friends and networks, numerous organizations and foundations attempt to court Filipino Americans to support their organizations, interpellating a homogenous Filipino American or Filipino diasporic identities through the elision of the differences among class, citizenship, sexuality and gender. My project attempts to point to the risks when such organizations and foundations usurp diasporic giving politics and define the extent of what it means for Filipino Americans to give.

From the 1960s, strains of feminist scholarship and organizing began to critique “essentialist” categories of identity, particularly in terms of the mobilization of the category “woman” in nominally liberatory political projects. Women of color feminism, Third World feminism and black lesbian feminism challenged liberal ideologies of

³⁰ In drawing on a transnational feminist critique for the study of Filipino American diasporization, I realize that gender and race/ethnicity are not equivalent, but I hold that the internal and self-critique of feminist studies and of feminist organizers and activists have pointed to the limitations and usefulness of identity in organizing projects, providing both cautionary and useful precedent for the larger study of identity formation.

women's organizing and cultural nationalist organizing that in their respective ways imposed gender, racial, class, and sexual normativity. For example, "Black lesbian feminists helped to render the imagination into a social practice that utilized cultural forms precisely because of the overlapping gender, sexual, class, and racial exclusions that constituted forms of nationalism" forwarded by mainstream feminist politics.³¹ It has come to be generally accepted, especially in interdisciplinary fields, that essentialist categories of identity work to perpetuate "universalisms" that suppress the differences and expressions of hybrid and historically-situated subjects. However, writes Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "[T]he critique of essentialist identity politics and the hegemony of postmodernist skepticism about identity has led to a narrowing of feminist politics and theory whereby either exclusionary and self-serving understandings of identity rule the day or identity (racial, class, sexual, national, etc.) is seen as unstable and thus merely 'strategic.' Thus, identity is seen as either naive or irrelevant, rather than as a source of knowledge and a basis for progressive mobilization."³² Allison Weir critiques the field's emphasis on the constructedness of "woman," which concerns itself primarily with the "objectivity" of "woman" as an identity category. This emphasis, she argues, fails to apprehend the "subjectivity of identifications."³³ In her argument, a subjective, "interest-driven, identification-based relational identity"³⁴ captures an additional dimension of identity, what she calls "identification-with" in the "identification with others,

³¹ I borrow from Roderick A. Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black: Toward a Queer of Color Critique* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 118.

³² Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*, 4th printing, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004 [2003]), 6.

³³ Allison Weir, "Global Feminism and Transformative Identity Politics," *Hypatia* 23, no. 4 (Oct.-Dec. 2008): 111.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 116.

identification with values and ideals, identification with ourselves, as individuals and as collectives.”³⁵ It is through this “identification-with” that a “we” can be formed through a shared orientation to solidarity and “feminist ideals.”³⁶ Similarly, Mohanty also theorizes feminist solidarity through her attention to identity.³⁷ Rather than assuming among women a common identification with oppression, Mohanty’s feminism defines solidarity “in terms of mutuality, accountability, and the recognition of common interests as the basis for relationships among diverse communities. Rather than assuming an enforced commonality of oppression, the practice of solidarity foregrounds communities of people who have chosen to work and fight together.”³⁸ It is not merely the construction of gender at stake, but rather a critique of individualized (and corporatized and imperialist) cultures and knowledges and a demand for a transformative feminist politics forged through the recognition of binding interest for those fighting for social and economic justice.³⁹ Particularly, a transformative solidarity-based politics connects those who choose to work together, those who participate in building solidarity among diverse communities, which itself demands an attention to the production and

³⁵ Ibid., 111.

³⁶ Ibid., 120.

³⁷ Of note, Mohanty is significantly indebted to postcolonial theorists like Frantz Fanon to develop her work on transnational feminism. I do not mean to imply that only feminist theory has contributed to the critique I (very) briefly outline.

³⁸ Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders*, 7.

³⁹ José Esteban Muñoz works to overcome the essentialist-social constructivist framework in *Disidentifications* where he writes, “This study is informed by the belief that the use-value of any narrative of identity that reduces subjectivity to either a social constructivist model or what has been called an essentialist understanding of the self is especially exhausted. Clearly, neither story is complete, but the way in which these understandings of the self have come to be aligned with each other as counternarratives is now a standard protocol of theory-making processes that are no longer of much use.” See *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 5.

exploitation of difference, and those who practice solidarity, in part, through what I am referring to here as critical associations of responsibility and accountability.

Filipino American diaspora giving critique stakes its analysis through the complexity of identity. Many if not most first generation Filipino Americans do not identify themselves Filipino Americans as such but as Filipino (or Pinoy or Pilipino).⁴⁰ I use the term Filipino American despite the personal choices of individual identification and despite important differences in legal status, generation, and circular, zigzagging migration patterns between the United States and other countries including, but not limited to, the Philippines. The core of this project is not to delineate or insist upon a politics around the objective dimension of “Filipino American” identity or a “Filipino diasporic” identity, a politics that builds itself around cultural definitions of ethnicity and static definitions of homeland, but “a model of identification mediated by recognition of power relations.”⁴¹ A transformative diasporic politics is formed through an identification as Filipino American as mediated by critical associations of responsibility, accountability, and mutuality within practices of diaspora giving. An attendant diaspora of giving motivates not by the desire for a return to a nostalgic homeland but to engage with and participate in a homeland constituted by a recognition of power relations.

Filipinos in the United States desire multiple nostalgic, childhood, pre-industrial, and

⁴⁰ Hence, Benito M. Vergara’s purposeful use of “Filipinos in the America” versus “Filipino American” in his important ethnography of Filipinos in Daly City, CA. “Being a ‘Filipino in America,’ as opposed to being Filipino American, is a state that seems to highlight the lack of a sense of belonging; this may, in turn, signify and intensify a longing for connections to the homeland.” The majority of his interviewees identified as “Filipino,” and he thus utilizes “the generic term *Filipino* to refer to Filipinos both in the Philippines and the United States, using *Filipino American* only to denote people who identified themselves thus (like those at the *Philippine News*) or who belong to the second generation. I choose this terminology not only for the sake of accuracy but to highlight the tensions regarding national belonging.” See *Pinoy Capital: The Filipino Nation in Daly City* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008), 14, 15.

⁴¹ Weir, *Global Feminism and Transformative Identity Politics*, 121.

romanticized homeland spaces. However, a radical and transformative diaspora politics intervenes in those identities and spaces, reorienting the terms and relationships among racialized ethnicity, diaspora, nation, and homeland.

From Failed Solutions to Transnational Solidarity: The FACES Organization and Critical Associations of Accountability, Mutuality, and Responsibility

The organization Filipino/American Coalition for Environmental Solidarity (FACES) was originally conceived in 2000 as a Filipino American pressure and advocacy group that hoped to gain attention in the U.S. Congress for the massive destruction wrought in the Philippines by the U.S. military and to support legal action to force the U.S. Department of Defense to assess and address the extent of its damage. In its originary form, FACES was not necessarily an environmental justice organization and had yet to develop its now professed transnational environmental justice politics, a move spurred by external political forces in the U.S. and the Philippines. Its original goals were largely technical and clear-cut in nature: the U.S. military must be pressured to take economic and legal responsibility for the toxic materials abandoned at the site of its former military bases.

FACES formed to address the environmental crisis caused by the U.S. military bases and withdrawal. Leading up to the exit of the military bases in 1991, the Philippine Senate voted against the renewal of lease for two U.S. military bases in the Philippines, the Clark Air Base in Pampanga province and the Subic Bay Naval Station in Zambales.⁴² Many Philippine political leaders hoped that the exit of the United States

⁴² The United States had already decided to close Clark Air Force Base due to the damage the base experienced following the eruption in June 1991 of Mt. Pinatubo volcano at the time the Philippine Senate in September 1991 voted to not renew the military lease. Subic Bay Naval Station, which is about fifty

military bases would lead to the end of a century of U.S. military presence in the Philippines and begin a new chapter in U.S.-Philippine relations. In the years following the closing of the U.S. military bases, however, the legacies and presence of U.S. military in the Philippines would prove durable. Not only did the Philippine Congress agree to the bilateral Visiting Forces Agreement with the United States in 1998-1999, allowing for joint military exercises and protected privileges for U.S. military in the Philippines, but the country became the “second front”⁴³ for the U.S. fight against global terror following the attack on the World Trade Center in 2001 and willingly opened itself to increased U.S. military and financial aid to fight the Muslim Abu Sayyaf on the southern island of Mindanao.

