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Reconceptualizing Victimhood and Resiliency: Transnational Narratives of Filipinas in Canada

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Abstract

Filipinas have been marked as Third World, submissive caregivers, and nannies. Scholarship on gendered citizenship continues to identify Filipinas as oppressed and in need of a savior. Current scholarship represents Filipinas as victims without also looking at the ways in which these women resist racism. This study acknowledges such scholarships but seeks to expand beyond narratives of victimhood and brokenhood to engage with the narratives of desires as expressed by the Filipina. This explorative qualitative narrative study interviewed 30 Filipino women living in Toronto. Their narratives provide not only how they are racialized but also how they resist racism in their everyday life. The paper delves into an understanding of justice within and outside damage and desire. The paper concludes that these women understand power and the subtle ways to subvert it.

Keywords: transnational, feminism, anti-Asian racism, resiliency, health, caregiving, agency

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Introduction

This article seeks to reimagine the lives of Filipina/Filipino women in the context of how they exercise power and resist victimhood. While a plethora of studies have focused on Filipino women as being oppressed (Torres & Nyaga, 2017; Lindio-McGovern, 2003, 2004; Nyaga, 2015), we as researchers in this study do acknowledge that racism and sexism is rife, well, and kicking; but it is time we also look at the ways through which Filipino women resist colonial hegemonies that construct and constrict them as emotional and submissive. The research questions for this study are:

1. How do Filipino women in Toronto experience everyday racism and sexism?
2. How do Filipino women in Toronto resist racism and sexism?

These questions will be answered in the findings and analysis section of this article to help imagine the Filipina as not just a victim but also a social justice fighter. This article employs the transnational feminist sociology lens posited by Kim-Puri (2005), which highlights four key pillars: (a) the cultural/material, (b) social structures and the state, (c) linkages across cultural context, and (d) empirical research, to understand the lived experiences of Filipino women to help answer the above questions. The following sections are discussed in this article: (a) The Making of the Nation State: The Case of Canada, (b) Transnational Feminist Sociology, (c) Methodology, (d) Sampling and Recruitment, (e) Interview Process, (f) Data Analysis and Coding, (g) Findings and Analysis, and (h) Conclusion.

The Making of the Nation State: The Case of Canada

Space creation is erasure of the other. For instance, Lawrence (2002), in discussing spatial erasure of Aboriginal peoples of Canada, identifies how diseases were used to exterminate and obliterate the Aboriginal peoples from their land. Gendered and racialized policies such as the Indian

Act (Alcantara, 2008) were also used to keep the Indigenous peoples in the reserve city.

Policies, flags, and laws are colonial spatial tools of signification, claiming and identifying who belongs and who disappears through acts of giving and taking away life. Such insidious and normalized practices come to be sanctioned by the law to help determine who becomes a citizen with rights and duties and who gets to be forgotten. Those within the law are marked as normal, civilized, rational, and masculine while those outside the law are cast out as abnormal, alien, degenerate, uncivilized, feminine, barbaric, and irrational (Blomley, 2003). These colonial national mythologies are juridical and violently felt and expressed in the border spaces where they sanction colonial control, regulation, management, and violence on the bodies of marginalized groups who are marked as alien or newcomers. They count as transitory gatekeepers in the border spaces to mark who enters spaces of civilization and who gets to lose their rights to be human. Such violent borders help rationalize the law as a necessary evil in maintaining order in a state of war by determining who enters the city and who is deported. Those who are allowed in the city come to be marked as border spaces through their race, gender, and other social constructions. Such social markers and labels help the city to regulate and manage such surplus populations in ways that are continuous and unverifiable. Such forms of state regulation and management of superfluous populations sanctioned by law help employ race and gender as a technology of social control.

Canada as a settler colonial state has a history of employing race and gender as a technology of social control and regulation of excess population. Canada is raced, classed, and gendered (Amin et al., 2006; Dei & Lordan, 2013; Nyaga & Torres, 2017; Razack, 2015). Historically, Canada was occupied by Aboriginal peoples (Brockman & Morrison, 2016). Aboriginal peoples helped the white man to survive the hostile environments of Canada. The First Nations helped them to master Canadian geography. This relationship was extended in socioeconomic aspects where the colonizer started the fur trade with the Aboriginal peoples (Forsyth, 2005). Through trading partnerships with the Indigenous peoples, the colonizer started surveying the Canadian Indigenous lands.

Colonialism sexualized spatial expansion. Indigenous geographies were defined as unlawful, uncivilized, and irrational. This masculine remodeling of Indigenous spaces as feminine helped define and determine citizenship rights and responsibilities. Those who belonged in the reserve were outside the state economy; they could not be trusted with ownership of space and had to be monitored, since it was assumed they would cannibalize themselves.

Having created Canada as a masculine nation state, instabilities between the Francophone and Anglophone erupted. Trading in fur was considered masculine among the Francophones because it involved intense labour and overcoming adversity. Masculinity to Francophones was physical, otherwise called French bush masculinity (Wamsley, 1999). Men who were in the public space were revered because of their competitive ability. The fact that they could stay in public spaces with extreme harsh weather conditions helped define them as very masculine and powerful.

On the other hand, British gentry masculinity was conservative and Christian (Wamsley, 1999). Honour and gentlemanliness define British masculinity. This paper argues that this redefinition of the city created a culture of tolerance and calm that has come to define Canadian society today. The view of Canada as a peaceful and honourable space in a world that is in turmoil is a testament to this Canadian mythology. Several laws and ordinances like the Nuisance Act (Wamsley, 1999) were passed to control those who manifested bush masculinity. This was supposed to curb undesirable and uncontrolled public behaviors. This racial and gendered narrative continues today.

