Ambivalent Repetitions

The Commonsensical and Performative Nature of Chineseness among Young Chinese Filipinos in Contemporary Metro Manila

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Abstract

Deploying Judith Butler's theory of performativity in understanding the notion of "Chineseness" for contemporary young Chinese Filipinos, interviews with forty-five respondents were conducted, nineteen short stories from two anthologies were analyzed, and selected episodes from a Chinese Filipino lifestyle show were examined. Based on the research, this paper aims to show how the "Chinese" identity is continuously formed through simultaneous repetition and disavowal of racial and cultural stereotypes, such that beneath the "cohesive" "Chinese" identity asserted by young Chinese Filipinos lies a sense of ambivalence. Thus, the "realness" of the "Chinese" identity for the Chinese Filipinos is established through their continuous performance and reassertion of its "reality."

Keywords

Chinese, Filipino, identity, performativity, stereotype, culture, race

Ambivalent Repetitions

Introduction[1]

With the Chinese population spilling over into the geographical borders of China and spreading throughout the world, the ubiquitousness of the Chinese compels scholars to continuously examine closely the phenomenon of the so-called Chinese diaspora. Moreover, the ideology of race interpellates everyone, such that the notion of a Chinese person being "always" Chinese is quite commonplace, and the Chinese person, regardless of his/her locale, is always compelled to define his/her identity by somehow incorporating Chineseness. However, the terms *Chinese*, *Chinese identity*, and *Chineseness* are becoming increasingly difficult to define because of globalization and its infinite challenges. Similarly, concepts such as race, ethnicity, and culture are constantly being redefined alongside the ensuing hybridization of the overseas Chinese's identities in the present day.

As Tong Chee Kiong aptly observes: "Despite the voluminous literature devoted to the topic, a description of whom, or what, is a Chinese, and what constitutes Chineseness remains elusive" (1). In the endeavor to generate

narratives that are representative of Chinese people in different parts of the world, many scholars repeatedly turn to the historical events that generated several patterns of migration of the Chinese, as well as the circumstances under which the Chinese have settled into the various host countries.

According to Wang Gungwu, the Chinese overseas or the Chinese diaspora can be divided into three categories: the *Huaqiao*, also called the Overseas Chinese, which refers to the sojourning Chinese nationals that reside temporarily in a host country and expect to return home; the *Huaren*, Chinese nationals who have chosen permanent residence in another country; and the *Huayi*, who are descendants of Chinese nationals who have been accorded foreign nationality and are considered ethnically Chinese or Chinese in terms of lineage ("Introduction" 12).

Southeast Asia remains to be the region with the most sizeable population of ethnic Chinese: around 18–20 million, equivalent to 80–85 percent (Tong 1). Despite the proximity between countries in this region, the experiences and profiles of the ethnic Chinese are remarkably diverse, which explains the difficulty of defining what constitutes Chineseness at present.

Among the countries in Southeast Asia, the case of the Chinese in the Philippines may be quite different because they constitute a significantly smaller segment of the population (Ang See, "Ethnic Chinese Community" 44), as well as other complicating factors such as the mass naturalization policy and their conversion to Christianity (Tong 26). Numerous studies done on the Chinese Filipinos have defined the ethnic group in terms of how well they have assimilated or integrated into the Filipino society, how they have overcome certain cultural barriers by learning (and contributing to) the Filipino language, how they have adopted the beliefs and practices of the Catholic church, incorporating them into their tradition, and how they have established businesses that continue to help boost the Philippine economy, etc.

A point often mentioned in the literature is the inter-generational conflict between the first-generation Chinese (the Chinese diaspora) and the later generations (the ethnic Chinese or Chinese Filipinos). The studies not only mention the older generation's laments on how the Chinese culture is

slowly eroding, but also emphasize that the erosion is irreversible, which means that the Chinese factor or aspect of the ethnic group will certainly recede through time. Hence, the Chinese Filipinos work hard to counter racist notions or racial stereotypes of the Filipinos against the Chinese, not only through their writings but also through their eagerness to engage in political and social activities that help them express their desire for a solidarity with the Filipino people.

Despite these efforts, however, racial prejudices continue to linger among Filipinos, though not as pronounced as they are among the Chinese diaspora. The continuing lament over the loss of culture among the older generation refuels their prejudices among the Filipinos, subconsciously believing that the reinforcement of these discriminatory practices is the only means to preserve the distinctness of the Chinese in the Philippines.

Chinese Filipino writings continue to focus on the tension between the Chinese diaspora and the Filipinos, which explains the anxiety-ridden character of the literature. However, their writings implicitly assume a uniform sentiment among the Chinese Filipinos in general, regardless of age or locale. The assumption is that they feel anguish about being caught between conflicting cultures, and the only way for them to escape this conflict is by overthrowing the oppressive Chinese ways and immersing themselves into the ways of the Filipinos.

"Chineseness"

This study presents a different perspective from the ones mentioned above concerning the "Chinese question" or "problem." Instead of repeating the familiar argument of scholars that the Chinese Filipinos have predominantly become Filipinized, or going the "opposite" direction by pointing to the inclination of some Chinese Filipinos toward emphasizing their "Chinese identity," this study works to highlight the tensions and ambivalences that emerge in the process of enunciating and (re)negotiating the "Chinese" aspect of this identity or the Chineseness of the young Chinese Filipinos. In such a process, what is revealed is how this identity which appears "natural" is actually performative, following Judith Butler's notion of performativity

which can be succinctly described in three parts: "eternal" (commonsensical), "social" (an act), and repetitive. With performativity as a critical category, the concern is not whether the young Chinese Filipinos are more "Filipino" or more "Chinese," but rather how "real" this concept.

I have traced how the perception of Chineseness of the younger generation of Chinese Filipinos begins from the commonsensical understanding of race. Chineseness is then "established" and "performed" through repetition by way of preserving and adhering to certain racial/cultural stereotypes. Since culture is, to a considerable extent, a performance of race, there is a tendency for people to shift or resort to culture as a means of "moving away" from race and achieving a sense of authenticity in terms of their identity.

I have also examined in various texts such as literary texts, personal and organizational accounts how the young Chinese Filipinos oscillate between perpetuating stereotypes and expressing ambivalence. Following Homi Bhabha's notion of stereotype, ambivalence is the power that ensures the continuous perpetuation of stereotypes ("Other Question" 18). Nevertheless, ambivalence is also an apt term to describe the desire of the young Chinese Filipinos to turn away from the stereotypes, while simultaneously recognizing how they appear shackled to their Chinese identity, or at least to maintaining a certain level of Chineseness. This ambivalence follows what performativity works to achieve; that is, recognizing both agency of the subject and presence of structure while working to escape from the deterministic nature of both (McKinlay 234–5). I have focused on the ambivalence of Chineseness for the younger generation, as opposed to the term *hybridity*, in consideration of Caroline Hau's cautioning that hybridity as a concept is generally overused in a way that expresses an unthinking glorification of a mixing of cultures, which then becomes hailed as an "essential" characteristic of Southeast Asian countries ("The Question of Foreigners" 183).

The many studies done thus far concerning the Chinese overseas generally repeat historical accounts on the different periods of migration of the Chinese and the process of their settlement in their host countries. But this study attempts to move away from this repetition by examining texts that are more concerned with the current trends of negotiation among the Chinese

Filipinos in terms of defining their identity. The concern is whether or not it is possible to examine and redefine the Chinese Filipinos' identity/identities without resorting to a regurgitation of their history. Although historical and sociological accounts are undoubtedly valuable for shedding light on the present cases of stereotyping, still, stereotypes of Chinese/Chinese Filipinos remain. This calls for reflection on the part of the Chinese Filipinos on how their notion of "Chinese" as ethnic/cultural identity is performative in practice such that they simultaneously own up to and resist these stereotypes. Although the studies conducted and writings produced by Kaisa Para sa Kaunlaran have undeniably made immense contributions to overturning stereotypes concerning the Chinese, it is possible that the younger generation of Chinese Filipinos are not as aware as the older ones about their writings.

This study hopes to provide the younger generation of Chinese Filipinos an alternative perspective so that they need not feel compelled to absolutely identify with either the Chinese or the Filipino or even work to explain how they are a mixture of both "cultures," only to experience and re-experience the anxiety of having to contend with the conflicts between different cultures. The hope is for the younger generation to be able to "distance" themselves from these "cultures" without being accused of betrayal or disavowal of Chineseness or even Filipinoness. By such distancing, they might be able to achieve a certain level of liberation by gaining an understanding of the ambivalence in their identity.

The main subject for this study is the younger generation of the *Huayi*, or the ethnic Chinese, in the Philippines. For the individual accounts (interviews), I follow Richard Chu's definition of the (ethnic) Chinese, referring to those who are Filipino citizens but are of "pure"[2] Chinese descent, born and raised in the Philippines, have little exposure to China, and possess meager knowledge of the history and culture of China (4). This definition also challenges the term "diaspora" because the ethnic Chinese do not undergo any form of uprooting, and generally do not imagine any "home" other than the Philippines. By *younger generation*, I refer to the generation labeled as the millennials[3] born between the early/mid 1980s to the late 1990s, now

between the ages of eighteen to early thirties.[4] However, for the other texts -- the short stories in the *Intsik* and *Lauriat* anthologies and the subjects in the Filipino Chinese TV program, *CHInoy TV* -- ethnic Chinese/Chinese Filipinos must be extended to include *mestizos* or so-called "part-Chinese," who either self-identify or are identified by others as *Chinoys*, as is the case of some of the writers of the stories.