Meanwhile, at the site of the former military bases, the legacy of the U.S. military bases continues in other forms twenty years after their official closing. The various communities and laborers that once served the American military continue to search for sources of income. Additionally, surrounding communities were left with devastating effects from environmental waste and contaminants abandoned by the U.S. military at the sites of the former bases, where extraordinarily high instances of stillborn births, birth defects and cancers are linked to the toxic exposure and the consumption of toxins in the water and soil. From a membership letter dated September 8, 2001, the year after FACES was formed and before its transformation to an environmental justice organization, the leadership states:

miles away from Clark, was also damaged by the eruption, but it was the Philippine Senate (and later the Philippine president) that terminated the lease for Subic for the United States.

⁴³ See for example Walden Bello, “A ‘Second Front’ in the Philippines,” *The Nation* (March 18, 2003): 18-22.

As you are aware, the situation of communities near former U.S. Clark Air Base and Subic Naval Base is life threatening. Yet there is a solution to this problem. The U.S. government must be encouraged to take the necessary steps towards a full clean-up of its former military bases in the Philippines. Towards this end, FACES was formed in March 2000 with the mission of transforming U.S. policy to hold our government responsible for environmental contamination left behind at Clark and Subic.⁴⁴

When it was formed in 2000, the “S” in FACES stood for “Solutions”; it was the Filipino/American Coalition for Environmental *Solutions*, reflecting the organization’s original goal of forcing the U.S. military to accept economic and legal responsibility for the management of its hazardous waste left in the Philippines. However, the organization not only lost its legal case,⁴⁵ it encountered an uncompromising post-9/11 political climate that challenged their ability to politically criticize the U.S. military no matter its collateral damage. As stated by FACES in a 2003 position paper:

In the wake of 9/11 and the war on terror, the U.S. military is virtually untouchable. The U.S. military is not only being built up and expanded, but also receives support domestically, while enforcing its authority internationally. Any criticism against the military is seen as being ungrateful towards the people that ‘protect our freedom and liberty. ‘Post-9/11 fear has created a bipolar U.S. climate: hot or cold, with us or against us.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Filipino/American Coalition for Environmental Solidarity, Membership letter, September 8, 2001.

⁴⁵ *Arc Ecology v. U.S. Department of the Air Force*, 294 F. Supp. 2d 1152 (N.D. Cal. 2003).

⁴⁶ Filipino/American Coalition for Environmental Solidarity, Position paper, 2003, 2-3

At its inception and before its refocus from a pressure and advocacy group to a transnational environmental justice organization, the founding members connected the War on Terror in the U.S. and the Philippines to the formula “Filipino-American identity through social change,”⁴⁷ which is indeed a significant formulation. By relating Filipino American identity to the machination of U.S. imperialism and the reach of a jingoist U.S. government in affecting policy in the Philippines, FACES disrupts a dominant trend in Philippine nationalism that aligns Filipino Americans with materialism and American exceptionalism. Postcolonial Filipino studies scholar Vicente L. Rafael writes how one popular Philippine-based journalist characterizes Filipino Americans as “positioned as neocolonizers whose ambitions lie in setting themselves apart from the rest of the so-called natives rather than affiliating with them.”⁴⁸ “Indeed,” Raphael continues in his analysis of the journalist, “they do nothing else but point out what it is the Philippines lacks as compared to the United States, thereby appearing shameless and arrogant...Not only are balikbayans⁴⁹ akin to U.S. colonizers; even more dismaying is their similarity to the collaborators of the past.”⁵⁰ Contrary to this categorization, FACES imagines a Filipino American identity outside of consumerist desires. It constructs a Philippine environment tied to U.S. militarism, resulting in a homeland politics involved in the contradictions of U.S. empire.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 2.

⁴⁸ Vicente L. Rafael, *White Love and Other Events in Filipino History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), 208.

⁴⁹ In Tagalog, *balikbayan* refers to a Filipino “returnee to the homeland,” and refers largely to Filipino Americans, in derision or not.

⁵⁰ Rafael, *White Love and Other Events in Filipino History*, 208-9.

Soon after the global political climate changed spurred by the U.S. War on Terror, FACES worked to broaden its vision and mission to “encompass the complex and nuanced relationship between the U.S. and the Philippines”⁵¹ and changed its name to reflect this: the “S” in FACES would now stand for “Solidarity,” clumsily designated here for the moment as *FACESolidarity* (whereas *FACESolutions* is used to indicate the organization’s original name and goals): “In January 2005, FACES members attending the biennial national conference decided to redefine and expand organizational and campaign strategy and goals. Through the recent FACES assessment process, the need emerged to extend the scope of FACES to capture the broader environmental justice framework. FACES wanted to deepen our notion of ‘solidarity’ and recognize the reciprocity of our relationship with Philippine partners. This fueled the discussion around the change of ‘S’ in FACES.”⁵² Institutionally defined *Solutions* was changed toward a broader cultural and social program in *Solidarity*. At this conference, the organization “decided to broaden FACES’s scope of concerns to address transnational issues of environmental justice that impact Filipino communities in both the United States and the Philippines.”⁵³ Their work now focuses on building leaders within the Filipino/American community through education and exposure to environmental justice projects both in the U.S. and the Philippines and working to politicize and rearticulate Filipino American subjectivities more broadly.

⁵¹ Galatea King, “Message from the Chair: New Directions, Building Solidarity,” *Facing Justice: Quarterly News Journal of the Filipino/American Coalition for Environmental Solidarity*, Fall/Winter 2005, 2.

⁵² Filipino/American Coalition for Environmental Solidarity (FACES), “Mission,” www.facessolidarity.org.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

Another reason for the shift to *FACESolidarity* rests in the organization's major legal setback. In 2003, a San Jose federal judge dismissed a lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Defense to conduct a preliminary assessment of Clark and Subic, a case filed by FACES, ARC Ecology, a California-based environmental justice organization, and thirty-six Philippine residents in the Subic and Clark vicinities who linked their cancer, blood disease, and children's birth defects to the toxicity in their soil and water. The legal decisions that sided with the military limited *FACESolutions* ability "solve" the problem of toxic waste so severely affecting the health of communities in the Philippines. On appeal in 2005, a Ninth Circuit judge ruled against the plaintiffs, stating the lawyers failed to prove their legal case. Before an analysis of the Filipino American politics of diaspora giving articulated by the *FACESolidarity* organization, the chapter furthers the implications of the organizational redesign amidst this legal failure. It failed in that it designated its mission as securing legal and economic reparations for Philippine-based families and communities that suffered from toxic contamination through a U.S.-based court case, and its case against the U.S. government failed. It failed, but it was through its litigious failure that *FACESolutions* began the intellectual labor necessary for building wider coalition and rearticulating a more critical Filipino American diaspora giving politics. As such, *FACESolutions* provides an example of the limitations of state- and legal-based solutions as the foundation for a diaspora politics, while the transition and reimagination of *FACESolidarity* illustrates an organization's investment in the articulation of a Filipino American identity shaped purposefully with an attention to the hierarchies of race, class, gender, sexuality, and geography, the heterogeneity of Filipino

American identity. This is not to say that international, diasporic or transnational organizations should not involve themselves in legal cases or advocate for state responsibility; drawing such a line is not the point of this chapter or this project. Rather, this chapter looks at the path to *FACESolidarity* as an example of what it means to practice a diaspora giving politics that attends to the contradictions of contemporary global capital and forwards a diasporic identity through an awareness of those contradictions.