A case in point is the gendered and raced experience of Filipinas in the diaspora. Canada is among a major importer of caregiving services from the Philippines (Kalaw & Gross, 2010; Lindio-McGovern, 2003, 2004; Portilla, 2010; Tubo, 2010). There is a need to imagine historical changes in Canada that intensified limitless consumption of caregiving services in the West and subsequent industrial production of the same in the Philippines. Some of these historical changes are tied up to world wars, the dire need for Canada to prove its diplomatic and gentle masculinity in world politics, and the right social movements that

influenced the sociopolitical and economic organization of both Canada and the Philippines in ways that were gendered, raced, and transnational. Canada as a settler colonial state is established and grounded on intensified colonial violence, marking the Indigenous peoples and immigrant populations superfluous (Razack, 2020; Thobani, 2007). Such colonial violence is grounded on a gendered-racial value system that looks at white men as the archetypal national subject whose citizenship is a marker of democracy achieved.

To understand the gendered-racial construct of the Canadian state, one must look at the ways in which masculinity is and continues to be socially constructed by white men who take the risk to venture, survive, and conquer the wilderness (nature) as a proof of their masculinity. Such is the history of Canada, where white men mostly from England came to dominate and conquer the nature and anything within it. Part of the gendered and racial colonial conquest and violence was to reduce, collapse, and empty anything and everything on the land into nature and the subsequent earmarking of such lands as uninhabited and barren and open for discovery (doctrine of discovery; Beaulieu, 2021). Such a colonial doctrine that earmarked indigenous spaces as historically and culturally barren also precipitated the killing and mass genocide of Indigenous peoples and their cultures as a way clearing the space for the European expansionist agenda. The encounter between Indigenous peoples and the European explorers was initially gentle and grounded on common trust to help each other and live side by side, while doing business. Indigenous peoples would trade with the explorer and help them find their way in the wild. In return, the explorer exchanged fur with indigenous foods and other material commodities. Later, the explorer killed many Indigenous peoples by providing them with smallpox-infested blankets as part of the grand colonial violent plan of clearing and improving the land.

Similar violent processes of social and cultural erasure continued to define the colonial expansionist agenda in Canada, among them the infamous residential school system and the Sixties Scoop. Indigenous children were picked up by social workers (majority being white women) from their parents and communities and placed in residential schools (Barker et al., 2019). The assumption was that indigenous motherhood

was irrational and irredeemably broken by heathen cultures and values systems that were unconducive for child development, therefore justifying the need for improving the children by assimilating them into white culture. As such, part of saving the Indigenous child was to remove them from their families and place them in the hands of more rational forms of care, mostly provided by white women. We argue that such form of care was in and of itself violent and came to define the residential school system as a form of cultural genocide. White women who provided rationalized care to apprehended Indigenous children were simultaneously redeemed from their gendered and private selves into a public white national subject in the name of a public social worker.

Effects of world wars and social right movements continued to push white women from the private space into the public space as they replaced vacant positions left by conscripted men of war. Subsequently, there were calls for white women to be included in substantive citizenship under the renowned women rights movements. It is fundamentally important to recognize the fact that such a form of citizenship was grounded in whiteness and white privilege, and framed a gendered and raced construct that all women were equal, but some were more equal than others. Such an unequal form of gender-raced citizenship had differentiated material and symbolic consequences to racialized and Eastern European women who were marked as of lesser value than Western white women. As white Anglophone women replaced their men in the public space, so did the need for caregiving services in private spaces grew. Such private vacancies were initially filled up by Western immigrant women who would immigrate with the promise of direct citizenship and the prospect of marriage (Torres & Nyaga, 2017; Nyaga, 2014). These women were highly required to keep linguistic and racial purity within the Anglophone white family while also marking Canada as a white national state.

The growth in caregiving services led to the need for Eastern European women caregivers who were considered lesser white because of their language and accent (Torres & Nyaga, 2017). They could access citizenship at a lesser grade than their Western counterparts. Black women, mostly from the Caribbean, were the next in line to provide caregiving services to white families (Torres & Nyaga, 2017). At this point, Black

women were subjected to a lot of racial violence based on their skin colour and their place of origin. While other white caregivers had unfettered access to Canadian citizenship, Black women were subject to racial practices and policies that were state-sanctioned and meant to mark the Black women caregivers as broken, pathological, and a threat to Canadian whiteness and purity. They were subjected to racist policies that required them to undergo multiple medical tests to ascertain that they did not have any transmissible (mostly sexual) diseases (Torres & Nyaga, 2017). They had to prove that they did not have a child back in their home countries. They were also expected to stay at their employer's home until their visa expired. These racially based national policies helped mark and affirm Canada as a white national state while spatializing the racial other as a transmissible pathology that should remain grounded and incarcerated in its border space of racial degeneracy.