The study focuses on the more recent texts produced by the younger generation of Chinese Filipinos, except for the *Intsik* anthology, which is more representative of the sentiments of an older generation of Chinese Filipinos. An analysis of the *Intsik* anthology is pertinent to the study, as it serves as a crucial starting point for understanding the Chinese and the Filipino in the Chinese-Filipino context at an earlier time-frame. The study attempts to veer away from more "historical"/earlier works, as a considerable amount of work has been done by scholars in various disciplines—literature, sociology, history—in excavating the beginnings of the Chinese in the Philippines, outlining their evolving status and continuing struggles. Instead, what is presented is an understanding of how young Chinese Filipinos deal with the concepts of race, culture, ethnicity, and even nation(ality), what their concerns are and how they work toward escaping the dictates of race and culture without necessarily embracing assimilation.

A "RACE" TO "CULTURE"

The rise of China politically and economically in recent decades has contributed significantly to the re-sinicization, particularly of Southeast Asia (Hau, "Becoming 'Chinese'"), presumably because of its geographical proximity to China and the sizable ethnic Chinese residential population in this region. The motivations for this re-sinicization among the Southeast Asians may be primarily economic in nature, given the perceived prosperity of China and thus the potential profits from engaging in trade and business with the Chinese people. This trend undoubtedly leads to increasing emphasis on the importance of learning the Chinese language and culture for the future generations. A resulting split among the younger generation would

be between those embracing their Chinese heritage for practical (economic) purposes and those shunning it because of its imposing and oppressive nature. Yet, whether they embrace or shun it, the younger generation of local Chinese residents in Southeast Asia—descendants of Chinese who have migrated from China at one point in the past century and have not engaged in interracial marriages—would presumably remain "unequivocally Chinese" because of the concept of race.

Wang Gungwu writes that Chineseness, or the Chinese identity outside China, largely depends on the "person's self-identity as a Chinese, and other people agreeing that the person is Chinese . . . the latter [centering] largely on *physical attributes*." Although Wang proceeds to regard the notion of Chineseness as a matter of choice, in the first instance, the physical attributes always come into play, so that other people can insist on a person being Chinese "whether the person like[s] it or not" ("Chineseness: The Dilemmas" 183–4).

Similarly, Tong Chee Kiong, in *Identity and Ethnic Relations in Southeast Asia: Racializing Chineseness,* uses primordialism as a conceptual framework for his analysis of Chineseness within Chinese overseas communities. The theory of primordialism explains the forceful affect generated by blood ties, the outward manifestation of which is seen in physical characteristics; because blood and physique are natural markers, they are viewed as quintessential for the Chinese master identity (4–7). This explains why the notion of race is so established that the majority of people do not think to question it.

Race as Commonsense and Formation

Commonsensically, race is considered a definitive category that neatly groups people of the same language and culture, based on the recognition of certain distinctive and telling physical attributes, such as skin color, hair color, and eyes. Because of the implicit biological foundation of the notion, race appears "benign" in the sense that it is largely seen as a "natural" occurrence; yet, it is precisely this presumed "naturalness" that hides its oppressive nature.[5]

In *Making Sense of Race, Class, and Gender: Commonsense, Power, and Privilege in the United States,* Celine-Marie Pascale elucidates this commonsensical nature of race. She begins by providing a definition of commonsense knowledge: "a saturation of cultural knowledge that we cannot control and fail to recognize and which, through its very obviousness, passes without notice." Race, hence, is commonsense knowledge, because "through commonsense we recognize who 'looks' familiar—who belongs and who does not" (4). Yet, this commonsense knowledge is necessarily ideological and a by-product of hegemony (5).

Power is inherent in race as seen in how race hails us and shapes our discourses. The (re)productive nature of race heightens its power, and in an analysis of Omi and Winant's work, Lee expounds on the paradoxical nature of race as facilitated by power, by referencing Butler: "The power imposed upon one is the power that animates one's emergence, and there appears to be no escaping this ambivalence . . ." ("Transitivity of Race" 62). Thus, race seems to appear benign as a concept, as merely descriptive. However, it necessarily imposes an identity on its subjects because it is not natural but "naturalized."

Tong presents insightful reasons behind the constant framing of studies about these Chinese in racial terms—primarily, that racialization stems from the desire to establish identity through physical differences. However, he argues that it matters not whether the act of racializing is ideological or propagates racism (9). Pascale counters these sentiments slightly by postulating that the idea of difference as facilitated by racial discourse is never neutral, nor does it allow one to easily end the discussion:

> The "difference" that commonsense leads one to recognize is not just the opposite of sameness; there are far more differences among people that pass unnoticed or without consequence. "Difference" is always a relationship—not a characteristic—shaped by histories of force, exploitation, and domination. (5)

Instead of reading Tong and Pascale as oppositional to each other, I focus on Pascale's theorizing as it addresses the racial question that Tong chose to describe rather than theorize.

In the case of the Chinese living outside China, Tong posits that identity "has become more individualized and personalized" (17). However, given the racialization that Tong claims to be the current dominant trend for these Chinese, and recognizing the public nature of race, this presents a tension that is difficult to reconcile.

Culture as a Performance of Race

Hall calls for the dissociation of "race" from "culture" in order to rid race of its oppressive tendencies ("Gramsci's Relevance" 444–448). Yet, Tong demonstrates in his study that in the course of investigating the Chinese question, race and culture remain inextricably entangled (9). Hunter, in an earlier study, notes that attention to racial difference becomes particularly pronounced when "there is a potential threat from one group to another" (8-9). In the case of the Chinese in Southeast Asia, the locals of some countries tend to see them as "intruders . . . offshoots of a large, powerful, politically dangerous foreign state, as culturally cohesive and different, and as economically competitive and threatening" (8-9). Hunter observes that the Chinese "are identified at least as much as by their culture as their physical appearance" (8–9), which suggests that the two go hand in hand. This is echoed by Mac an Ghaill in his work, *Contemporary Racisms and Ethnicities*: "many social tensions associated with race relations are really centred [sic] around cultural differences . . . Economic disadvantages and ethnic diversity are two sides of the same coin . . ." (22–23).

When one recognizes how biological signs, such as eyes and skin color, do not have corresponding, singular signifieds (e.g., Chinese may be white or tanned or yellow-skinned), one feels compelled to take the recourse to culture to attain a sense of authenticity for Chineseness. As Pascale puts it, "biological essentialism is *rearticulated* through social constructionist analyses that are rooted to culture and history" (42). In effect, race is not written out of the equation, but instead "justified" through ("one") culture; this culture

becomes a performance of race. The lens of culture affords a clearer view of how the discourse of race never really ends with biological distinctions, although there is a constant struggle in the racial discourse, not to mention the difficulty of defining culture; this culture becomes a performance of race, eventually pushing people to return to race's most basic (biological) definition from time to time. The comfort derived from this return to the biological is never permanent. Herein lies the paradox of race as a method for this study: that it appears to be an easy exit from or facile response to the Chinese question. Yet, its insidious nature traps the Chinese subject into having to reply to statements such as "Are you Chinese?" or "You are Chinese" over and over.

In the analysis of personal accounts taken from the young Chinese Filipinos in present-day Metropolitan Manila, I wish to highlight certain contradictions or inconsistencies that emerge in the course of discussing what it means to be Chinese, to demonstrate how the racial text (of Chineseness) is not so much a representation as it is a production and performance. Two rounds of interviews were conducted, with two sets of questions (see appendices), primarily through email and online chat.

Commonsensical Race

"One of the first things we notice about people when we meet them (along with their sex) is their race. We utilize race to provide clues about who a person is . . . Without a racial identity, one is in danger of having no identity" (Omi and Winant 12). Yet, instead of claiming racial identity as a means of self-identification, one might say that it is more accurately a means to identify another, and in the process of identifying the other, the other returns the favor, and only by which one's own racial identity is brought to the surface. It is the other's continuous questioning that allows racial identity to linger, establishing its objective truth and the accompanying fear that rejecting one's race is equivalent to a loss of a sense of self.

While it may be instinctive to think of identity as primarily a matter of personal choice, it is equally important, if not more, to consider it as necessarily social and relational.[6] Identity becomes a more pronounced concern

when differences emerge between people, and it becomes an issue when it is questioned or is in crisis. Thus, the questions formulated for this study go beyond the usual questions about Chineseness that focus on self-perception, as self-perception assumes agency, which only makes up half of the equation for the performativity of identity (keeping in mind that performativity is always a balancing act between agency and structure).