Organizational Failure: Background on the Legal Case, ARC Ecology v. United States Department of the Air Force

The former U.S. military bases in the Philippines, like all military bases, are not isolated islands contained by chain-linked fences and signs regulating who belongs and who is forbidden in the demarcated zones. Military bases are part of communities, jurisdictions, states, and other measurements of scale and space, and the hazardous waste abandoned on the sites of the former military bases directly and fatally impacted the lives, health, and livelihood of the peoples of Zambales and Pampanga provinces in the Philippines. The U.S. military left its former bases in the Philippines in disastrous conditions. According to a 1992 U.S. General Accounting Office report, the naval facility lacked a complete sewage and treatment system and discharged untreated sewage and process waste waters directly into Subic Bay, naval repair facilities dumped lead and other heavy metals directly in the water or buried the metals in landfill, power plants emitted untreated pollutants into the air, fire-fighting facilities with no drainage systems left fuel and chemicals used in fire-fighting exercises to seep directly into the soil and water table, and the military left waste-filled underground storage tanks lacking leak

detection equipment. None of these waste relocation tactics comply with U.S. standards and would not be allowed on U.S. soil. As stated in the 1992 report:

Although the Air Force and the Navy have identified significant environmental damage at both Clark Air Base and the Subic Bay Navy Facility, the current basing agreement does not impose any well-defined environmental responsibility on the United States for environmental cleanup and restoration. However, according to Air Force and Navy officials, if the United States unilaterally decided to clean up these bases in accordance with U.S. standards, the costs for environmental cleanup and restoration could approach Superfund proportions.⁵⁴

In the above statement, should the United States “unilaterally” decide to clean up its acknowledged environmental mess, it could do so through funding from the Congressional environmental “Superfund.” This “Superfund” refers to the Comprehensive, Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) of 1980, often used interchangeably with the “Superfund” mentioned in the 1992 report. The U.S. Congress enacted CERCLA, or the Superfund, on the heels of the Love Canal disaster of the 1970s and in the hopes of creating a new direction and reputation for environmental responsibility for the United States government. CERCLA compels responsible parties to attend to abandoned hazardous waste sites and maintains a trust fund (the Superfund) for the “cleanup” of hazardous waste when responsible parties cannot be legally established.⁵⁵ As the court decision regarding the former military bases

⁵⁴ United States General Accounting Office, “Military Base Closures: U.S. Financial Obligations in the Philippines,” Report to Congressional Requesters, GAO/NSIAD-92-51 (January 1992), 27.

⁵⁵ In its notes, the U.S. General Accounting Office’s report states that the average cost of construction per Superfund site is about \$26 million.” See *Ibid.*, 3. For the EPA’s overview of CERCLA, see U.S.

in the Philippines would hold, parties are only responsible for abandoned hazardous waste sites when those waste sites are on U.S. soil. After the bases were returned to the Philippines, the U.S. Department of Defense no longer had legal responsibility to the environment or the peoples in the surrounding areas and refused to initiate the clean up through a moral responsibility for the situation.

The fight to hold the U.S. government legally responsible for the hazardous waste cleanup was, of course, an uphill battle from the onset. According to environmental legal scholar Margot Laporte, after an overseas military base “is returned to the host nation, the [U.S. Department of Defense] may not fund any remediation beyond that required by a binding international agreement or under an approved remediation... Because most international agreements do not include specific provisions regarding environmental remediation, the United States is generally under no obligation to comply if the host nation requests remediation.”⁵⁶ In 2003, *FACESolutions* brought a precedent-setting legal suit against the U.S. government seeking the international enforcement of the CERCLA environmental legislation. The United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit ruled that CERCLA “cannot be applied extraterritorially to regulate environmental harm overseas” as “the statute overcomes the presumption against extraterritoriality.”⁵⁷ In this particular case, the lawyers for the plaintiff failed to support the argument that Congress wrote the CERCLA legislation with the intention for it to be applied overseas or “extraterritorially” in the judge’s opinion. While Congress has the

Environmental Protection Agency, “CERCLA Overview,”
<http://www.epa.gov/superfund/policy/cercla.htm>.

⁵⁶Margot Laporte, “Being All It Can Be: A Solution to Improve the Department of Defense’s Overseas Environmental Policy,” *Duke Environmental Law & Policy Forum* 20 (Winter 2010): 219.

⁵⁷ Laporte, “Being All It Can Be,” 221.

power to legislate activities overseas for U.S. citizens and entities, statutes that do not expressly say so must overcome what the courts call a “strong presumption against extraterritoriality.”⁵⁸ The presumption of the courts against extraterritoriality underlines the court’s hesitation to “authorize the application of laws that may conflict with laws of another sovereign state” and thus the courts presume that Congressional legislation expresses a domestic, territorial focus.⁵⁹

The court, in very direct language, ruled that CERCLA was not intended to apply overseas, thus ending *FACESolutions* legal tact of holding the U.S. responsible for the hazardous waste left on former military bases in the Philippines.⁶⁰ The United States Department of Justice enjoyed a victory against *FACESolutions* and the fellow claimants. The U.S. Division of Environmental and Natural Resources and the then-Assistant Attorney General Thomas L. Sansonetti were jubilant as the case was ruled in their favor. In the 2004 Environment and Natural Resources Division’s “Summary of Litigation Accomplishments,” former Assistant Attorney General Sansonetti writes, “I am pleased to present the Environment and Natural Resources Division’s (‘ENRD’)

⁵⁸ As defined in Laporte, “Congress has the authority to enforce its laws overseas. However, courts assume that Congress legislates under a presumption against extraterritoriality. Therefore, unless Congress clearly expresses its intent to give a statute extraterritorial effect, courts assume that Congress intended the legislation to apply domestically.” See *Ibid.*, 230.

⁵⁹ Anna D. Stasch, “ARC Ecology V. United States Department of the Air Force: Extending the Extraterritorial Reach of Domestic Environmental Law,” *Environmental Law* 36 (2006): 1067.

⁶⁰ While the application of CERCLA, a piece of environmental legislation, was judged as failing to overcome the presumption of extraterritoriality, other bodies of legislation do overcome this presumption. With *ARC Ecology v. The United States Department of the Air Force*, the precedent was made for the interpretation that U.S. *environmental* laws do not extend outside its borders. However, courts show an inconsistency in the terms upon the presumption of extraterritoriality is applied to *market* law such as securities and antitrust laws: “In contrast to the express congressional intent required for an environmental law to overcome the presumption, securities and antitrust laws frequently avoid the presumption, even absent a demonstration of congressional intent, because failure to apply such market laws abroad may pose a threat to the American economy. Courts have developed flexible alternatives to the presumption that allow extraterritorial application of securities and antitrust laws.” See *Ibid.*, 1068.

Accomplishments Report for Fiscal Year 2004. The Division continues to work tirelessly to enforce and defend America's environmental laws, ensuring the air we breathe is clean, the water we drink pure, and the majestic American landscape preserved for generations to come. This year produced even more record-breaking accomplishments of which all Americans can be proud."⁶¹ The portion of the report addressing the dismissal of *ARC Ecology v. Air Force and Navy* appears under the subheading "Protecting the Public Fisc," a turn in the use of "protection" in an environmental-care context whose object is federal budgets and not an evocation of nature: "A significant portion of the Division's practice includes resolving liability of federal agencies in connection with cleanup of contaminated facilities under CERCLA. This year ENRD successfully defended numerous claims of federal Superfund liability, saving the government hundreds of millions of dollars."⁶² Thankfully, at least in regard to the U.S. budget for environmental calamity, the Philippines deserves no such protection. Sociologist Valerie Kuletz documents a "geography of sacrifice" where the government and industry identify "expendable" spaces for pursuits known to destroy the environment such as those for weapons testing, nuclear development, and uranium mining. For example, "Fifty years of the unbridled pursuit of nuclear power have obscured a geography of sacrifice that, when mapped, shows how racism, militarism, and economic imperialism have combined to marginalize a people and a land that many within government and industry, consciously

⁶¹ Thomas L. Sansonetti, Forward to "ENRD Fiscal Year 2004 Summary of Litigation Accomplishments," *United States Department of Justice*, http://www.justice.gov/enrd/ENRD_2004_Lit_Accomplishments.html.

⁶² United States Department of Justice, "ENRD Fiscal Year 2004 Summary of Litigation Accomplishments," *United States Department of Justice*, http://www.justice.gov/enrd/ENRD_2004_Lit_Accomplishments.html.

or not, regard as expendable.”⁶³ The U.S. government produces the Philippines as a “highly militarized sacrificial landscape”⁶⁴ as opposed to those spaces worth protecting, as in the “majestic American landscape” from Sansonetti’s erstwhile description.⁶⁵

The government’s response raises several important issues that point to the limitations of creating a diasporic politics based primarily on legal procedures. In terms of legal redress, the environment—and those most directly related to its “contamination”—can only be protected as far as U.S. governing bodies create, interpret, and enforce its own environmental laws. The rhapsodic tone of the descriptions above demonstrates how “protection” is not merely of the environment —American or overseas—but in the protection of U.S. coffers tied to the legal victory of the Environment and Natural Resources Division and the U.S. Department of Defense, the winning party in the lawsuit. The U.S. government (and the Philippine government) direly failed the communities surrounding the former military bases in the Philippines at the levels of military oversight, legislative vision, and judicial interpretation of existing laws. Putting organizational faith in the U.S. legislative and judicial system to hold the U.S. military responsible for the hazardous waste limited the organization’s scope for imagining their relationship to the Philippines, particularly as a Filipino American

⁶³ Valerie Kuletz, *The Tainted Desert: Environmental Ruin in the American West* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 6.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 66.