Filipino caregiver women continue to face such race-based policies and practices in unique ways, as manifested by the live-in caregiver program (Brickner & Straehle, 2010; Cohen, 1991; Kalaw & Gross, 2010; Torres & Nyaga, 2017; Magkaisa Centre, 2008; Nyaga, 2014; Portilla, 2010; Stiell & England, 2011; Tubo, 2010; Walia, 2010; Zaman, 2004). They are expected to live with their employer for 2 years after which they are granted permanent residency. It has been argued that such policies leave a gap that is exploited by the employer who ends up using the deportation clause to continue abusing Filipino live-in caregiver women. This places caregiving services in Canada as a race-based employment sector in what has come to be known as economic apartheid, where immigrant services are underpaid and the economic labour system is racially marked to eliminate immigrant women from the body politics (Galabuzi, 2006). We concur with Galabuzi (2006), who claims that:

> The resulting social crisis is what we document here: a persistent income gap, above average levels of poverty, high levels of unemployment and underemployment, overrepresentation in low income sectors of the economy and occupations, and under-representation in well paid jobs. There is also a disproportionate concentration in part-time, temporary, and home work—particularly for racialized women. (p. 3)

Part of this historically based economic apartheid, and for which this study pays attention to, is caregiving services by racialized women with a keen interest on the experiences of Filipino caregivers in Canada.

While there have been major policy shifts in caregiving services in Canada, it is equally significant to highlight inimitable ways through which caregiving policies continue to mark Canada as a white national state, while simultaneously violently spacing out and expunging racialized bodies from the body of politics, and marking them as expendable, superfluous, and deportable populations (Razack, 2021). Studies on nursing services in Canada help us understand how raced and gendered caregiving policies and practices continue to affirm the white Canadian national as the quintessential element of citizenship and epitome of democracy achieved (Thobani, 2007). Filipino women continue to be earmarked as racial objects of labour exploitation and subjected to everyday forms of racism in nursing homes and hospitals (Stasiulis & Bakan, 2003). Such forms of racism manifest in everyday questioning by patients whether they are qualified to work as nurses, to systemic procedures of racism in policies. One example is the process of accreditation for internationally trained nurses: this is another way through which we come to recognize how Canada is ideologically grounded on the belief that the white national subject is valued more than the racial other. This study pays more attention to the question of value gap (Glaude, 2019) which is the major underbelly that continues to construct Canada socially as a white national state, the subsequent claims that white people are more important and superior than racialized others. This is cemented by the myths and legends we continue to give to protect the innocence of the country from the colonial violence it continues to mete on Indigenous and immigrant populations. This has become clearer with the current COVID-19 pandemic where immigrant Filipina nurses were at a higher risk of contracting the COVID-19 virus and yet they were underpaid, precariously employed, and racially profiled. The death of seniors in care homes during the height of COVID-19 was blamed on personal support workers, most of whom were racialized immigrants, and for which helped sanitize the implication of corporation and state support for racially subsidized and segregated labour.

Transnational Feminist Sociology

Most feminist scholars agree that a transnational feminist framework provides a nuanced and ethical focus on the role of race, class, gender, sexuality, and politics of space- and place-making in diaspora (Conway, 2017; Nyaga & Torres, 2017; Razack, 2008; Todorova, 2017). These identities work together to help make sense of the multiple, complex, and ambivalent forms of oppression faced by women of colour in the West, among them being the Filipina in Toronto, Canada, whose focus this study addresses. Butler (1999) says that failure to work within and outside those social complexities is an indictment of scholarship to epistemological imperialism and colonial violence. In this regard, we propose a transnational feminist approach to look at how the Filipina negotiates race and racism in Toronto. Kim-Puri (2005) states that a transnational feminist "approach was first named and elaborated by Caren Kaplan and Inderpal Grewal (1994) and draws on Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's contributions, in particular, and insights from Marxism, post structuralism, post colonialism, and Feminism" (p. 142). Consequently, transnational feminism applies and walks through a multitheoretical prism to complicate and engage with the experiences of transnational racialized Filipina immigrant women by paying keen interest on their interlocking identities as manifested by their complex lives, realities, and values. Such a theoretical focus gives an account of experiences of racialized immigrant women as they cross the border and enter the host country, and how to create spaces that question Western realities.

Transnational feminism helps in understanding and imagining the interlocking experiences of women of colour in the West and how they negotiate, complicate, and rebuild such white spaces to be in tune with their desires and aspirations. This framework elaborates and demonstrates how immigrant women of colour create safe spaces of survival amidst racial and gender erasure. Spivak (1996) has reiterated that *transnationalism* is spatial displacement of the world we know to those worlds that never existed and whose time has come to breathe and speak in and with a difference. While transnational movement and border crossing reduces the geopolitical and economic order of the state through a process of managerialism, it expands those of corporations and profits

while simultaneously contracting those of immigrant populations. Such a reduced government fails to meet the needs of its population and by extension authorizes a biopolitical practice of marking out immigrant populations as excess and deportable populations. In this regard, this paper seeks to imagine the "real" transnational body by asking questions such as: Who enjoys transnational rights? When the state is shrunk, who has the power to transcend their cultural identity and expand possibilities? Are some bodies cast out from expressing themselves while in transit and how do they reconcile such forms of spatial and social expulsion? To help us answer such questions, we impress that transnational feminist sociology will help conceptualize the inequalities, irregularities, and consequences of global capital and geopolitics to start asking questions of how the Filipina negotiates spaces that mark them as absented bodies.