For this study, the questioning begins from inquiries about nationality or citizenship and proceeds to questions on race or ethnicity. The first two questions revolve around people's responses when the Chinese Filipinos claim to be Filipinos, and their thoughts and reactions when people identify them as Chinese ("racially"). One sees that in deliberating over reactions about their being Filipinos, the respondents are also required to grapple with questions about being Chinese:

> "I usually qualify my answer . . . with the assumption that I'm talking to a Filipino (Filipino citizenship, but 100% Chinese by blood). They usually ask a follow-up question, like, 'but were you born there, then came here' [or] 'did you live abroad, and then come here?'"
>
> "They usually say, "aren't you Chinese?" They usually mean "blood," even if I grew up here, I live here."
>
> "If they're Filipino (race), they usually react with confusion or disbelief. I usually explain that I was born here."
>
> "They are very surprised. Their reason is based on my skin color and that I look very Chinese/Korean (according to some). I usually just laugh and insist that I was born and raised in the Philippines."

Although the usual response is to immediately qualify the "Filipinoness" of the Chinese Filipinos, some respondents do own up to their Chinese identity, thus aligning the "social" identity and the "personal" identity.[7] Meanwhile, there are also those who do not find it difficult to claim that they are Filipino, because they do not "look Chinese" anyway. However, the latter case still demonstrates how the Chinese identity is racial and common-

sensical, as there is an implicit understanding that "looking Chinese" would make assuming the Filipino identity a less straightforward matter.

Because of the commonsensical nature of race, many respondents find it common to be identified as Chinese, so that when they are asked what comes to mind when this happens, a number of them draw a blank, or shrug it off as normal or natural. Some refer to physical appearances:

> "Is it my eyes? Or my skin?"
>
> "It's probably due to my "chinky" eyes, and [I] wonder if I look weird or exotic."
>
> "This is how I look, so what if I go the Chinese face?"
>
> "Nothing really [comes to mind], I look Chinese so a lot of people know that I'm Filipino Chinese."

The eyes ("chinky," "small") and the skin ("fair, "white," "yellow," "yellowish white," "whitish yellow," "light") are the two phenotypical markers that all respondents refer to when asked to describe a typical Chinese face. Interestingly, one of the respondents, Annie,[8] a twenty-year-old studying in one of the top universities in the Philippines, describes Chinese as "flesh-colored."[9] In an article, "White Privilege: 'Flesh-Colored,'" Lisa Wade writes about how the flesh color is a clear indication of white privilege, which can be seen in products such as band aids, skin creams, and even in crayons. In the case of crayons, she notes that Crayola has removed the "flesh" color and (re)introduced a combination of colors of flesh as "multicultural crayons," and subsequently mentions an observation made about this change: "It's interesting how 'culture' here is a substitute for 'race'" (n.p.). This statement contributes to the ideas that "race" often hides behind "culture" and that "culture" is "naturalized" through "race."

Looking at the responses, one sees that identifying the Chinese as "white" may be interpreted as symptomatic of colonial residue, in the sense that we operate on terms that are similar to the West's white/black or light/dark dichotomy; in this instance, the Chinese becoming "white" is an exten-

sion of this privileged othering. Simon,[10] a twenty-six-year-old marketing graduate, also makes a similar conjecture:

> "The aftereffects of colonialism [are] still found in everyday life through . . . people's perception of beauty, skin color, hair color, and how lighter tones of these examples are perceived as different but superior . . ."

In response to the question on what comes to mind when people ask if they are Chinese, some respondents realize that others' thoughts or impressions of Chinese people are not necessarily very straightforward:

> "Sometimes people ask if I'm Korean or Japanese as well, so I want to know what the difference is."

> "They want to be sure I am a Chinese. Because others look Chinese, but they are Filipino."

> "They don't ask. They know just by looking. [Although] if it were another race, then [my reaction] would be, 'Why'd you think that?'"

First, what is worth noting is not merely the attempt by others to label them as Chinese, but also the others' impression of a homogenized look among the Chinese and the Koreans (and to some extent, the Japanese). The Koreans have entered the equation because of their increasing population and presence in the country. The idea that Chinese and Koreans look the same demonstrates not only the Filipinos' tendency to view the fair-skinned and small-eyed as equally alien, but also speaks against the notion that the "Chinese" look is unquestionably apparent, that there is a specific "Chinese" look to speak of.

Second, some people realize that while it appears implicit that being Chinese means "looking Chinese", there may be cases where people "look Chinese" but are not, as seen in the above-mentioned response of an informant. What is intriguing about the last example is that the respondent himself assumes that there *should* not be any question about Chinese people "looking Chinese," but proceeds to put in the clause that there is a possibility to be misrecognized. The last two responses confirm what Byrne writes:

"despite the function of the visible as a key signifier of race, the visibility of race is not always clear or evident. There are unsettling and unclear borderlands between racial identifications . . ." (5).[11]

As previously mentioned, informants whose appearances do not fall into neat categorizations are not compelled to qualify their answers when they claim to be Filipinos.

> "Most people don't react to it [when I say I'm a Filipino] because they say I do look like a Filipino—with this kind-of-dark skin and un-Chinita eyes . . . most people say I don't look Chinese."

> "When I'm with Filipinos, I look Chinese. When I'm with (mainland) Chinese, because they look different, so in that sense, I appear to be Filipino."

In the last example, one sees the ambiguity of using physical attributes as the ultimate criterion for qualifying Chineseness. Byrne quotes Alcoff who explains what happens when a person's phenotypical markers do not appear to accurately represent his or her "racial" origin:

> When mythic bloodlines which are thought to determine identity fail to match the visible markers used by identity discourses to signify race, one often encounters these odd responses by acquaintances announcing with arrogant certainty "But you don't look like . . ." or then retreating to a measured acknowledgment "Now that you mention it, I can sort of see . . ." to feel one's face studied with great seriousness, not for its (hoped for) character lines, or its distinctiveness, but for its telltale racial trace. (4)

Thus, another oddity that emerges in the accounts is that although respondents appear to subscribe to a "Chinese" look that defines race in their minds, majority of them did not refer to race (phenotypically) as a point of similarity when asked about the similarities of Chinese Filipinos to the new Chinese migrants (usually referred to as "mainland Chinese").[12] Only a couple of respondents made references to race:

> "We are all Chinese in blood. They were brought up differently in a different culture."

"We have the same race. They have no class."

"We have some similar features (skin color, height, eye shape)."

Interestingly, one of the informants, Esther, a twenty-year old advertising major who previously studied in one of the Chinese schools in Manila, claims that "physical looks" is a point of difference between the Mainland Chinese and the Chinese Filipinos.[13] This is a clear challenge to the notion that being racially Chinese means possessing that "one Chinese look." Thus, in another round of interviews, after the respondents were asked to describe a typical "Chinese" face, they were subsequently asked if Chinese Filipinos and the new Chinese migrants look alike. All of them are quick to deny or at least qualify any similarity between the two groups.

> "There are similarities between the two. But usually, you can determine which is which . . . for those pure Chinese, who grew up in the Philippines, they *dress* and in some way *act* differently compared to the migrants (*Culture* may be a factor here)."

> "I think there's a difference between how the Chinese Filipinos and new Chinese migrants carry themselves, in the way they *dress* as well as *their appearance* or how they *speak* . . . So somehow, you'd be able to tell . . . there are significant features that tell them apart."

We see thus how "Chinese" progresses from the first moment(s) of commonsense to succeeding moments that demonstrate performativity. The enunciation and reiteration of physical attributes as markers of race is a performance in itself, a social act that acquires its meaning because it is said to another, to the public that concedes. For example, the ambiguous tone of the following response already points to performativity: "well, in terms of looks, it's *true* . . . all Chinese look the same *supposedly* . . . I just go along with it ." Byrne states similarly in her work:

> Why do we see, notice, act upon skin color and certain other visible physical features and not others? These ways of seeing are not natural, but learnt . . . It is through the reiteration of these perceptual practices that racialized performativity occurs and racialized subjectivity produced. (5)

Hence, when one is compelled to examine his or her own race, the looks of the Chinese Filipinos and the new Chinese migrants, considered members of the same Chinese "race," are then differentiated through "culture" (referring to fashion and behavior) that "stylizes" their appearances, making them look different. However, some respondents insist that the two groups look different in terms of physical attributes alone (not considering the cultural attributes), but immediately realize that they cannot spell out precisely this "difference."

> "I can't explain the differences but if you're Chinese Filipinos, somehow, you'll be able to distinguish one from the other."

> "I think Chinese Filipinos and Chinese migrants look different. Even if both are fair skinned and chinky-eyed, there's still a difference. It's not just a matter of fashion or clothing . . . But the way they look is pretty different as well. It is hard to pinpoint specifically which particular aspect is different. Best description I can give is that Chinese Filipinos look less "G.I.,"[14] which I hope makes sense . . . I have no better way of describing it. Maybe Chinese Filipinos have already adapted to the Philippines environment . . . As taught in social anthropology, humans . . . can respond to environmental stress with physiological and growth adjustments."

It must first be remarked on that subjects are able to unproblematically reproduce racialist language, using terms such as "chinky-eyed," etc., which is a sign of the socialization of people into racial discourse.

A major implication of these responses is the Chinese Filipinos' determination to differentiate themselves from the new migrants, who are mostly seen in bad light. One respondent, Tim, an analyst who lives in Manila and is thus considerably exposed to members of this group, goes so far as to describe them as "uncultured, unrefined savages . . ." This particular depiction/impression of the new Chinse migrants not only follows a Eurocentric definition of culture as "civilized," it also paints culture in "racialized" terms—that is, insisting on difference in appearance due to a number of factors that are even more unstable than the usual and already unstable phenotypes (eyes and skin).