⁶⁵ See Amy Kaplan’s 2004 presidential address to the American Studies Association, presidential address: “In this logic, the United States claims the authority to “make sovereign judgments on what is right and what is wrong” for everyone else and “to exempt itself with an absolutely clear conscience from all the rules that it proclaims and applies to others...If in these narratives imperial power is deemed the solution to a broken world, then they preempt any counternarratives that claim U.S. imperial actions, past and present, may have something to do with the world’s problems.” See “Violent Belongings and the Question of Empire Today: Presidential Address to the American Studies Association, October 17, 2003,” *American Quarterly* 56, no. 1 (March 2004): 5-6.

organization, because the extent of their social critique was necessarily contained by the possible reach of legal action. Speaking more broadly of the environmental justice movement or of the larger effects of movement organizations' focus on legal justice, political scientist Stephen Sandweiss asserts the compromises made when the environment justice movement becomes caught up in legal discourse and policy debate:

[T]here is a danger to this remedial action to the extent that legal strategies shift movement struggles out of the control of local activists and into the hands of lawyers and national legal organizations. As a result, laws and litigation are seen as the solution to the problem of environmental injustices, as opposed to community empowerment. Instead of being viewed as a means of achieving fundamental systemic change, 'environmental justice' becomes redefined and transformed into just another issue for which we need legislation, or a new legal strategy. The entrance of legal groups into the environmental justice field is, in many ways, a detriment to the movement, blunting its ideological edge and diverting its limited resources.⁶⁶

It is very difficult to sustain a transnational movement that centers on legal recognition for it buys into the terms set by the hegemonic judicial and legislation system, a system that protects U.S. markets and the U.S. treasury over the environment of the Philippines, the people of the Philippines, or any notion of moral responsibility. *FACESolutions* did not find its legal solution for the hazardous waste in the Philippines, but from its failure *FACESolidarity* has successfully developed a more sustainable platform that can more

⁶⁶ Stephen Sandweiss, "The Social Construction of Environmental Justice," in *Environmental Injustices, Political Struggles: Race, Class, and the Environment*, ed. David E. Camacho (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), 50.

broadly “encompass the complex and nuanced relationship between the U.S. and the Philippines.”⁶⁷

Solidarity in Return

The work of the *FACESolidarity* organization disrupts the narration of the expendability of the Philippines, but not just because it has lobbied for U.S. responsibility. The organization understands what is at stake in the construction of the environment surrounding the former military bases, not just in terms of the sacrifice of a Third World nation by the United States and its resolve to protect its economic/military properties and privileges, but also in terms of the Philippine state’s investment in protecting the Philippines as worthy of economic development according to the terms set by the U.S. In *FACES*’s description, the presidential administration of Gloria Macapagal Arroyo was as set as the U.S. in not establishing accountability for damage from toxic waste. As did its predecessors, the Arroyo administration endured to remain in U.S. favor in order to reproduce the Philippines as a safe space for international loans and investment. The Philippine administration protects its environment according to those same logics of sacrifice for the neoliberal project of global capitalist expansion.

I came to know *FACESolidarity* through interviews with three present and former board members; through analyses of organizational materials, newspapers articles, and materials related to its court case; and, largely, through participation on its first annual Face2Face Solidarity Trip in 2005⁶⁸ in the Philippines and subsequent interviews with several of its participants from that trip. After losing their court battle, *FACESolutions*

⁶⁷ Galatea King, “Message from the Chair: New Directions, Building Solidarity,” 2.

⁶⁸ Technically, *FACES* board members had gone on “solidarity trips” in 2003 and 2004, but it was on this trip in 2005 when they were to able to implement their redefined organizational goals.

became FACE*Solidarity* and designed the “Solidarity Trip” in conjunction with their organizational re-haul—it no longer had the choice of limiting its resources to the court battle. The trip targeted Filipino Americans, and particularly second generation Filipino Americans, for participants, Filipino Americans who did not necessarily have a familiarity with the organization but had an interest in environmentalism. As a “return trip,” the Solidarity Trip works to redefine homeland and how multi-generation Filipino Americans find meaning through travel to the Philippines. In general, returns trips are organized travel and stay in homeland countries for children or grandchildren of emigrants, and they can be sponsored by governments, by U.S.-based cultural associations, by corporate foundations, by private benefactors or individually funded.⁶⁹ As described by Asian American studies ethnographer Andrea Louie, return trips are a form of cultural tourism that she argues “represents more than the coincidence of tourist destination and ancestral heritage...What differentiates cultural tourism from other forms of tourism is the actual and/or imagined historical, familial, and cultural connection between the traveler and his or her destination.”⁷⁰

The FACE2FACE Solidarity Trip disrupts the logic of nationalist returns to homeland that attempt to define an uninterrupted and originary “home” for second-plus generation Filipino Americans. Returning to Andrea Louie, her work demonstrates how

⁶⁹ Return trips for Jews to Israel would take on a different emigrant-homeland narrative, and the Jewish “Birthright Israel” is probably the most well-known return trip. It is a fully sponsored return trip to Israel to encourage personal connections between Jewish youth and Jewish history and culture as practiced in Israel.

⁷⁰ Andrea Louie, “When You Are Related to the ‘Other: (Re)locating the Chinese Homeland in Asian American Politics through Cultural Tourism,” *positions* 11, no. 3 (2003): 740. See also Louie’s book-length examination of the “In Search of Roots” cultural heritage program for Cantonese Chinese Americans in Guangdong Province. Louie, *Chineseness Across Borders: Renegotiating Chinese Identities in China and the United States* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 74.

Chinese American youth bring multiple layers of meaning to personalize their experiences to China and emphasizes how these return trips create new transnational understandings of “Chineseness.” In Louie’s study, Chinese Americans participate in return trips co-sponsored by the Chinese government and Chinese American cultural societies in order to pursue family genealogical projects in ancestral villages. Noteworthy in her analysis, Louie demonstrates the fiction of pure, original homeland even in such kin- and origin-based return trips. Through the nuances allowed by her ethnographic work, Louie demonstrates how Chinese Americans complicate nostalgic returns to an originary homeland on their organized return trips to ancestral villages by rewriting the scripts of official and “authentic” nationalism, creating meanings from their experiences merged from multiple cultural and historical references.⁷¹ Groups of Chinese American youth visit each of the groups’ ancestral villages and connect their experiences of ancestral origin to their knowledge of Chinese American history as well as to transnational popular culture such as Hong Kong movies and Japanese *manga*, demonstrating the transnational production of Chineseness. Thus, although the participant’s connection to China “are based in the historical ties of family and kinship of the past, they are also informed by a broader sense of China as a symbol of heritage and as part of a broader Asian-pacific popular culture that is as much about being Asian American as it is about being transnational.”⁷² Louie draws attention to new forms of transnational Chineseness based on how participants relate personal experiences and transnational media to the ancestral homeland, prompting, for example, participants to

⁷¹ Louie, *Chineseness Across Borders*, 85.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 89.

refuse the Chinese government's discourses of ancestral "home" as a natural space of belonging for overseas Chinese. While Louie delineates new *negotiations* of transnational belonging of second-plus generation Chinese Americans, I argue that the Face2Face Solidarity Trip creates a framework for its participants to rearticulate "Filipinoness" through their connection to the transnational production of global injustice that values Western capitalist accumulation over Philippine spaces, as in the production of sacrificial landscapes, and Filipino bodies.

On the 2005 Face2Face Solidarity Trip, the organization led the group on a ten-day tour of the organization's projects and partnerships in the Philippines, some of which were longstanding partnerships, such as with Buklod ng Kababihan,⁷³ a workers organization comprised of current and former sex workers in the immediate vicinity of the former military bases, and partnerships that were yet to be fully explored and developed, such as with people's organizations in Marilao, Bulacan, where an unregulated battery recycling plant was dumping waste into the community's water resources. The Face2Face participants and organizers stayed at non-profit organizations that were connected with these issues, attending daily lectures by organizers and activists on the history of the issues and tactics of organizing by the local Filipino groups.