Transnational feminist sociology calls for a disruption of essentialism in terms of race, class, gender, sexuality, nation, and state. The term *transnational* means going beyond national border politics, and as such a breakaway from a universal to multi-identity place of becoming immersed by transformed cultural and economic facets of global change. The framework interrogates and centres transnational women of colour within the analysis (Mayuzumi, 2008) of imperial and colonial change while affirming issues of race and class as fundamental in the analysis of experiences of women of colour (Razack, 2008). *Transnational feminist sociology* "is a political lens that focuses on how power relations inside and outside a nation-state are reflected in its institutions and people" (Mayuzumi, 2008, p. 169). It often poses the question, "Who is a citizen and who is not?" Within such epistemological posing, transnational feminist sociology interrogates how the concepts of power, culture, imperialism, gender, race, and border-crossing are made real within and outside the nationalist discourse (Alexander, 2005; Mayuzumi, 2008). Transnational feminist sociology highlights the importance of multiple frameworks of difference within and beyond nations to start giving accounts of how migrant bodies are not just victims but also capable of negotiating spaces in ways that are powerful and geared towards social justice. Transnational feminist sociology recognizes the power of diversity

and disturbs hegemonic cultural, socioeconomic, political, and material analysis in the lived experiences of migrant women. It reorients how we analyze the narratives of women who willingly share their lived experiences.

Transnational feminist sociology calls "attention to the complex, sometimes contradictory, and often unequal interconnections that exist across cultural settings" (Kim-Puri, 2005, pp. 148–149) to help reiterate the importance of empirical research that is geared towards transformative change. According to Kim-Puri (2005), empirical research "accounts are indications of how subjects make meaning about social practices and relations" (p. 149). Transnational feminist sociology unwraps the inconsistencies and interconnection of experiences of racialized women from the South while acknowledging and appreciating their differences as points and spaces of resiliency and power. Through their narratives, a rebirth of new and temporal forms of knowledge and power is realized. These contingencies in their narratives trouble and subvert the normalized forms of knowledge. This temporality in knowledge production brings newness in authorship and hailing of authority from the Filipina.

Methodology

This study applies an explorative qualitative narrative approach (Creswell, 2007; Creswell & Poth, 2012; Padgett, 2017) to understand the lived experiences of Filipina women in the diaspora. Narrative inquiry pays attention to the stories of participants as fundamental in the becoming of being (Fraser, 2004; Gegeo & Watson-Gegeo, 2001). A narrative or story makes the being exist and be recognised as living. Narrative approach affirms the human as storied life (Fraser, 2004; Harrington, 2005) and as such to undertake a study within this approach is to affirm the creativity of the participants as having the strength to author their lives (Kim-Puri, 2005). Strength of a participant is the defining aspect of narrative study (Fraser, 2005; Gegeo & Watson-Gegeo, 2001), and helps in imagining and creating the self as an asset, which is the definitive framework of this study. The strength of Filipino (read: Filipina) women in the diaspora is what grounds this research and sits within the frame of transnational feminist sociology (Kim-Puri, 2005). Human

beings (read: Filipina women) have the capacity of inventing and imagining themselves and their environment in ways that challenge dominant ways of knowing and take for granted aspects of their being (Lawler, 2002; Gegeo & Watson-Gegeo, 2001). This is "fundamentally" affirmed within the transnational feminist sociology that believes in the power from below (voices/stories believed as vacant and subjugated [read: Filipina]; Foucault, 1980) as important mechanism of creating transnational society that is transformative and globally conscious of socioeconomic and cultural changes (Kim-Puri, 2005). Transnational feminist sociology is grounded on the belief that women (read: Filipina) are capable of questioning their victimhood through their qualitative stories. Filipina women express and explore ways in which they resist racial and gendered oppression both in the province and beyond in ways that are cultural, social, economic, and political. The stories of the Filipina need to be read transnationally and transculturally for one to understand their place of strength even in situations of sexism and racism.

Sampling and Recruitment

This study used a snow-balling and purposive sampling (Padgett, 2017). We applied purposive sampling because we wanted specific experiences as expressed by the Filipina. There are many Filipinas in Toronto but because of this specificity in terms of experiences, we had to identify one participant who would then refer us to another participant who had a similar experience. This is within the transnational feminist sociology perspective that believes that women have different ways of experiencing an issue based on context and lived experiences (Kim-Puri, 2005).

We recruited 30 Filipinas, living in the Greater Toronto Area, aged 18 years and above, who have lived in Toronto for the last 5 years. They were supposed to be permanent residents or citizens working and volunteering in Toronto. The majority of the participants came from healthcare professions. Participants were in the low-income category earning minimum wage. All participants had different degrees from the Philippines, among them being a nursing degree.

Interview Process

The study received ethical protocol from the University of Toronto. Participant interviews were conducted from May to August 2018. The interview schedule had 10 questions, expected to answer our major research questions. The researcher started with an ice-breaking discussion on our daily stories and our everyday challenges and victories. Some participants spoke about their challenges trying to bring their families to Canada and immigration challenges. Such an icebreaker provided a gateway to our interview questions. To break the official practices of data collection, the researcher decided not to make visible the interview schedule. This is because the schedule represents colonial boundaries between the knower and the object of knowledge (Participant), which is in contradiction to our research objective and transnational feminist sociology. To humanize data collection, the researcher read and internalized the interview questions in ways that allowed the interviews to be dialogic and conversational. This way, the researcher did not have to go back and forth between checking the question in the interview question and listening to participants, which would be disrespectful to participants. This meant that the researcher would ask relevant questions based on the participants' immediate conversation and would guide the process of the conversation in ways that stayed within the scope of the study and immediate stories of the participants. This enhanced respect for the stories of the participants, hence staying within the transformative practice of ethical responsibility in the research process. The researcher started with an open-ended question so that the participants would open and answer our interview question contained in the schedule. This way, the open-ended question helped ask broad questions that collapsed the interview questions in ways that provide grounds for participants to express themselves. This helped decolonize the dominant place of the interview schedule in narrative study (Creswell & Poth, 2012; Gegeo & Watson-Gegeo, 2001) which lies within transnational feminist sociology (Kim-Puri, 2005). After the interviews, the researcher thanked the participants and sought to know whether they wished to remain in the study and whether they are comfortable with the information they had provided.