Still on the matter of new Chinese migrants, Charm, a twenty-three-year-old computer science graduate residing in Manila, talks about how a Chinese identity can be of value to her, and her response demonstrates what Pascale means by how race has "relevant" rather than "particular meaning" (27):

> "As long as someone keeps that fine line between Chinoys and the new (Chinese) immigrants, then we're good. Am I being *racist* here to the new Chinese immigrants? I am ashamed, but yes."

The Chinese Filipino's resort to "racial" discrimination as a means of distinguishing himself/herself from the new migrants can also be read as indicative of the assimilationist desire/anxiety, yet one must acknowledge that this desire is not absolute in the sense that the Chinese Filipino is decided on a total integration into the Filipino culture/society that results in a complete erasure of his/her Chineseness (this following the traditional idea of assimilation that attests to the primacy/"purity" of the dominant culture).

Performativity of Race, Power of Stereotyping, and Resultant Ambivalence

One informant claims that given the established presence of the Chinese in the Philippines, people do not necessarily question the person's claim about being Filipino. However, the Chinese Filipino's fluency in Filipino (language) usually leads to a double take. While the Chinese Filipino often feels compelled to justify his or her Filipinoness by speaking Filipino or Tagalog fluently, this also leads to the Filipinos' amazement over their fluency or amusement over their quaint accents.

> "I can't remember anyone being surprised. Sure, people can tell by how I look that I am Chinese, but a lot of Chinese were/are born here, so it's normal. Maybe there were some who were surprised that I could speak conversational Filipino, so it's more of the fact that I speak the language."

Following Butler's use of the transvestite figure to demonstrate how gender is performed ("Performative Acts" 527), one may argue in this

instance that the Chinese's use of (performance of) the Filipino language is the equivalent to that jarring moment—that moment that causes a break in the perceived "naturalness" of race. Conversely, should a non-Chinese speak (perform) Chinese (possibly through language or another cultural medium), it would induce a jarring effect as well. The more distinct the "racial" features are, the more the person is compelled to "perform" the culture (language) of that "race," and any "performance" that does not seem to follow the prescribed may be simply dismissed by the other:

> "I remember back in college that my classmates [would be] mesmerized by how white my skin is . . . Even now, people are surprised to know that I'm actually born here and more surprised to find out that I can speak fluent Filipino. I *continue speaking in Filipino and they try to reply in English and I don't understand why*" (emphasis mine).

One can see from the other responses that language is considered the most reliable marker of "race." When asked to "describe a typical Chinese face," Katie, a twenty-three-year-old engineer who previously studied in a Chinese school in San Juan, qualifies her description as fitting "any Asian," "so I don't usually assume until I hear them speak in Chinese." In response to the question of distinguishing Chinese people from other "similar-looking" Asians, such as Koreans or Japanese, some respondents claim to be able to them apart based on certain features, but eventually resort to language in order to confirm their guesses:

> "Their facial features and mannerisms/how they act are different . . . for us Asians. We can typically distinguish each other. Sometimes though, I can be wrong. So, I usually eavesdrop [on] their conversation and listen to their language."

> "In terms of specifics, it's difficult for me to put my hand on something in particular because I would look through various factors of the face and actions and manner of speaking. If this is based on anything, then it would be easiest through hearing how the person speaks, since each person's language has certain tones unique to their own nationality."

In the latter example, and in other responses, one can also see how the concept of nationality is imbued with racial/cultural elements, which is likewise confirmed by Rattansi, who writes about how people of certain nationalities [nationalisms] are simultaneously seen as "deriving from specific racial stocks" and possessing certain "cultural attributes" (36).

> "I can tell apart a Chinese from other Asians such as Korean and Japanese. I'm not sure how, but there's a difference that helps us identify their nationalities even before they speak their language."
>
> (On being identified by other people) "[I am identified] as other Asians with similar facial features/language as Chinese . . . that person explains why he/she identified me as that nationality."
>
> (On whether a Filipino identity is more liberating than Chinese identity) "No, I think every nationality has [its] own stereotypes."

There is confusion at this point as to whether the Chinese identity has really been relocated to the "private"/"personal," as opposed to "public"/recognized and verified by a third party, since the first moment of reckoning with the other often provokes the resurgence of the Chinese question.

One might temporarily argue that for the Chinese who have typified physical traits of a Chinese, it becomes easier to set aside the "national" identity in favor of the "racial" identity. However, because cultural baggage comes with the "naturalized" racial identity, it does not afford any easy exit from these questions either. This is seen in the responses of the informants on their thoughts about others identifying them as Chinese:

> "Here we go again . . . because it shouldn't matter [if I am Chinese, it's] not a big deal."
>
> "I used to think it's a bit racist because they ask me a lot of questions regarding stereotypes, and I always think, "why do you need to know/ask?" or "*ba't ba mas marunong ka pa, e ako 'tong Chinese?"* ["Why do you presume to know more than I do when I'm the Chinese?"]"

In these instances, Ien Ang's understanding of the Chinese identity may be more relevant: Filipinos' labeling of Chinese Filipinos as "Chinese" makes the Chinese identity the categorical "prison-house" (11) for the Chinese Filipinos, which many may try to break away from, but will always find themselves dealing with certain aspects of this identity.

> "For several reasons I don't want to be looked at as a "G.I." or someone who grew up in China. Stereotypes exist because they are somewhat true, and I believe that everyone is just a little bit racist."
>
> "They ask me, am I rich? . . . I really have no idea where people get the idea that Chinese people are immediately rich. I just respond saying that it really isn't the case and that I really have no idea where they got the notion."
>
> "They will ask me to translate . . . English words into Chinese or they think I come from a rich and conservative family."
>
> "I wonder if they think I'm rich and my dad's some squandering businessman.
> They will not believe I'm Catholic.
> They'll think I live in Chinatown."

All the abovementioned responses point to performativity, to race as a construction that continues to fortify itself over time, such that it goes beyond phenotype and physique. People have been trained to conjure a number of signifieds from the physical attributes that serve as signifiers. Thus, while the Chinese Filipinos claim that Chineseness is primarily about "culture," a number of them are also careful to describe their looks as not very "Chinese" (or "G.I."), as this can either mean looking like the Chinese migrants, who are, as mentioned, often seen as "uncultured," or it can generate other (stereotypical) assumptions about possessing certain cultural attributes.

In an informal online poll conducted in the course of this study, I raised the question on whether *Chinese* is a matter of race or of culture. Many are quick to answer "culture," though not all respondents provided a reason for this answer [which can be read as proof of its commonsensical nature as well].[15] But some[16] do think that "race" would be a more accurate measure of Chineseness more permanent and imposed rather than something by choice:

> "Race. Culture is fluid, constantly, evolving thing; putting a label on it presupposes that it's already fully defined, when it can never be. Chinese as a race and ethnicity is definable by genes and DNA . . . being ethnically Chinese . . . that's not something you can change."

> "Culture [is] the default expected answer. Without overthinking . . . I go for race. Because if no one told me I was "Chinese" in the first place, then I wouldn't even give it a second thought. But someone told me from childhood that I am Chinese, ergo affecting culture and my mindset of culture from then to now . . . Culture is a choice. Race is not. I can choose to not live as a Chinese . . . Race, I cannot change . . ."

> "Chinese is a race. There will be stereotyping once someone hear[s] or see[s] that you're Chinese. You don't have a choice. Culture is the practice. [It] changes over time . . . even if you don't follow the culture, you're still a Chinese."

Interestingly, the more prevalent perception among Chinese Filipinos themselves is that "culture" gives "depth" or "authenticity" to Chineseness.

> "Culture, because even the definition of "Chinese" varies among those of the same race."

> "For me, being Chinese is more about the culture. A person can be 100 percent Chinese by blood but cannot speak the language or doesn't exercise the Chinese culture."

> "I don't think of race since by definition race is genes and physical characteristics and with the advancement of technology, those two things can be altered/changed, while culture is something deeper. *But* I think the Chinese people in China would answer 'race.'"

There are a couple of possible interpretations for the last response. It can be linked to a sentiment mentioned earlier, that the Chinese Filipinos think of themselves as more "cultured" than the mainland Chinese, as represented by the new Chinese migrants in the Philippines. Another possibility is that the "Chineseness" for the mainland Chinese is even "more commonsensical" than it is for Chinese Filipinos, and thus the respondent thinks of "race" as a

more likely answer. In any case, though, this response shows the complexity of the Chinese question and how Chineseness is necessarily overdetermined. Another response also demonstrates this complexity:

> (Chinese is about . . .) "Culture. Because look at third or fourth-[generation] Chinese immigrants, they usually act more like the host country's culture."
>
> (Answer to follow-up question on how the younger generations are still Chinese) "In the sense that being Chinese was because of *the culture of the place* rather than the race, because take someone out of it, after enough time, being Chinese feels I have Chinese genes rather than I am Chinese!"