The trip was designed, in their words, to "expose participants to the effects of militarism, globalization, and capitalism on local communities and their resources, introduce participants to groups that are fighting for environmental justice in the Philippines, [and] foster a sense of ownership and understanding through a hands-on

⁷³ In Tagalog, the organization name connotes a bond that brings women together.

service learning curriculum.”⁷⁴ Targeting Filipino Americans for participation in Face2Face, the organization redefines Filipino ethnic identity in the United States as always already impacted by the racialization and sexualization of the Philippines, and Filipinos as structured by these global hierarchies that construct the Philippines as a place for U.S. neocolonial and imperialist activity. As described by the FACES board of directors, “The main goal of F2F is to establish meaningful and mutually beneficial relationships and provide concrete bonds of solidarity between Filipinos American and Philippine communities.”⁷⁵ Elsewhere, the chair of the board of directors wrote that the trip’s intention was “to connect with communities directly impacted by U.S. transgressions in the Philippines.”⁷⁶ From the onset, the organization contributed to a new form of transnational Filipino American diasporic subjectivity and an important example of a giving relationship that enacted a critical responsibility. Oriented toward a Philippine homeland and driven by a responsibility *as* Filipino Americans to fight against U.S. imperialism, the organization provides a context for a critical responsibility in their giving practices. Almost all of the Filipino American associations, organizations, and foundations I had contact with and whose leadership I had the opportunity to interview for this dissertation went on some kind of return to trip to present their donation, to carry out their medical mission, or to visit an organization-supported project. While in general, “return trips” designate cultural heritage visits to connect ethnic youths to homelands,

⁷⁴ Filipino/American Coalition for Environmental Solidarity (FACES), “FACE2FACE,” <http://www.facessolidarity.org>.

⁷⁵ Filipino/American Coalition for Environmental Solidarity, *Summary of the 2005 Face2Face trip and Recommendations to FACES*, Organizational Report, 2005, 1.

⁷⁶ Galatea King, “Message from the Chair: A Strong Start to the New Year.” *Facing Justice: Quarterly News Journal of the Filipino/American Coalition for Environmental Solidarity*, Spring 2006, 2.

return trips figure prominently in Filipino American diaspora giving, where the movement and orientation toward the Philippine homeland is enacted by frameworks of giving, by volunteerism and donations, and by the organization's involvement with their projects in the Philippines. Overwhelmingly, Filipino American organization leaders and participants travel to the Philippines to disperse their gifts, to volunteer their expertise, and to oversee their infrastructural projects on the diaspora giving return trips. However, these acts generally lack a connection to larger institutional and structural critique and an attention to one's own involvement in the maintenance of inequality. This Solidarity Trip is FACES's version of a return trip to the Philippines, but, as one participant describes, "FACES was good at bringing us questions that we would have never seen if we were just on vacation."⁷⁷

The Face2Face Solidarity Trip toured, so to speak, toxic "hot spots" in the Philippines of locales where community members were fighting for recognition that their towns and neighborhoods had been made environmentally uninhabitable, but it was an environment-related tour quite different from the model of environmental tourism represented by the travel guides as described earlier in this chapter. On this trip in 2005, FACES gathered fifteen participants from across the U.S. to accompany them on a two-week tour in the Philippines where they introduced the participants to a dozen partner-organizations and community groups, relationships with whom that they had nurtured on their own environmental justice campaigns and in their work advocating for those affected by the U.S. military bases in Subic and Clark. FACES leadership made it so the participants could engage in activities to support the work of the Philippine communities

⁷⁷ Jake Allen [pseud.], interview by author, San Jose, CA, September 21, 2005.

and organizations, articulating a complex culturally- and socially-constructed environment as homeland for this Filipino American organization. Instead of a pristine environment that would then call for its protection, FACES disrupts this representation and gives meaning to this space through social practices. It builds coalitions with groups of workers formally employed on the military bases carrying symptoms of toxic exposures, and, for example and as noted earlier, it also builds coalitions with a group of former and current workers in the sex industry surrounding the bases as well as with a group of Amerasians organizing to be acknowledged by the U.S. state and American fathers. All of these groups focus on particular social issues, and all are simultaneously tied to the production of the environment and inform FACES's environmental justice politics and the construction of the Philippine homeland as a space impacted by environmental injustice, corporate-based destruction and militarism.

The educational component and principles of FACES was again visited on the first day of the Solidarity Trip at the Institute for Popular Democracy, a Philippine organization defines itself “as an agent for democratization in the Philippines, seeking to enhance the capabilities of non-government organizations, people’s organizations and progressive political formation” and who pioneered “analysis of elite politics and initiated education work among non-government organizations and political organizations, focusing on the then-incipient question of local democracy.”⁷⁸ There, the executive director of the Institute set the context for “creating a Filipino *and* a Filipino American consciousness.”⁷⁹ While

⁷⁸ Institute for Popular Democracy, “About IPD,” <http://staging.ipd.org.ph>.

⁷⁹ Joel Rocamora, from author’s field notes, 2005.

many Filipinos in the Philippines and in the United States are apathetic, he claimed, he urged the mostly Filipino American group to relate to the Philippines in terms of “justice and social change,” which is itself a conceptual remapping of diaspora: “This is something different because colonial experiences are very much a part of who we are as the Philippines.” He lectured to the group on how the political system of the Philippines had been molded by colonialism and dominated by oligarchy and explained his organization’s work in coalition building and affecting the economic system in the Philippines, framing the organization’s vision against ones that work within the sanctioned political system, where political factions align themselves behind the lesser of the evils of political campaigns. In one of our regrouping sessions, the FACES leaders presented the organizational goals of FACES: they were working to flesh out ideas of reciprocity and solidarity and how to use the information presented by the Institute for Popular Democracy’s executive director to build their Kamalayan Filipino American consciousness education program.

The focus and missions of the Philippine-based environmental justice groups and organizations varied. Through lectures by Philippine activists and community members attempting to organize their neighbors in protest of the alarming levels of benzene and dioxins found in their environment, the participants learned of the history of oil corporations Shell and Chevron in Pandacan, Metro Manila, and the corporations’ ability to influence policy and maintain oil depots within the boundaries of urban communities. The group spent a day with residents of Marilao, Bulacan, where most work at an automotive lead-acid battery recycling plant, Philippine Recyclers, Inc., a subsidiary of

Los Angeles-based Ramcar Batteries, Inc., located on the banks of the local river.⁸⁰

There is data and anecdotal evidence of lead contents in the water and soil, supporting the suspicion that lead has a detrimental effect in Marilao and contributes to high rates of asthma and cancer-like symptoms of the community. The participants heard from a former employee of Philippine Recyclers, Inc. whose blood was found to have very high levels of lead, and who had recently received death threats from neighbors because of his actions speaking against the company. These threats stemmed from the fear that the company may eventually move to a different location or close down, and his neighbors did not want to lose their jobs. An understanding of the environmentalist dictate to recycle was given new meaning as the group witnessed the impact on people's health by the environmental destruction of an American-based recycling company.

In Olongapo near the former Subic Naval Base, the participants stayed at the People's Recovery, Empowerment, Development and Assistance Foundation, which assists sexually abused children and child prostitutes in the red-light district that remains in the area even after the formal exit of the military base, and heard a lecture given by the director on the city and provincial government's support of the sex industry in the area, which continues to be frequented by former American servicemen. Together with the other organizations partnered with FACES, the Philippines as homeland, its environment, and Filipino American subjectivity were resignified through a critical politics of diasporic giving; that what it means to be a Filipino American oriented toward the Philippine homeland entails a critique of the lack of transnational corporate responsibility in

⁸⁰ Ramcar has been shipping lead acid batteries to Philippine Recyclers, Inc. for recycling for many years. Philippine Recyclers, Inc. denies any responsibility for the physical ailments of the local community, blaming it on leaded fuel being used by cars.

Philippine communities and the U.S. military's legacy of racialized and sexualized imperialism in its former colony. This politics of diaspora giving cultivates giving relationships where the Filipino American is not a "provider" but a diasporic collaborator in counter-hegemonic struggle.