Data Analysis and Coding

This study applied thematic coding. The researcher identified key words that seemed to appear repeatedly in major discussions with the participants. Such key words helped to group the participants' conversation in ways that helped answer the research questions. This means that the participants' key words must be in tune to answering the research question and as such any participants' statements that did not fit within the key words (themes) would automatically be eliminated. The study also engaged with decolonizing the rationalities of knowledge production by breaking the official demarcation between data collection and data analysis. This was done through engaging the participants in analysis of their comments at every point of the interviews. The researcher would probe more from what the participants had said, which allowed them to open up more and imagine what they had said. There were many moments when the participants went silent. The researcher took such silence as an ethical place for allowing participants to journey through their experiences in ways that would humanize them, hence rendering our study as human and ethically responsive. In research, silence is key to allowing participants to engage with their lost selves and therefore bring forth repressed selves. Silence also allowed the participants to imagine themselves cognitively in the moment of the research process.

Findings and Analysis

The Filipina body lives in liminal spaces where she is simultaneously needed yet erased. In Canada, a Filipina is repetitively reminded of her racial and gender campground. But even under those conditions they subvert colonial authorship, representation, and hailing to stage their own desires and needs in ways that are nonviolent and grounded in community well-being. To do this, the Filipina applies a form of transnational feminist praxis that disorganizes and calls into question the dominant white feminism to start to speak in ways that recognize the needs of their fellow Filipina in ways that are nonviolent. This way, they can appropriate a dominant view of them being submissive to

negotiate gendered racism in the West in ways that sustain them as a community while fighting for social justice.

This section engages in ways that are critically reflexive and ethical to answer our main research question on how the Filipina negotiates their spaces to renegotiate social organization and citizenship in ways that are nonviolent and grounded in community well-being. During our research, we came up with five themes which were: (a) I do not belong, (b) I am saving you, (c) I break boundaries, (d) silence as a weapon, and (e) I cannot be without you.

I Do Not Belong

Bella, one of the study's participants, states that:

> As a Filipino in Canada I feel like there are some places I do not belong to. For example, my husband and I wanted to rent an apartment in Toronto, and before we open our mouth, the superintendent in the apartment complex said, "If you are planning to rent here, forget it . . . no vacancy . . . maybe you should go to another apartment complex." We were surprised because on their placard outside their building, it was clearly stated the words "vacancy available for 1 and 2 bedroom." My husband and I thought because we are Filipino, therefore we have no right to rent.

This experience of Bella and her husband shows that race is a colonial technology of eviction from the space. Race as a spatial organization helps determine who gets to be marked as citizen and who is evicted. Bella as an immigrant woman is marked as out of space by the superintendent in ways that are gendered and raced. The question of race and gender is grounded on emotions so that women of color are doubled up as emotional beings who should not be allowed to enter white Canadian space. We see the material and symbolic consequence of such conceptualization of space based on how women of colour come to be evicted in ways that are complex and interlocked. Racialized men of colour, on the other hand, are visualized as rational because of their gender and yet disappeared by their race. This helps maintain them in liminal or

border spaces. Such borders are in and of themselves violent, helping to maintain the whiteness of Canadian spaces. Bella as a racialized woman resisted such forms of social spatial organization by giving an account of their experience and recognizing the fact that her race was the reason why they were denied a chance to rent the apartment.

Hilda, one of the participants, also expressed a similar aspect of being reminded of who she is and how that helps situate and define her place.

> When I went to the mall and walked into the store, I was told to move out because the clothes were so expensive. . . . And when I said, I can afford to buy the clothes, one of the sales ladies asked, "Are you a Filipino? Hmm . . . I can tell . . . ." With that kind of question, I felt bad; I had no choice but to leave. Indeed, racism is so real . . . it hurts!

Kim-Puri's (2005) "dualism" on Hilda's categorization as a Third World woman, who is not qualified to enter a store whose merchandise is expensive, is visible and helps make her public. Such a form of making her public also organizes her in ways that shed light to her racial marker as a technology of deporting and expelling her from the store. When asked whether she is a Filipino, the attendant of the shop is not just asking her of her identity but rather reminding her that you are unwelcomed in the shop since you cannot afford to pay for the merchandise. In this case, you see how class, gender, race, imperialism, and neoliberalism as quintessential technologies of mapping spaces and are inextricably connected to technologies of spatial eviction of immigrant women. Those who can afford merchandise are deemed as citizens who have worked harder while those others who cannot afford are categorized as aliens and lazy.

Nel states:

> You know, I believe in equality, but, in my workplace, because I am a Filipino I have to do all the lowest kind of job. I work in a restaurant, so I thought that we all do the same job, but I have to clean the washroom and throw the garbage . . .