In this, we see that the "absence" of culture prompts one to return to "race" as measure of Chineseness. The intertwined nature of both concepts can also be seen in how culture and authenticity are defined. Jane, twenty-two years old, youngest of five children raised in a "traditional Chinese"[17] family, defines authenticity and how it is crucial to ("Chinese") "culture":

> "Authenticity is practicing *the exact same* beliefs, values, and way of living that have been taught and passed on to the Chinese. I think *the Chinese race* is particularly one of those that find importance to the things that has been taught to them."

Not only does race have cultural implications, but culture also has racial underpinnings. Thus, in answering the Chinese question, race and culture are inseparable, although the latter is often given more import. When asked to explain why culture matters, Jane replies that it distinguishes "one race from another," while Ann, another twenty-two-year-old management graduate,[18] defines culture as "a tradition which a certain race or group practice[s]." Stef, twenty-nine years old, also raised in a "traditional" Chinese family,[19] talks about how some people "try very hard to dismiss their own culture and adopt something else," this idea that there is an inherent culture to dismiss seems to point to a "racial" coloring of culture. The most obvious example of this is the issue of (inter/intra-racial) marriage.

> (On Chinese culture) "Chinese are generally collectivists with a strong sense of pride in their community and in their Chinese identity. This partly explains why they instruct their children to marry into another Chinese family in order to *preserve the bloodline*."
>
> "Marrying [a] person of the same . . . *culture*. That's very Chinese. *Racist."*
>
> "[The non-Chinese] are intrigued about how *interracial* (Filipino and Chinese) relationships work. They made me realize that Chinese value *culture* and *tradition*."
>
> "[For Chinese Filipinos] There's also some *cross-cultural* marriages happening, so Chinese Filipinos would most likely have a *mix of other blood* in them."

These responses show that either the concept of race is masked as "culture," or that the two concepts are simply inseparable. According to Byrne's study, racial differences are often repackaged with "the key term . . . culture. Rather than speak of race, many of the interviewees would focus instead on questions of cultural difference" (9). This also means that the notion of ethnocentricity, defined as cultural superiority, can be read as a variant, even if a milder one, of racism:

> Racism . . . should be restricted to discourses which group human populations into "races" on the basis of some biological signifier . . . with each "race" being regarded as having essential characteristics or a certain essential character (in attributions to "races" of laziness, rebelliousness, or industriousness) and where inferiority of some "races" may or may not be present. Such views may be held alongside others in varying combinations. They may shade off into what might more appropriately be called *ethnocentrism*, where ethnic groups are defined *primarily in cultural terms and are regarded as having essential traits.* Although overt inferiorization may not be present, there is a tendency to view cultures from within the categories and frameworks of one ethnic group (Rattansi 36, emphasis mine).

Thus, examining the respondents' definitions of authenticity in terms of Chineseness, one sees that the answers usually touch on ethnocentrism and a "purist" notion of culture almost akin to notion of racial purity:

> "Authenticity is important because I think that the culture will be lost if it is mixed with other beliefs or practices."
>
> (On why authenticity may be important) "One can surmise that the reason is similar to why older generations disliked mixing of Chinese blood and foreign blood, wherein there is a higher value to "purity" whether it's by blood or through the traditions being done."
>
> "Chinese people think highly of themselves . . . they think their culture is above all others', so that's why they think it's important."
>
> "Authenticity is particularly important because . . . I think the Chinese is a "closed" and strict culture. It doesn't really welcome new ideas and changes. Because of that culture, Chinese mentality is influenced to think that authenticity is important."

Given these strict definitions of "authentic" Chineseness, some people then display reticence toward any labeling. In an answer to the question on the difference between "Filipino Chinese" and "Chinese Filipinos," one informant replies: "The only people who give a difference about [labels] are racist people. I label myself as Filipino Chinese and [it] makes no difference if [I'm] called the other."[20]

Here is a point of tension. For the Chinese Filipinos, their notion of being Chinese inevitably includes a racialized notion of Chinese (i.e., being Chinese "by blood"). However, some of them subsequently project a desire to dissociate from being Chinese because of the racialist/racist tendencies of both Chinese and Filipinos. This can be seen in some of the informants' experiences of racism:

> "Most of the time, if you have small eyes, [you're labeled as] Chinese. It's true, so I'm not offended."
>
> "[People] judging somebody by their looks, like for example, possibly a Chinese judging a Filipino, saying they look poor because of the color of their skin, [while] the person's rich, well-off [if they have fair skin]."

"At one point in college, I believe I have been given a lower grade as compared to my other classmates because my professor did not like Chinese people."

"I don't say that I'm Chinese to avoid situations [as such]."

It appears that racial discourse can be characterized as a slippery slope that begins with racialization (racialism) that can eventually slide into racism.[21] Alleyne explains why the difference between the two notions is rather artificial: unlike racism, racialism "does not necessarily imply ranking racial groups, but *it always asserts that they exist in some stable fashion*," yet "neither biology nor genetics offers support for the idea of human beings being divided into distinct racial groups" (emphasis mine). In other words, the idea of racialism, in its "purest"/most "benign" sense, is merely expressive of a desire to categorize people into groups based on certain aspects of their physique/phenotypes without wanting to impose any other definitive characterizations of their intrinsic skills, etc. Yet, this definition of the term renders it superfluous, which explains why it is often lumped with racism.

Thus, the abovementioned responses of informants explain why, while racial identity provides a small, stable point of reference for identity, when being repeatedly questioned, some find themselves reluctant to be defined by any race.

I don't believe there is such a thing as being Chinese, being Filipino or being [of] another ethnicity; I think that's another form of *racism* that is slightly more acceptable."

"To be completely honest, I have never worked to be identified by whether I am a Chinese or a Filipino."

"Not so important. I mean, I'm not very Chinese, I hardly speak Mandarin. Use of Hokkien is mainly confined to home. Other than my face and my name, I don't *feel* very Chinese. My Chinese identity is tangential. Superficial. On a surface level."

> "It does not matter much anymore because of globalization. Because of it, we see many different cultures in our country, and people are more accepting towards the diversity already."

Despite some displaying reluctance toward racial labels, others still gravitate toward keeping Chinese identity, for the purpose of relatability.[22]

> I would retain [the Chinese identity] . . . I believe that the ability to connect with people in general is important.

> [The Chinese identity] can come in handy sometimes . . . For example, I was in an airport, and someone needed help, they were Chinese. I look Chinese, [so] they asked for my help . . . luckily, I knew the language, but looking Chinese helped them identify [me].

It is important to note that the respondents realize that they do feel compelled to identify themselves as Chinese—no matter how essential or peripheral an identity it is. When asked about the desire to retain or do away with a Chinese identity, respondents came up with various reasons for retaining this identity:

> "Yes [I want to retain my Chinese identity] . . . it is part of my heritage and it has contributed to what kind of person I am right now."

> "I would want to retain my Chinese identity because I have grown around it already. If I can't be proud of my own identity, then I don't think I should be proud of anything at all."

> "I'd like to keep it just for the sake of keeping it. I currently see no real value apart from ethnical pride and sentimental value."

> "I don't know why, [but] it just should [be retained]."

Gilroy criticizes this tendency to accept or inhabit a racial or cultural identity without any visible struggle as succumbing to "authoritarianism":

> This understandable but inadequate response to the prospect of losing one's identity reduces cultural traditions to the simple process of invariant

> repetition. It has helped to secure deeply conservative notions that supply real comfort in dismal times but do little justice . . . to the complexities of contemporary cultural life. (13)

Even with Gilroy challenging the notions of racial and cultural identities, the ideology that is Chineseness cannot be easily overturned. Obvious racial "differences," stated by the respondents above and identified by the Chinese and by other peoples through phenotypes and the viewed performances of the Chinese culture (such as speaking Mandarin and/or Hokkien) are not without ideological implications, although recognizing the ideological nature explains the difficulty of exposing these implications, much less escaping or overturning them.

Pascale defines "difference" as "a relationship . . . shaped by histories of force, exploitation, and domination" (5). Yet, one need not go far back into history to see the penchant for domination as seen in how the Chinese and Filipino cultures are defined by some respondents as sets of oppositions, with one characteristic being more desirable than the other. Mac an Ghaill explains this as indicative of performativity: "performative suggests that ethnic, racialized and national identities are *continual establishment and articulation of binaries*" (55; emphasis mine).

When asked to identify values and practices that the respondents perceive as distinctly Chinese or Filipino, some of them find it necessary to contrast the two:

> "I think one of the values I find to be distinctly Chinese . . . is being thrifty. I don't often find Filipinos who first think of saving their salary before spending it, although it is subject to debate."

> "Unlike Chinese, [Filipinos] do not favor sons over daughters but they believe that sons and daughters have specific roles to play."

> "[Filipino values include] close family ties, more emotional and physical ties, unlike the Chinese, they're not as warm and as modern."

> "Filipinos are more *kapal-mukha* ("thick faced"). For example, in my first year of college I was shocked when my Filipino friends would just pick their

forks at my plate and grab food. Even with my permission, I think it's a habit that shows how Filipinos are less reserved than Chinese."

"Perhaps Chinese are more racist . . . for Filipinos, there might be some, but not as much."

The same thing occurs when respondents are asked to identify stereotypes for both races. The stereotype of one race results in the "opposite" as the stereotype for the other.