It was important for the *FACESolidarity* organization and for Buklod to demonstrate how the racialized, sexualized, and gendered bodies of the Filipina are integral to narratives of American military masculinity, particularly for this group of Filipino Americans. The participants spent five days interacting and learning with the member organizations of the local umbrella group, the Metro Subic Network, a campaign-driven coalition that focuses on toxic waste issues around Subic, the site of the former Naval Base. There was one organization in particular on the 2005 Face2Face Solidarity trip, Buklod ng Kababihan (Buklod), that significantly impacted the participants I interviewed and that linked the materiality of environmental injustice, the racialization and sexualization of Filipinos, and U.S. militarism to Filipino American subjectivities. Buklod is a women's organization in Olongapo City that organizes current and former prostitutes and advocates for the welfare of Amerasian children in the area. As a member organization of the Metro Subic Network, Buklod held the Network's leadership role in 2005, leading the partnership to address the toxic cleanup in the Subic Bay area. The participants of Face2Face were asked to serve as election monitors for the organizational elections, members of Buklod took the participants to the city's red-light district as they canvassed for new members, and members of Buklod and its partner

organization, Movement of Amerasians for Solidarity and Social Assistance, joined the FACES group for a night of food and story exchange.

For an example of the dominant sexualization and investment in the Filipina located in proximity to such red-light districts designed to service the U.S. military, consider how Jesse “The Body” Ventura, former governor of Minnesota, sings the praises of the Philippines:

I loved the Philippines. I was stationed at Subic, and I loved going into Olongapo. It was more like the Wild West than any other place on earth. In Olongapo, there’s a one-mile stretch of road that has 350 bars and 10,000 girls on it every night...To the kid I was then, it was paradise...When a girl went with you in Olongapo, there was no question about what you were going to do.⁸¹

The beauty of the Philippine paradise corresponds to the availability and sexualization of Filipinos. This is another moment, like with the travel guides, of how neocolonialism operates in the Philippines and of how the appeal of tourism is contingent upon the erasure of the struggles of the Filipino people. Ventura participates in a discourse that constructs a Philippines-as-paradise, requiring a “suspension of a critique of the neocolonial Philippine economy [that] ensures and distinguishes the privileged positions these men occupy in Philippine society.”⁸²

On the Buklod-led red-light district outing, the spectacle of older, white Americans, many of whom were presumably former military men stationed in the

⁸¹ Jesse Ventura, *I Ain't Got Time to Bleed: Reworking the Body Politic from the Bottom Up* (New York: Villard, 1999), 78-79, quoted in Catherine Ceniza Choy, *Empire of Care: Nursing and Migration in Filipino American History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 13.

⁸² Vernadette V. Gonzalez, “Military Bases, ‘Royalty Trips,’ and Imperial Modernities: Gendered and Racialized Labor in the Postcolonial Philippines,” *Frontiers* 28, no. 3 (2007): 29.

Philippines, drinking with and playing pool with Filipinas in the Olongapo bars did not initially appear to have a purpose for the participants beyond its shock value. The bars were dark, and a few of the customers/clients tried to strike up conversations with members of the group, forcing the Face2Face participants to confront their racialized sexualization and their identities as Filipino Americans. Instead of distancing themselves from the figure of the Filipina prostitute that worked this space of “rest and relaxation,” one group member even agreed to play pool with an older, white American man who had moved to the Philippines because “it is such a beautiful place to be.”⁸³ Participants found identification with the Filipina sex workers and, significantly, connected to the Philippine homeland through the social and political struggle of Filipino organizing.

Instead of instilling a feeling of guilt for their relative privilege, the participants felt the weight of the U.S. military. While some of the group felt similar to participant Miriah Velasco who “had been overwhelmed with doubt having only been a witness to the socio-economic effects of the U.S. Military’s legacy a.k.a. the Red Light District bordering the former Subic Naval Base,”⁸⁴ many of the participants felt energized by the work that Buklod performed. The participants, instead of feeling merely pity, learned from them, thus affecting the giving relationship as a participant of FACES’s program. Instead of neocolonizers who set “themselves apart from the rest of the ‘natives,’”⁸⁵ the participants learned to understand the larger context of the sex-trade in the Philippines. As argued by Avtar Brah, “[D]iaspora space as a conceptual category is ‘inhabited’, not only by those who have migrated and their descendents, but equally by those who are

⁸³ Author’s field notes, 2005.

⁸⁴ Miriah Velasco [pseud.], *Summary of the 2005 Face2Face trip and Recommendations to FACES*, 8.

⁸⁵ See note 50 above.

constructed and represented as indigenous. In other words, the concept of *diaspora space* (as opposed to that of diaspora) includes the entanglement, the intertwining of the genealogies of dispersion with those of ‘staying put’. The diaspora space is the site where *the native is as much a diasporian as the diasporian is the native.*”⁸⁶ FACES takes this relationship seriously and links the two in the mutual production of giving subjectivities, which undercuts the hierarchal relationship that giving generally facilitates, *a giving up* of fictions of American exceptionalism in a giving framework that purposefully encounters the entanglements of variously situated Filipinos.

From an interview post-trip, Paul Ramos, one of the participants describes:

I really liked the vice president from Buklod, and her story. She was a prostitute. I was talking to her and I knew it was an old prostitute group, but I didn’t know that all or most of them did that [worked or had worked as prostitutes]. I thought that they had needed educated women to help them build the thing. I didn’t know that they started it themselves or that they were [prostitutes]. I was like, ok, tell me about you. ‘I used to be that [a prostitute].’ And I was like, are you sure? Ok, wow, because I didn’t see it. And she was the vice president, she’s been to New York for all the conferences, and I was like wow. She had to do it because she’s the oldest, and it was her responsibility and her dad got sick and so instead of going to high school she did it. She was there. She was looking for a job, but all the signs were like, ‘GRO Needed,’⁸⁷ and there were a lot of American military

⁸⁶ Avtar Brah, “Diaspora, Border and Transnational Identities,” 208; emphasis in original.

⁸⁷ GRO refers to “Guest Relations Officer.” In the Philippines, GRO is a popular euphemism for women who work in bars and karaoke joints and are hired to flirt with the male clientele, enticing them to purchase alcohol at inflated prices and can often be hired for sex work in the back of the bar or off premises. While

that the businesses catered to, and she fit the role. She had to do it. Now I was like, she's still intelligent, she can talk, she can charm people. She talked about Buklod and then their programs, and then their projects, and then the future.⁸⁸

An interesting omission in Ramos' quote above is that he could barely bring himself to use the word "prostitute." As a young man, I presume that Ramos was embarrassed by her job. His incredulity to the fact that the vice president had been a prostitute speaks to his preconceived notion of who prostitutes "are," what they look like and how they speak, but also to the elisions of U.S. neocolonialism of which he was made aware through FACES's and Buklod's environmental justice politics that tied prostitution around the military bases to their construction of the Philippine environment. This exposure trip changed the terms of difference from an essentialist one that saw prostitutes as "other" and inferior to a vision of difference that focused on power and opportunity. His sense of self as a 1.5-generation Filipino American and of the Philippines was altered in a way that could facilitate critical relationships of giving.

Another participant, Jake Allen, a second generation Filipino American, shows how he became aware of the "hidden truths" of U.S. neocolonialism, an intimation of FACES's ability to relay the complexity of diaspora giving:

One pressing issue would be trying to find the balance between living happily and knowing the truth. Like learning the story about the two kids whose mom [who

prostitution is illegal in the Philippines, the GRO industry is allowed by politicians to thrive, though for GROs and prostitutes, the "difference between the two is barely noticeable." As implied in the quotation, bars that hire GROs are predominantly found in red-light districts such as in the area surrounding the former military base and cater mostly to European, American and Japanese men. See Roderick T. dela Cruz, "Sex Industry Thrives with Tourism Boom," *Manila Standard*, March 28, 2006, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com>.