Nel's experience is an expression of how gendered racism is intractably connected to citizenship and the ways in which immigrants come to be conceived of as alien or a superfluous population that must be evicted from the space. Such a form of violent eviction deports immigrant women to border spaces of exception hence reinforcing the white body as the original national subject. Such a form of returning of immigrants also affirms the white man as the quintessential owner of Canadian workspace. Such a national mythology that affirms workspaces in Toronto as pure, white, and masculine renders the Filipina woman as a lesser being whose survival depends on the magnanimity of the white man. This affirms the colonial belief that the Filipino/a is a white man's burden, that must be saved from itself by programing it through eviction. Eviction in this sense becomes a means of civilizing the broken other whose life depends on the benevolence of the white man. Such a form of civilization is barbaric and stems from the narrative that the Filipino/a is emotional and has to be grounded in their low point of social ladder, what Galabuzi (2006) has called out as economic apartheid. As a Filipina, Nel is located in this zone based on her citizenship. She has to be reminded of her submissiveness and caregiving "talents." She informed us that she signed a contract to work as a server, yet she is also supposed to clean the washroom and collect the garbage. Such a point of being an immigrant who is supposed to collect garbage reduces or simplifies her as expendable or excess bodies that must be violently disposed of.

I Am Saving You

In her comment, Marian states:

> One of the educators that I had a conversation with . . . told me that it is funny that Filipinas are seen with white babies. . . . He continued to tell me this . . . is this the only job that they know . . . the Filipinos . . . taking care of other's children?

These are not innocent sentences and story lines but rather technologies of disciplining and punishing the Filipina caregiver. Their role as caregivers has to be continuously and consistently maligned to

confirm the Filipina as a second class citizen who needs a white savior to survive. The statement also reduced the Filipina to the level of a white child and as such the interlocutor is seemingly asking the Filipina woman to outgrow themselves. This may come out as a caring statement whose role is to improve the Filipina, and yet such a form of care is meant to violently deport the migrant Filipina. Margles and Margles (2010) state that "the messages of racism teach that the lives of racialized peoples are dispensable, and disposable, that the work of racialized peoples is less valuable, that the thinking of the racialized is less useful, that the concerns of racialized peoples are trivial" (p. 140). Mary demonstrates how race and racism play in her everyday life:

> My previous employer always calls me to take care of her children, but she never pays me. When I ask, she usually says, "I am the reason why you got your paper . . . so forget about the payment." To work as a caregiver or nanny is lifelong slavery . . . no options . . . no genuine care.

Whiteness bestows enjoyment of social, institutional, and economic privilege to whites and pain to others (Filipinas). The employer not only enjoys the privilege of being a public figure, but also avoids spending for her children's upkeep. This privileging of the white woman at the expense of the migrant racialized woman is institutional and cultural/ideological. It explains and expresses citizenship in ways that mark out the Filipina immigrant while simultaneously keeping in place the narrative that the white national is a benevolent savior. Bordered bodies are objectified and expected to be thankful for their objectification since the white body has improved and civilized them. This definition subjugates and alienates the Filipina (Nyaga & Torres, 2017), and borrows its ethos from the historical definition of the other as a property that can be owned and dispensed at will. It is also used to keep the Filipina caregiver on track while maintaining the white national as the quintessential savior. This way, the Filipina is exploited and erased from citizenship rights. That said, Filipina women continue to negotiate such a form of anti-Filipina racism in ways that are grounded on their community realities and values.

I Break Boundaries

Nel states that:

> My boss is white and he takes me as a fool. . . . When I complain about the work, he said, "Be thankful you have a job. You Filipinos you complain too much . . . can't believe it . . . ." Is this how we are supposed to be treated when you are a Filipino? I wanted to argue with him . . . , but it seems like his mentality about us is fixed and cannot be changed. So, I work in that place for few months, until I can't handle it anymore, I have to look for another job . . . .

This statement by Nel affirms the fact that while the Filipina is constructed as a submissive and excess population, they are also reminded that they need to be thankful for the white men's benevolence. Such a form of reference to the Filipina helps explain how the Canadian nation state looks at immigrants as vessels that can be used and dispensed with at will. Such a form of dispensing has symbolic and material consequences in that when taken literally they come to manifest themselves in workplaces where employers expect immigrant labour to submit and be thankful for being in Canada. Such narrative fails to account for the different ways in which they can participate in global eviction of immigrants from their home countries through engaging with multinational organizations like the International Monetary Fund and World Bank's application of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) in the global South. According to Schick (2010),

> Racism is not simply a pre-existing condition or an inevitable fact of life that would render the social world helpless to change it, but something with a history that is learned across time and geographic location. . . . Everyday racism is more than dislike or fear of the unknown although these may be factors. Rather it is in the taken-for-grantedness of unequal power relations that organize and are organized through large and small discourse of social, material and ideological exchange. These

> discourses are found throughout major and minor institutions of society including education, the law, religious organizations, health care, governmental systems and other means of social organizing, including public policy. (pp. 48–49)

This means that if we are going to imagine the gendered and racialized lived experiences of Nel, then we will need to account for the role that markets, imperialism, colonialism, and masculinity discourse play to explain how Nel is resilient to have left the job and sought another one. This act of leaving and looking for another reveals Nel as resilient to recognize her power as fluid and transnational to break the colonial rule of grounding her as garbage collector.