"[The Chinese] are extremely hardworking . . . [for Filipinos] there is also the stereotype of being lazy and poor."

"Chinese have superiority complex . . . [Filipinos,] they're not racist or judgmental . . . much more cultured, because for example, the Chinese are very loud . . . the Chinese can be tactless, while Filipinos are more cultured, more soft-spoken."

"Chinese [are] very proud of their culture and traditions, stingy and conservative. Filipinos [are] very liberated . . . money spenders, not proud of their own nationality, often looking up to Westerners."

Despite labeling these as stereotypes, many informants insist that there is truth to these labels, and as one processes the different accounts concerning cultures and stereotypes, one finds several overlaps between the two aspects. This confirms Gilroy's statement that fear of loss of (racial) identity leads to a culture becoming a case of "invariant repetition."

Bhabha offers a rather apt definition of stereotype that elaborates on this repetition: "The stereotype is not a simplification because it is a false representation of a given reality. It is a simplification because it is an *arrested, fixated* form of representation" ("Other Question" 28). In other words, Bhabha likens stereotyping to fetishism in that both are fixations, and this fixation strengthens the link between concepts of race/skin/culture and the underlying ideologies and positions of dominance and subordination (*Location of Culture* 75–80).

There are a number of values and characteristics that are simultaneously identified as part of Chinese culture and as stereotypical attributes. Chinese people are stereotyped to be respectful, hardworking, success-oriented or successful, and conservative. They must also possess filial piety. The same process occurs for the identified Filipino cultural values and stereotypes. Common points between these two include respect, hospitality, optimism, resilience, and an orientation towards family.

What is worth noting is that there are changes in wording or phrasing for other Chinese characteristics. For instance, the idea of thriftiness as part of Chinese values may be associated (translated) to negative tendencies such as being stingy or "cheap." Another example is the importance of preserving bloodline in marriage as part of the Chinese culture is thus translated to the Chinese being discriminatory or racist or having a superiority complex. However, contrary to the Chinese values and stereotypes, the respondents have not provided any Filipino values that can be associated with or that have been translated to negative descriptions. Implicitly, the Chinese Filipinos must feel compelled to justify Chinese values by injecting a positive note into some of the negative stereotypes, for these to be considered as Chinese cultural values.

Despite Bhabha's definition of the stereotype (about it not being a false representation), one reason some people are inclined to think of stereotypes as false is because of many undeniably negative denotations, particularly for the Chinese. These not only show that value is implicit in stereotypes, but also how dominance and subordination are at play between Chinese and Filipinos in their definitions or depictions of the other's culture. One senses a certain one-sidedness among the Chinese Filipinos in that it is easier for them to accept Chinese stereotypes than Filipino stereotypes. This is presumably due to Chinese having more positive stereotypes and Filipinos having more negative stereotypes. To some extent, the Chinese Filipinos work to adhere to the positive stereotypes because they may have realized on some levels that doing so keeps them in dominant or influential (economic) positions. This explains a certain level of arrestedness in their self-identity, as well as the static nature of the "culture" they inhabit.

"I accept that Chinese are stereotypically known for being good at business . . . I also know a lot of Chinese friends whose parents encourage them to go into business for money and success . . . I dislike business, but I cannot deny that the stereotype is somehow true due to this continuous encouragement."

"Subconsciously, it wants you to prove the stereotypes to be true, if they're positive, and disprove the negative ones."

"You want to prove that you can plan for the future. You want to disprove that you're narrow-minded . . . unable to make your own decisions. Stereotypes make you conscious about your actions."

"It influences me to actually be like that. Well, it's not a bad or degrading stereotype in the first place so I'm actually okay with it. It sometimes pressures you to live up to these stereotypes."

Thus, Bhabha proposes that there ought to be a "shift from the identification of images as positive or negative, to an understanding of the processes of subjectification made possible (and plausible) through stereotypical discourse" (*Location of Culture* 18). I draw a parallelism between Bhabha's view of the colonial discourse and the hail of assimilation for the Chinese Filipinos; in colonial discourse, the colonizers hail the colonized as subaltern subjects, but also "required" (albeit on a less imposing note) to be different, as minorities. Because the Chinese desire to be embraced by Philippine society, they somehow wind-up conceding to the (positive) stereotypes as a means of defining themselves (as it is also how the Filipinos work to contain them). The power that is ambivalence facilitates the course of stereotyping because stereotypes appear to be true, although there is no clear basis for it; but because of its "truth," it beckons its subjects to continuously perpetuate it.

I also wish to point to another level of ambivalence based on the responses. This ambivalence may be considered a progression from the ambivalence identified by Bhabha as reinforcing the oppressiveness of race through stereotypes. Instead, it points to a weakening of stereotypes that

allows for respondents to distance themselves from the stereotypes.[23] This ambivalence marks the beginnings of the desire to escape or break stereotype.

A significant portion of the interview responses that points more definitively to inherent contradictions (which I translate as ambivalence of a second level) would be the young Chinese people's grappling with stereotypes.

> "They say that Chinese are rich. I say, it is *accurate* and *not accurate* at the same time; after all, most tycoons here are Chinese, but there are also poor Filipino Chinese."

> "We are aware that [not being allowed to marry non-Chinese] is racist. Our parents may be in denial, but we are not . . . although, we do tend to gravitate [toward]/prefer people who are Chinese, but it doesn't mean that we're discriminating against non-Chinese."

> "These stereotypes are very racist. I accept *all* of them because for *most* of the time, it's correct for the majority."

> "I *can't accept* any of the stereotypes . . . I strongly believe that many people fall outside of the stereotype . . . Although I also *cannot deny* the fact that there really are people who fall within the stereotypes as well."

> "I'd prefer to say they're not true, because you have to look at individuals, not group people together."

> "Most stereotypes are true with all cultures. Of course, individuals have particular traits and only exhibit certain levels of these stereotypes. I accept most of them because it's just natural result of being exposed to the culture since birth."

When asked about how stereotypes affect their perception of what it means to be Chinese Filipino, the tension continues:

> "[Stereotyping] doesn't really affect me that much, I just try to not be the kind of person that can be found in these stereotypes."

> "Sometimes it makes me proud to be part of a unique group; other times it makes me ashamed."

> "I don't think it affects much, but somehow it makes me feel somewhat uncomfortable with other people."

> "Even though we've been living together as early as the Spanish era . . . there is still an alienation of the Chinese Filipinos from the Filipinos themselves . . . I realize I just said (previously) that Chinoys in the present generation are blending in better, but, baby steps. We just got started in this generation."

How can you be rich and poor at the same time? My answer does not make sense. The last example not only assumes that there is truth to stereotypes, it can also be read as questioning the assumed straightforward nature of syncretism—that being Chinese Filipino is simply an amalgamation of both "Chinese" and "Filipino" cultural (often stereotypical) traits. This leads to another related viewpoint; about how Chinese Filipino culture is composed of the "best of both worlds" (according to a representative of a Filipino Chinese student organization). This can be read as a variant or a re-performing of ethnocentrism. One respondent, Simon, elaborates on how stereotyping is related to ethnocentrism in the case of the Chinese Filipinos:

> "[Stereotyping] creates a situation where a Chinese Filipino is unnecessarily given a higher opinion without any prior merit, and done subconsciously due to the aggressiveness of this particular mindset . . . all [of these are] done through knee-jerk instant reactions, from unwritten rules or at the very least subconscious bias."

This particular response is in line with Bhabha's presentation of stereotyping as fetishistic and compulsive in nature, and also follows the Gramscian definition of culture as hegemonic.

Erin, a twenty-four-year-old teacher residing in Manila, writes that while she disagrees with certain aspects of stereotyping, she finds herself unable to be completely rid of its influence in her interactions with other people:

> "I see the culture wherein Chinese Filipinos find that they can trust each other more than other races . . . [but I] definitely [do] not [agree with] the ones about Filipinos [being] not trustworthy."

(On effects of stereotyping on identity as Chinese Filipino) "The tendency to talk in Chinese when you want to keep things in private. You become wary about people around you."

"When I go elsewhere [outside the Philippines], I identify myself as a Filipino, polite, respectful."

"When I'm in the Philippines, you never know where to draw the line between."

John, a twenty-seven-year-old researcher, exhibits the same sentiments concerning stereotypes:

(On stereotypes about Chinese, Filipinos, and Chinese Filipinos) "Stereotypes don't really affect me that much . . . I usually try to ignore stereotypical remarks [but it doesn't mean I like it when people stereotype]."

(On differences between Chinese Filipinos and new Chinese migrants) "I think the Chinese Filipino people are more respectful, are more refined in terms of manners and conduct, more "civilized" . . . Yes, stereotypes."

The contradictory stances possessed by the informants demonstrate the fluidity of identity and the inherent ambivalence in stereotyping/racial discourse.

Stereotyping and performativity are similar in that both are acts of repetition that project a seemingly holistic or natural front, but are, underneath it all, ambivalent and discursive in nature. Stereotype appears to be essentializing in nature, but understanding its fetishistic tendency allows one to see that the primary reason stereotyping persists precisely because it has no meaning, which it hides by way of repetition. Ambivalence is present in stereotype because it "needs no proof, [but] can never really, in discourse, be proved." The "productive" in this ambivalence does not refer to a positive output, but only to the production of the other through difference (Bhabha, "Other Question" 18). In effect, I have elaborated on stereotyping as a means of questioning/critiquing the seemingly simplistic but insidious work that racialization of Chinese performs/contributes.