⁸⁸ Paul Ramos [pseud.], interview by author, San Jose, CA, September 21, 2005.

was a member of Buklod] didn't want them to play basketball because she couldn't feed them after. And she would tell them that she wanted them to study more. Like a lot of truths hidden just for people to be happy. A lot of people have to live a kind of lie or just like not telling the truth about certain situations.⁸⁹

Here the "hidden truths" take on multiple meanings. In his scenario, Jake Allen describes a conversation with a member of Buklod who discouraged her sons from playing outside but to study so they can succeed in school. In reality, however, as she explained to Allen, she told them to study because of her fear that her children would become hungry from playing basketball and as a result need additional food that she could not afford to provide. Allen's story speaks to the hidden truths of the lack of opportunities for this woman in particular, but there is resonance for its commentary on the hidden truths of neocolonialism in and the economic reality of the Philippines. Allen, like Ramos, was impacted by his experience as shown in his reaction to Buklod's dedication as an organization: "You hear a lot about color movements or civil rights movements, and you don't hear too much about Filipino American struggles or Philippine struggles. We have our struggles as well. We have people fighting for our struggles." His connection to the struggles in the Philippines, the legacy of U.S. imperialism in the Philippines, and the untold histories of Filipino American organizing are important elements to consider in FACES's politics of giving.⁹⁰ Allen's "we," referencing Filipinos in America and the

⁸⁹ Jake Allen [pseud.], interview by author, San Jose, CA, September 21, 2005.

⁹⁰ For an example of the implications of America's national "forgetting" of U.S. imperialism on Filipino representation, see Catherine Ceniza Choy, "Salvaging the Savage: On Representing Filipinos and Remembering American Empire" in *Screaming Monkeys: Critiques of Asian American Images*, ed. M. Evelina Galang (Minneapolis, MN: Coffee House Press): 35-49.

Philippines, captures the transnational racialization of Filipinos and the material impact of racist differentiation on people's lives.

Through Face2Face Solidarity Trips, FACES brings members of the Filipino American community to the Philippines. The organization politics and programs define Filipino American ethnic identity in terms of the potential for a social justice orientation toward the Philippines. Because of charity's and philanthropy's history of producing knowledge of self and other that reflects and legitimates the social order, self-critique becomes an intrinsic component of critical diaspora giving politics. Doing so, redefines the possibilities of "home." Kandice Chuh asserts, "[S]elf-critique is surely a necessary part of examining how it is that we might produce knowledge about self and other, about other *as* self, that accords agency and power to the spaces of otherness. This is about trying to realize home as a place where complex personhood—selfhood and otherness, contradiction and commitment, community and difference—is always and immediately granted."⁹¹ Solidarity through difference expands diasporic identity. What starts out as wanting to help those in the Philippines because of one's orientation to the Philippines does not remain a politics of addressing poverty or environmental justice in the Philippines, but of poverty and environmental justice in general. The rationalities undergirding a parochial ethnic identity change so that Filipino American interests correspond with the sexual exploitation of women by the American military in Okinawa and environmental injustice in Richmond, California. Here, giving practices are not about "doing good" or "helping others" but conceived through subjectivities bound up

⁹¹ Kandice Chuh, *Imagine Otherwise: On Asian Americanist Critique* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003): 148.

with those “others” in the Philippines and other spaces impacted by U.S. imperialism, corporate destruction, and environmental injustice.

Conclusion: Ecology and Paths to Home

Critical environmental studies is a useful way to enter these discussions as ecology emphasizes social and “natural” connections and relationships. Through a critical ecology we can begin to theorize how Filipino Americans are connected to Filipinos in the Philippines and other Filipinos overseas through dominant and alternative visions of social transformation in the Philippines. Environmentalism is not the only way to get at “alternative” diasporic subjectivities and identities, but there is something to learn from the way that it emphasizes connections among capitalism, peoples, and spaces.

Like other return trips, FACES targets second-generation Filipino American youth for their Philippine trips. FACES argues that “in an increasingly global economic, social, and political environment, it is becoming more and more critical to encourage young people to gain awareness and take action on pressing transnational issues.”⁹² They work to resignify cultural heritage and family genealogy for second-plus generation youth who do not necessarily carry a deep understanding of Filipino culture. More uniquely than other Philippine return trips for youth,⁹³ FACES organization consciously and deliberately works to define the relationship between Filipino and American on their

⁹² Filipino/American Coalition for Environmental Solidarity (FACES), “Preparation for 2006 Face2Face Trip,” *Facing Justice: Quarterly News Journal of the Filipino/American Coalition for Environmental Solidarity*, Spring 2006, 4.

⁹³ Elsewhere, for example, I have written about the Ayala Foundation-sponsored Filipino youth return trips. I highlight the Ayala Foundation’s politics of giving in Chapter 3 of this dissertation. See Mariano, “Filipino American Community and Diasporic Philanthropy” (paper presented at the annual meeting for the American Studies Association, Atlanta, GA, November 2004).

trips, constantly questioning the nature of responsibility Filipino Americans have to the Philippines.

In an interview with one Face2Face participant after returning to the U.S., all of these issues were touched upon. Paul Ramos, whom I quoted before, is a nineteen-year-old 1.5-generation Filipino American, having moved to the U.S. at about twelve years old. In his words,

I really liked [the trip]. I didn't even know it was more political. I thought it would be more environmental, because that's what got me interested in the first place was the environmental aspect of it, but I guess it comes with it. The political aspect comes with the environmental aspect. But I really like the environmental approach, using that view to see, as a starting point to look at all these problems that were interconnected... Environmental issues, I've been kind of involved with since high school...like toxic waste and recycling. That's what I was really interested in... using this environmental ways to be all these other aspects that were political, transnational, government, and like people. So that's what I like. I really liked it. As a Filipino, I think I got more personally because it was environmental like if I went to a different, like foundation-based, tour.

In this telling, the focus on the environment becomes a moment of possibility. Like diaspora, the environment or environmental politics does not necessarily bring together the excesses of global capitalist politics in its construction. Paul Ramos compared his experience with FACES to other youth exposure trips that focus on Philippine culture, where culture is distinct from politics. And, he was doing so in a way that gave meaning

to Filipino American diasporic identity through his revision of the environment, the Philippine environmental homeland. To theorize diaspora politics outside of neoliberal capitalist processes, say, to think of diaspora as merely the scattering of peoples outside of a homeland or as the experiences of migrants, can lead us to a celebration of transnationality in and of itself, a diasporic landscape that refuses to look at its contradictions and neocolonial histories and presence. FACES organization fosters a diasporic identity based not on place and cultural heritage, a timelessness rooted in nostalgic longings, but on the geopolitical contingencies of U.S.-Philippine relations. In fact, in an email communication with Paul Ramos about a year after returning from the trip, he wrote, “I am telling you that FACES has not all left me hopeless nor jaded by rather hopeful and optimistic of the future...I wanna thank each one of you for opening my eyes and allowing me to recognize and be aware of these injustices that are all interconnected, international.”⁹⁴

Environmental justice is not merely about the critique of environmental racism or the lack of accountability by transnational capital for its use of poor spaces as a dumping ground for toxic waste. Environmental justice politics and critical ecology allow us to see how society operates to produce spaces more likely to be exposed to hazardous waste—brought on by the military, by industry, and state governments—than others. Recognizing this, we can imagine how this toxicity obstructs potential coalitions and communities as hazardous waste sites are tied to social divisions and racial, class, gender,

⁹⁴ Paul Ramos, e-mail message to author, October 4, 2006.

and sexual hierarchies.⁹⁵ Environmental justice politics show how giving practices can work to counter the hegemonic imposition of these divisions. FACES rewrites the travel-guide representation of the environment and the tourists' relationship to the beauty of the Philippines, of the beaches, the vegetation, and the people. Vigilant giving practices can challenge modernity's philanthropic relationships where a knowing subject bestows gifts onto needy recipients. Filipino Americans create new accounts of giving, of social change, and of diaspora belonging when they work to challenge the dominant social relationships of giving.

⁹⁵ See Joni Adamson and Rachel Stein, "Environmental Justice: A Roundtable Discussion with Simon Ortiz, Teresa Leal, Devon Pena, and Terrell Dixon," in *The Environmental Justice Reader: Politics, Poetics, and Pedagogy*, ed. Joni Adamson, Mei Mei Evans, and Rachel Stein (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 2002).

Epilogue

This dissertation intervenes in scholarship and in community organizing that privilege a diaspora tied to uninterrupted and authentic homelands. Using organizational documents and interviews with organizational leaders and participants, the work explores how Filipino American subjects are produced as moral partners in Philippine economic development through quotidian expressions of “giving back,” which privileges Filipino Americans in relation to other Filipino subjects in the Philippines and in diaspora. Timeless diasporic identities squelch spaces from which to imagine a Philippine homeland not dominated by a handful of landed elite or politically and economically dependent on U.S.-backed multilateral institutions. Rather than merely giving credit to Filipino Americans for their generosity and sacrifice, the project pushes us to consider how committed organizers and activists may nurture more liberatory transnational giving politics.