Silence as a Weapon

Gendered racism is a significant principle of social organization, identification, and censorship in Canada (Razack, 2015). Nilda has broken social boundaries and helps us to imagine how silence can be used differently and with a particular unique purpose:

> One morning . . . while waiting for a school bus and my children are playing . . . a white woman approached me and asked me, "Do you work in the daycare?" At first, I was surprised by the question. . . . I felt very uncomfortable. I wondered why she had asked me. My answer was . . . I am a doctor and no I do not work in the daycare. . . . She looked at me . . . she was surprised. . . . I wanted to say more about what I'm doing, but she left the moment she heard me. . . . When I saw her the next day . . . she did not talk to me anymore. . . . This kind of interrogation . . . I get it a lot . . . and I know why. . . . It is because I am a Filipino; there is a stereotype that Filipinos are only caregivers.

Anything else is questionable. "Working in the daycare" is a technology of deportation meant to freeze, ground, and discipline the Filipina. It is a form of reminding the Filipina that they are alien and that they are deportable. Gillborn (2005) says that "race inequality and racism . . . are not aberrant nor accidental phenomena that will be ironed

out in time, they are fundamental characteristics of the system" (pp. 497–498) that manifest themselves in our everyday conversations. The question whether she works in the daycare is not just a slip of the tongue but serves to erase, expunge, and render such racialized and sexualized Filipina bodies into spaces of exception. A Filipina must be hailed, reminded, and assumed as belonging to caregiving sites to rationalize the role of the Canadian national as the benevolent savior whose role is to save the Filipina burden. This is not just gender but race discourse that objectifies and punishes bordered bodies in ways that rationalize white bodies as quintessential giver and protector of life.

It is a functionalist and totalizing institutional and cultural strategy that locates bodies to spaces based on the phenotype. This is authored and authorized by our unconscious everyday utterances, practices, and belief systems. The question is automated and can easily be assumed as insentient and yet its aftermath has material and symbolic consequences when it lands on Filipina bodies. A Filipina must constantly claim her space based on everyday institutional, cultural, and personal racial and gender markers that are geared towards deporting her to the violent border spaces. It may be argued that the hailer did not know that Nilda was that educated. How then is it that the same author was quick to assume that Nilda was a caregiver? Which social library necessitates this taken for granted assumption about Nilda as being only a caregiver? It is not that caregiving work is dishonourable work but it is the assumption made that a particular population shall be held captive into one particular social box. This boxing is a form of social prison meant to freeze and discipline them whenever they attempt to break it. In this instance, Nilda has broken the prison complex and her freedom is being questioned since she was supposed to wait for the white savior to release her. Now that she defied the social code, the white woman employed silence as a technology of saving her face as a quintessential savior of the broken Filipina. By hiding her face through silence, she can continue disremembering the Filipina and continue to affirm herself as the saving subject. The issue with this kind of white forgetting the other is violent and unethical since it is grounded on shame and guilt and cannot reconcile the fact that a Filipina can be without the white savior.

Racism surveys, positions, and imprints power on bordered bodies. When a body is bordered, it becomes a site of control, violence, erasure, and abuse. Bodies that do not matter (Butler, 1993) are made public to discipline and punish them. It can easily be seen but it is denied the right to move. It is visible but cannot be visualized. It is public yet cannot become public. The becoming of the objectified being is greeted with silence. Silence is a nonacceptability ploy meant to return the body to its original place, a space of exception. The Filipina body is condemned as not belonging to certain spaces, and not capable of self-redefinition and authorship. If the border claims its space the city strategically ignores such representation. When Nilda said that she is a doctor, the hailer left. This dominant ignorance silences and returns the hailed body to the initial position. But Nilda has to respond to claim her space and self-authorship.

While white women used silence to disremember the other, the Filipina employs silence to disturb the social organization of space in ways meant to include those others who have been marginalized. This kind of silence is grounded on transnational feminist praxis that see the face of the other as an ethical necessity for social change. It is important to recognize that the Filipina notices the silent behavior and can read through the silence without the face. This is a form of defacing whiteness in ways that call into question the taken for granted assumption that the Filipina is submissive and caregiver. Another participant named Rosie notes:

> I went to a restaurant to eat. One of the servers asked me to sit and wait for her. So, I waited for 30 minutes and I realized that she was serving the other white couple who came after me. I called her attention and asked if she was going to take my order. And she said, "Can't you wait! You see . . . I have somebody here! Are you a Filipino? . . . My friend is a Filipino; she's nice." Then she left. I could not believe what I heard. I left . . . .

From this verbatim, we recognize how race is a marker of privilege based on the fact that racialized bodies are expected to be patient, resilient, and submissive. Such forms of labels are tied to their racial configuration that authorizes maltreatment of racialized bodies by returning, reminding, or deporting them to their racial borders of being emotional bodies. Such

forms of deportation are expressed in the ways through which Rosie is reminded that she needs to behave like other Filipinos. While this is the case, Rosie decided to leave the space as a form of resistance to such racial definition of Filipino communities in diaspora. Such a walk by Rosie is a political reinversion of border politics. What Rosie did in the walk-out is to deny the server to evict her by evicting herself. This way of countering spatial definition interrupts the normal organization of space that looks at the Filipino/a as patient and submissive and instead inserts a nonviolent form of self-eviction that silences the violence of white spaces. It also tells how silence can also be a tool of decolonizing spaces that are tailored to evict racial bodies. Rosie's act of leaving the restaurant in silence helped interrupt the restaurant lifeline that is tied to profit rationalities and subsequently introduced a conversation around ethical treatment of racialized peoples. Silence in this case became a transnational subversive act of failing white narrative upon the Filipina/o as being patient and submissive.