Although I have argued for most part that performativity reinforces race, the ambivalent nature of performativity allows for it to serve as an escape from social and racial determinations. More specifically, it would be the understanding of racial performativity that would allow such escape. The escape is not abandonment of the notion of race, but the inhabiting of an in-between space that allows the subject to temporarily, yet effectively, shift the dualism between agency and structure.

Conclusion

While the young Chinese may feel unease or nonchalance about being identified as Chinese because of phenotypical markers—and their understanding of the Chinese culture leads to either justification or disavowal of certain values and practices—at the end of the discussion, they generally still identify themselves as Chinese. This explains how the diffractions contribute to the overarching linguistic sign that is Chineseness.

It is exactly the young Chinese's constant desire to pull away from the Chinese identity coupled with their perception that they are irrevocably shackled to this identity that demonstrates ambivalence. Ambivalence lies in the tension, in the contradictions that begin with the stereotyping (the arrested representation) or the performativity (the stylized repetition) of the Chinese. This is a formulaic expression that can be extracted from the interviews: "Being Chinese means [a specific characteristic or attribute]; I am Chinese, but I am not (entirely) like that." The "but" that repeatedly resurfaces in the discussion points to the discursive formation of Chinese identity that is not necessarily diverse or disparate. It is an unfinished statement, an elsewhere, a possibility, which is what makes it productive, albeit not in the "positive" sense of the word that refers to a sense of freedom or progress. What is considered productive here is allowing for irreducible or non-conclusive statements on what is to be considered Chinese. The main purpose is to point to the indefinitive nature of Chineseness among the younger generation, and how this state is never fully explained by sociological writings about assimilation by authors such as Teresita Ang-See or those about an essentialized Chinese identity, an example being Tong's study, although the

notion of an essential Chineseness only constitutes half of his very comprehensive text.

Being a Chinese Filipino myself, I also wish to argue that the young generation Chinese's distancing or "disavowal" of certain aspects of or moments in Chineseness should not be easily equated with a lack of linguistic or cultural knowledge, but should instead be interpreted as the desire to escape the arrested nature of Chineseness, or to deny it as fully constitutive of the multiple identities they possess. This is not to deny that compared with the older generation, the young Chinese's knowledge is generally not as extensive, but people must be dissuaded from the temptation to easily dismiss the young Chinese as "un-Chinese" because of the so-called lack of knowledge.

While some scholars argue that engaging in racial/cultural discourse is supposedly important to avoid the homogenizing effects of globalization and of diaspora, the younger generation appears disinterested in such engagement because a number of them associate these discourses with the negative notion of racism. The repetitive questioning about racial and cultural makeup, as opposed to creating varying narratives, can also work toward an "essentializing" take on identity and culture. By inquiring again and again what it means to be Chinese, respondents wind up feeling compelled to consider what is truly or authentically Chinese. The sense of loss, angst, or confusion might perhaps be construed as evidence of battling the "essentialist desire." Finally, the purpose of collecting these accounts is not to generate conclusive statements about younger generation of Chinese Filipinos, but only to add to the existing narratives about Chinese and show the diversity of the younger generation in how they grapple with the difficult, primary Chinese question.

ITERABILITY OF AND ITERATIONS IN THE TEXT

For the young Chinese Filipino, Chineseness is performative, primarily because of repeated references to phenotypical markers and cultural (racial/stereotypical) characteristics. Inasmuch as a significant number of the younger generation would desire to "abandon" their Chinese identity, it always returns to "haunt" them because it has become a racial identity. Tong Chee Kiong's study concerning the Chinese in Southeast Asia posits that there is a racialization of Chineseness, particularly for the younger generation, possibly attributable to the perceived general decline in Chinese youth's knowledge of their ancestral language and "culture" (211–214).

However, in the Philippines, "Chinese" is seen by most as a cultural identity, given that the Chinese Filipinos who were born and raised in the Philippines would identify themselves as Filipinos first and Chinese only because they maintain the culture (Hau, "Chinese Question" 13). This point is where I argue that Chineseness is performative because it is first a racial issue. As much as the younger generation continues to call themselves Filipinos, their phenotype and their lineage both remind them that they are indubitably Chinese. Race then becomes the impetus for maintaining this culture, and this culture, from the point of view of the younger generation, is comprehended (and constructed) by repeating certain values and practices that are identified as inherently or distinctly "Chinese." The question may arise as to why face and not ethnicity establishes identity, and Raymond Williams' definitions of both terms explain how ethnicity understood as an extension of race (120–121; see also Hall, "Introduction" 444–448). Even Hau's description of the development of the term *Chinese* demonstrates this particular view of ethnicity:

> A quick look at the historical and current terminology relating to the "Chinese" suffices to bring out the difficulties in pinning down people once and for all by recourse to such criteria as place of birth, blood, ancestry, *race (or ethnicity*), and self-identification. (*Chinese Question* 7, emphasis mine).

Although Hau clearly states that race is not an adequate criterion for understanding and defining Chineseness, there is always that recourse to race, which eventually leads to culture, which again reverts to race when one identifies a "lack" of culture. This over-determination of Chineseness points toward performativity because in order to create a coherent, cohesive, and comprehensive Chineseness, one is compelled to engage and re-engage in these self-determining questions indefinitely.

Chineseness is performative for the younger generation, whether it is racial or cultural in nature because Chineseness becomes most real at the moment of utterance. By this, I mean that Chineseness is brought to the fore of the consciousness of the Chinese Filipinos whenever they are called to define or speak about what is Chinese, which in turn compels them to identify certain elements as Chinese in order to create a relatively whole picture of Chineseness.

This utterance is seen in not only ordinary conversations as depicted in interviews, but also in literary and cultural texts such as fiction, organizational cultures, and media (television shows), and these are the primary texts to be used for this study. Just as individuals questioned about Chinese identity or Chineseness begin to consider carefully what *Chinese* is in the process of responding to questions, the writers of the short stories also begin to think about and conceive of this Chineseness in the process of writing. Moreover, the multiplicity of the Chinese is a hindrance to an ultimate gauge of what is truly or falsely Chinese. Chineseness is as Chineseness does.

Performativity of Text

I borrow Austin's theory of performative utterance as a starting point. Austin classifies utterances into two categories—the *constative*, referring to statements of descriptions or facts that can be verified as to whether they are true or false; and the *performative*, referring to utterances that "do not describe or "report or constate anything at all, are not 'true or false," and "the uttering of the sentence is, or is a part of, the doing of an action . . ." (3–5). However, Austin proceeds to blur the distinctions between the two catego-

ries, by revealing constatives to be "implicit performatives, since they are truth claims: "I assert that . . . ?" (Shepherd and Wallis 220).

Hence, although the instinct is to qualify these stories as representational, as constative or descriptive, the making of these stories also hint at the performative. In the case of the stories, they are written not only to represent but also to re-present. The editor of the *Lauriat* anthology, Charles Tan, describes Chinese Filipino writings and the motivations behind the anthology as such:

> "I think it's a mix of several combinations; I think in one way it's unrepresented, so it's a way to give voice to that generation of Filipino Chinese. I think, as a reader, it's important to find someone you can identify with. You'll find a lot of Chinese American writings, like Amy Tan or Melinda Lowe, but when it comes to Filipino Chinese, there's not really a lot."
>
> "When we talk about the Filipino Chinese experience, we're really limited to what came before, like Charlson Ong, for example. So, I think it's important to give voice to that kind of writing. Also, I like to write, and I want to give other people a venue to exercise their imaginations, and possibilities. It's a niche that hasn't been covered yet: it's an area that needs to addressed."

The "giving voice" to the younger generation creates a new notion of Chineseness that somehow echoes but is also different from earlier Chinese Filipino writings. In Tan's responses, one may argue that the desire to speak signifies a desire not only to describe but also to create and elaborate, to make Chineseness in the current Chinese Filipino context come to life.

In associating performativity with writing, it becomes necessary to consider Derrida's text, "Signature Event Context." In the section entitled "Writing and Telecommunication," Derrida first revisits the ideas of philosopher Etienne Condillac, who posits that writing is "an external accessory or supplement" to communication (Hill 26). In Condillac's terms, writing, being communicative in nature, is necessarily representational:

> If men write it is (1) because they have something to communicate; (2) because what they have to communicate is their "thought," their "ideas," their representations. Representative thought precedes and governs communication which transports the "idea," the signified content; (3) because men are

> already capable of communicating and of communicating their thought to each other when, in continuous fashion, they invent the means of communication that is writing (as qtd. in Derrida 312).