What impelled me to my work were personal connections to Filipino American volunteerism and medical missions in the Philippines and political commitments around Asian American activism and the cultural production of difference. The work begins with a paradox: Filipino Americans engage in diaspora giving while simultaneously separating their visions of social change and themselves from discussions of political and social equality in the Philippines. In the dissertation, I illustrate the limits of this situation and point to a way of bringing together giving and commitments to equality. To

do this, I focus on institutional, structural, and discursive contexts of diaspora giving by Filipino Americans.

The Preface of the dissertation recounts an autobiographical narrative of diaspora giving and how I came to this project. Though this dissertation was not told through first person narrative, my instinct for how to frame each chapter so that it sits in relationship to but also in distinction from the next relates back to those days when I was younger, before I even entertained the thought of graduate school in American Studies, and when I joined my dad on his medical missions. Truth be told, the influence of my father reveals itself not only in why I decided to pursue my PhD but in every paper or chapter I have produced.

My dad, to whom I dedicate this work, died during my first year of field work, soon after I took my preliminary exams. He lived for eighteen years after the first time doctors told us he had only months or even days to live. I feel grateful that I do not harbor a sense of tragedy around his death due not only to the years he lived past medical expectations but for how he consciously lived his life after his diagnosis. He eschewed materialism to live his life for God, but I saw the manifestation of conscious living in how he cherished his personal relationships and how he organized his life around his social commitments to directly improve the lives of hundreds of individual Filipinos in the Philippines.

Though different politics and values between us would surface in difficult times, there are fleeting moments when I understand that my inclination to write on themes of morality and authority, consumerism and elitism, and transnational, diasporic

commitments cannot and should not be entirely separated from my own desires to connect with a Philippines imaged in the dreams of my dad. Simultaneously, this work pushes the lessons from my father and traces how paternalistic moral authority signifies belonging in Filipino American diaspora. It considers how Filipino American balikbayans embody the American dream, a dream that propels the labor-export industry in the Philippines that produces labor migration as a right, containing popular protest in the Philippines. I show how diaspora giving is structured by global capital and how consumerism and the logics of neoliberalism impact diaspora formation. I also consider organizations that articulate the diaspora-homeland relationship as a critical space of engagement and diaspora giving as counter-hegemonic critique. These are the themes the chapters explore and work to contextualize in contemporary Filipino American diaspora giving. This is, in effect, my own attempt to live consciously, and to provide a framework for that consciousness that I can share with and draw out in dialogue with others.

The discussion engaged in this project addresses the social relations and cultural meanings propelled and developed in Filipino American diaspora giving. It makes efforts to demonstrate how the overlapping contexts of “diaspora” and “giving” provide an opportunity for a critical examination of mobility, identity, home, return (and returns), and for collective responsibility in a moment of neoliberal globalization, transnational linkages, and international migration. There are many spaces, entities, and voices that would actively suppress alternative ways of imagining diaspora giving, hence the need to seize the opportunity for critical examination. All diasporic giving imagines social

relations and situates terms of power. Exploring multiple manifestations of giving allows insight into the functioning of the social system and our cultural practices.

The subject of my study is not philanthropy or Filipino American organizations per se but the multiple deployments of Filipino American diaspora giving and the multiple contexts in which Filipino American diaspora giving is embedded, a method of questioning enabled by its American cultural studies interdisciplinary approach. My work joins discussions of how diaspora operates as a discourse of race and nation in a transnational American cultural context. It contributes to our understanding of political economies of culture, power, identity, and difference with a transnational critique. One contribution of my work is to think of social movement activism or philanthropy or volunteerism as collective efforts that forward particular frameworks of social change and human need. For Filipino Americans, it speaks to the relationships between racial, ethnic, national, and diasporic identities and the role of giving in shaping subjectivity. My work examines the linkages and mutual production of transnationalism, diaspora, community, and activism, breaking down or spanning what some believe to be opposing poles in the field of Asian American studies between the activist origins of the field, its commitment to serving Asian American communities, and scholarship engaging transnationalism and diaspora.

There are multiple strains of transnational studies engaged in the dissertation. One emphasizes the links produced through international migration. That ties through visits, calls, remittances, philanthropy, medical missions, and civic engagements produce multiple identities to both countries. The other, emphasizes the dialectic between global

capitalism and the production and responses of cultural forms, identities, and social movements in multiple spaces. Transnational feminism, for example, takes this approach to the study of gender, power, and resistance. The way I approach diaspora studies is taking this approach to transnationalism to the study of space, migration, and mobilizations of racial-ethnic belonging. I argue that homeland tourism, family obligations, remittances, civic engagements, and philanthropy produce different knowledges about diaspora. My work considers diaspora as a social and cultural formation expressed particularly through discourses of giving and belonging, the various identities involved, and the structural forces that shape those identities. My work pushes our understandings of diaspora formation by taking seriously practices and discourses of giving. It considers how Filipino Americans both support and intervene in neoliberal globalization and American exceptionalism through their diaspora giving projects. In so doing, my work demonstrates the complexity of relationships within Filipino diaspora and the multiple investments in mobilizations of diasporic identities.

The most challenging aspect of this project was honing the scope of the chapters given how far reaching the project could be. I saw elements of my topic and my analytical frame in so many texts that I read and in so many of the political and social movements and commitments unfolding around me. How we imagine what is involved in Filipino American diaspora giving politics connects to almost every aspect of Filipino American cultural and social life. Dozens of avenues, unexplored here, open themselves for analysis. Building on this work, one might explore queer participation in diaspora giving re-turns, theorizing the contradictions among diaspora, home, and

obligation/responsibility/exclusion. One may trace the social and cultural history of anti-Marcos organizing and politics through a framework of diaspora giving and historicize different periods of Filipino American diaspora giving from the mutual aid societies of early waves of Filipino agricultural laborers to current responses by Filipino Americans to the state's retreat from welfare programs.

In the process of revision, I have come to understand my emphasis on the political urgency of understanding the implications of a kind of apolitical diaspora giving, leading me to focus more on the intuitional and structural level of diaspora giving. I look forward to reflecting more seriously on methods of analysis not solely based on this kind of critique but also on the emotional, expressive, and nostalgic elements embedded in both diaspora formation and in diaspora giving projects. In such a project, one might explore other sites and objects besides organizational materials, for example R. Zamora Linmark's exuberant novel *Leche*,¹ that lend themselves to questions related to the value of migration, immigration, and giving and alternative approaches to the contexts of Filipino identity and return.

While I recognize value in an examination of each of these sites, I realize their common thread is not how topically they relate to the politics of Filipino American diaspora giving, but something more abstract. Each of these, I believe, would provide another opportunity to theorize how identity both lends itself to and fights against its commodification, a theme to which each chapter returns. This, I believe, is the larger

¹ R. Zamora Linmark, *Leche* (Minneapolis, MN: Coffee House Press, 2011).

context of the dissertation, and this is a frame upon which my future scholarship can build.

I had the privilege of attending a lecture given by Grace Lee Boggs, the Chinese American labor, anti-racist, environmental, and social justice activist, at a special commemoration at the Jane Addams Hull-House Museum on the occasion of Boggs' ninety-fourth birthday and what would have been Addams' 149th birthday.² Boggs mused on the relationship between revolution and evolution: How have our understandings of revolution evolved since the 1770s, 1917, or the 1960s? If the definition of revolution embraces the active pursuit of expanding our collective humanity, as Boggs would have it, what is the next American revolution going to be about? At the core of her call to the standing-room-only audience was a plea to recognize and create spaces and organizations that work to protect humanity and communities from commodification. This dissertation asks, how does the commodification of giving cut off those connections and isolate our practices of giving, and as a result, undergird the fictions of global capitalism? Through my exploration, I have tried to illustrate what it would mean to give in a way that was about enlarging ourselves through our connection to one another. While I offer no definitive answers, my response hopes to engage Boggs' revolutionary call.

² Grace Lee Boggs, "Love and {R}evolution," Jane Addams Hull-House Museum, University of Illinois-Chicago (keynote address), September 10, 2009.

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