I Cannot Be Without You

Ella, having faced a similar experience, states that:

> I am married to a Spanish man and we have a daughter. . . . Every time I bring my daughter to the playground or store, they ask me whether I am a nanny. At some point I am tired of responding. . . . I usually leave the place with my daughter.

In Toronto, Filipinas are coded, frozen, and preserved as caregivers and submissive. They are hailed and reminded of their racial and sexual border even though they may not be doing caregiving work. It is normalized and applied to any Filipina who may exalt herself. That way, the Filipina has to be returned to their border to wait for a white man who may make them public. To negotiate such a form of social deportation, the Filipina will act and perform the portrayal to negotiate a space for other oppressed Filipina. This is the case when the Filipina negotiates with their employer to employ other Filipinas in their workplace. It is in the negotiation part that the Filipina reinvents the social configuration

of them being "just a caregiver" by forming a social community in ways that are nonviolent. Ella decided not to defend herself because she knows that her explanation will not be taken seriously. Sometimes silence is used to deny the oppressor their continued definition of the body. Refusal to answer troubles normalization (Parada, 2012). Silence construed as peace is war in other ways (Foucault, 1980). Deep is a silent and most dangerous area of alteration.

According to one of the participants' narratives, Filipinas are continuously negotiating their position in Canada even under strict regulation and racial censorship. Once a Filipina acquires a job, she helps her fellow Filipina to get employed. This makes it possible for them to stay together and continue to assert and renegotiate their citizenship rights. Catharine said,

> When I came to Canada, I was not that lucky in terms of getting a job. I used to attend community meetings and that's where I met Johana. . . . I told Johana that I was unemployed and have family. She was gracious enough to tell me to apply in her firm. She networked on my behalf and was able to be employed by her employer.

Filipinas have been able to maintain their community and look at it as an oracle of love, sharing, and connection. The Filipina believes that they need others for them to fight gendered racism within the workplace and assert their worth in social reorganization of citizenship rights in Canada. One of the ways that they trouble whiteness in the workplace is by working with employers to employ their Filipina friends. To succeed in such a social transaction with the employers, the Filipina has to maintain and employ some of the taken for granted stereotypes about the Filipina. One of the Filipina participants used her submissive representation to fight for a position for her Filipina friend. The desire of Catherine to see her fellow Filipina doing well is a testament of how the Filipino woman looks at community as an ethical requirement for nonviolent forms of social inclusion and equity.

Conclusion

The flows of global capital and geopolitics thereof help maintain a world economic and political order that give credence to social inequalities and geographical asymmetry. This is made real by a neoliberal perspective that helps ground and affirm duo-spatial differences between the East and West, rich and poor, educated and uneducated, village and city, oppressed and oppressor, centre and margin. This essentializes the experiences between the Third World and the West in terms of bodies and geographies, creating social inequality of Filipinas both in Canada and the Philippines. Essentialism positions women from the global South as oppressed, submissive, uneducated, irrational, and powerless, while women in the West as educated, powerful, rational, and savior to the Third World woman (Razack, 2008). This racial and gendered representation helps objectify and consume Filipina labor through the claim that they need to be thankful to be in Canada. This kind of savior mythology helps exploit women of colour while simultaneously affirming the white national as a quintessential savior of the broken migrant. Through this, women of color are treated as second-hand citizens and social and economic excesses.

Transnational feminist sociology helps to theorize how racism affects the lives of Filipino women in the diaspora. It looks at power, control, punishment, and disciplining of racialized women's bodies in a hegemonic, transnational, and masculine global economy. It centres the local forms of power that help subvert normalized structural power. While this paper recognizes institutional trauma and damage inscribed on Filipina bodies, it juxtaposes that narrative with strengths and desires of transnational Filipina feminist bodies. Race as a neoliberal technology of power helps to assert the narrative that Filipina women are "just" caregivers and submissive. Based on the narratives of Filipinas, they applied such taken for granted markers to subvert and negotiate white spaces. Such forms of subversion asserted the need for nonviolence (Butler, 2020) as an ethical necessity in transnational feminist praxis. This also helps to confirm that when power is exercised productively, it inscribes local narratives as powerful and empowering technologies that can break the taken for

granted assumptions that the Filipina is "just a caregiver." This study looks at the power of Filipina women in the diaspora while recognizing that colonization has had an effect on them through the everyday narrative that they are supposed to be caregivers.

The transnational feminist sociology lens complicates cultures and identities that are in transit to start shedding light on the role of imperialism and neoliberal capital in the exploitation of Filipina women in the West. It complicates experiences of women of colour in colonial settler states to start to imagine other ways of being as fundamental towards social justice. Furthermore, the transnational feminist sociology lens recognizes the role played by the imperial and neoliberal world in suppressing the voices of women from the global South. This paper looks at Filipinas as powerful, resilient, and subversive in ways that are community-based and nonviolent. The root cause of their experience is complex, transitional, and contingent and cannot be reduced through a white feminist lens. Transnational feminist sociology helps acknowledge and account Filipina struggles in ways that are transcultural, multifaceted, relational, and transnational. Regardless, the participants in this study never intend to give up on their fight against raced and gendered cultures. Based on this study, it is clear that Filipino women are not just victims of social circumstances but that they have devised ways through which they can negotiate citizenship rights in ways that are community-based, nonviolent, and ethical.

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