Derrida then proceeds to challenge these propositions about writing by zoning in on the absences—not only of the addressee (who, in Condillac's terms, is only temporarily absent, but in Derrida's terms, may be either several or dead), but also of the speaker/addressor that is necessarily divorced from the words that have been written. Derrida questions the validity of according higher importance to intentionality in writing. Hence, given the possible absences of both addressee and addressor, what is unique writing is not representation or communication that depends on intentionality, but iterability—its "repeatability" that will allow for its perpetuation:

> My "written communication" . . . has to remain legible despite the absolute disappearance of every determined addressee in general for it to function as writing . . . It must be repeatable—iterable—in the absolute absence of the addressee or of the empirically determinable set of addressees. This iterability (*iter*, once again, comes from *itara*, *other* in Sanskrit, and everything that follows may be read as the exploitation of the logic which links repetition to alterity), structures the mark of writing itself . . . (Derrida 315)

The iterability of writing is what makes it performative, such that it is not only preoccupied with referencing the external. It does not solely function to represent; is also able to stand on its own (following the death of the author and the infinite set of readers) and allows for the (re)creation of context and meaning.

To operationalize Derrida's iterability, I argue that "Chineseness" itself is the iterable text, for which the stories serve as simultaneous and successive iteration(s). The stories then become a performance of the text that is Chineseness. But more than that, the stories themselves look to earlier writings—whether fictional or historical—for basis. This proves the iterability of writing and of the stories themselves because they may be repeated and may serve as the context for future writings across several genres. This is why, despite there being existing Chinese Filipino literature, there is still

the impulse to "give voice." When asked about the earlier Chinese Filipino writings, Charles Tan says in an interview:

> "I think those writings are representative of their work [and] experiences during their time. [They're] not necessarily my experiences, nor do I think they're the experiences of the younger generation. But again, that's not to say we should ignore it. It [was] also a different time back then, so it's also important that we should remember. But it's also paving the way for the stories to come, since right now it's part of the canon, and whatever you write can be a reaction to it or a counterreaction to it."

Notice also that the younger writers are not primarily preoccupied with looking into authorial intent for the decoding of the stories. Although the earlier writings are accepted to be "representative" of the Chinese Filipinos, there is also the acknowledgment concerning the mutability of Chineseness over time, thus the necessity to (re)write Chineseness. There is thus that tension between wanting to place Chineseness in contemporaneity while simultaneously looking to the past, to 'tradition' as the gauge Chineseness.

Munday expounds on the iterability of the text in his reading of Derrida:

> For Derrida, words are subject to an internal force and movement. It is not the case (as Austin might have it) that the context determines the force of words. Rather, an unlimited number of possible contexts are internal to the words themselves. (6)

Thus, Derrida challenges Austin's theory of performative utterance—specifically the latter's preoccupation with context as the ultimate means of verifying the "truth," or what Austin calls "felicity"/"infelicity" of the utterance—whether the utterance is successful or not. Derrida does not discount context so much as question its ultimate authority over language/writing, because the latter is self-sustaining and can generate its own meaning/context:

> Every sign, linguistic or non-linguistic, spoken or written (in the usual sense of this opposition), as a small or large unity, can be cited, put between quotation marks; thereby it can break with every given context, and engender infinitely new contexts in an absolutely nonsaturable fashion. This does not

> suppose that the mark is valid outside its context, but on the contrary that there are only contexts without any center of absolute anchoring. This citationality, this duplication or duplicity, this iterability of the mark is neither an accident nor an anomaly, it is that (normal/abnormal), without which a mark could not even have a so-called "normal" functioning. (320–1)

This explains why the Chinese Filipino stories can be read infinitely without being limited only to the immediate context of the writing. The context can be created by the stories' infinite number of readers and varies slightly for each one.

Text as Production

Apart from adopting Derrida's notion of iterability as the theoretical foundation for arguing the performativity of the text, I also wish to include Terry Eagleton's theory of the text as a production, for which he uses the metaphor of a dramatic production:

> The literary text is not the "expression" of ideology, nor is ideology "expression" of social class. The text, rather, is a certain production of ideology: for which the analogy of a dramatic production is in some ways appropriate. A dramatic production does not "express," "reflect," or "reproduce" the dramatic text on which it is based; it "produces" the text, transforming it into a unique and irreducible entity. (297)

In the context of this study, the stories can be considered as a production of the ideology that is Chineseness. Eagleton goes on further to say that ideology is, in turn, a production of history. In order to arrive at this point, he first establishes that history is not the "object of the literary text" (300), because following the Marxist tradition, we never fully apprehend the "real" as we are always contained within ideology. However, this does not mean that ideology does not contain any "elements of reality"; rather, in addition to these elements, ideology "deformatively [produces] the real" because ideology involves creation of meaning through a particular way of stringing together certain facts, events and ideas (301).

Applying this to "Chineseness," although what constitutes "Chinese" certainly finds its groundings from certain sets of historical events, Chinese/

Chineseness is an ideology because specific elements of history are extracted or highlighted in order to create a seemingly "cohesive" image of the Chinese that allows for people to identify with or dissociate from it. The stories then proceed to create from this image or idea of Chinese/Chineseness:

> The text . . . gives us states of affairs which are imaginary, pseudo-events, as their meaning lies not in their material reality but in *how they contribute to fashioning and perpetuating a particular process of signification.* In this sense, history is distantiated, becoming . . . more "abstract," the signifying process assume greater dominance, becoming more "concrete." (305, emphasis mine)

> The text strikes us with the arresting immediacy of a physical gesture which turns out to have no precise object—*as though we were observing the behavior of a man urgently gesticulating, and so intimating an actual state of affairs, only to realize that his gestures were in some sense mere ritual and rehearsal*—learnt, studied actions which indicated nothing immediate in his environment, but revealed, rather, the nature of an environment which could motivate such behavior. Our mistake was to search his environment for an object to correlate with his gesture, rather than *to grasp his gesturing as a relationship to the environment itself.* (306, emphasis mine)

These passages explain how the text involves stylizing and how it may be construed as performative. However, Eagleton labels the text as necessarily "pseudo real," that while it may seem "free," it is undeniably determined by ideology. This particular state of balancing agency and structure is also characteristic of performativity—the text or body is not absolutely free to state or enact whatever it wishes; however, the text or body also does not passively represent or follow the "real"—whether it be history or societal structures.

Theatres in the Texts

To establish a context for the more recent *Lauriat* anthology, we simultaneously look into selected stories in the *Intsik* anthology, which appears to be recognized by later writers as a "canonized" work of Chinese Filipino literature (based on Tan's earlier statement about established Chinese Filipino literature by authors such as Charlson Ong, Caroline Hau, etc). This is done while keeping in mind that the *Intsik* anthology is not the ultimate authority

for what constitutes Chineseness for Chinese Filipino, but is an iteration in itself of the history and culture that make up Chineseness. However, its "canonization" shows that writing or the text itself can indeed serve as context for all subsequent writings.

Thus, I look into the common elements present in the selected stories of both *Intsik* and *Lauriat*. I hereby argue that these elements that constitute Chineseness are not to be considered the "essence" of the Chinese, but are the iterable components of the text that is Chineseness. There is a duality to their repetition in that they are iterations of Chineseness, but also iterable in their own right—which means their very repetition establishes the "contexts" that make Chineseness.[24] In other words, these elements (signs) become "Chinese" and "Chinese" becomes the sum of all these elements through continuous repetition. To allow for simultaneous analyses of stories in the anthologies, I identify some settings common to the stories that serve as the "theaters" for the performances[25] of Chineseness.[26]

Theater 1: Funeral—Ritual as performance

The most common element among these stories is death, which is interesting as death is presumably an undesirable topic for most cultures. Fear of death is said to have developed along with modernity—technological/medicinal advancement and decline on religion (Lee, "East Asian Attitudes"). The Chinese's dislike of death goes so far as to refusing to use the number four, because its pronunciation is similar to that of death (*si*, but of different tones). Tetraphobia (fear of the number four) as characteristic of the Chinese is implied in the story by Erin Chupeco, "Ho-We," following the description of the father who appears to be a stereotypical Chinese: "Father disapproves of a lot of things. He disapproves of lazy people . . . the *number four* . . . big Filipino families . . ." (n.p., emphasis mine). Death as a taboo subject is also mentioned in Fidelis Tan's "The Stranger at My Grandmother's Wake," when the main character talks about anticipating death and is berated by the nurse for doing so as it is "bad luck" (n.p.).[27]

The Chinese's fear of death may be due to the (dead) person failing to fully accomplish or abide by the (Neo-)Confucian principles for "self-trans-

formation" and "dialectics of harmonization," which presumably has an effect on the quality of the afterlife. Since the dead can no longer fulfill these, they rely on the next generation/s to continue.[28] From this we might infer that the dead fear the abandonment of duty by living, not to mention the possible undesirable consequences for failure to complete these moral acts. The perceived continuity from life to afterlife along with death as a general "mystery" creates that conflicting understanding of death: the dead are afraid of being abandoned by the living, while the living are afraid of being haunted by the dead, and yet also respect the dead as ancestors, believing in their power to accord prosperity for the living.[29] Thus, there is the need to continually perform rituals in relation to the dead (Lee, "East Asian Attitudes").

Death is a common topic or element in the Chinese Filipino stories because every death requires the performance of funeral rituals, which allows the Chinese rituals to enter in the picture. Thus, what occurs with every death is a resurgence of Chineseness through the performance of these rituals. These rituals constitute performance of Chineseness, but also, on another level, the very nature of the rituals is that they gain meaning (of Chineseness) by virtue of repetition in and out of the text, which illustrates performativity.

One of the contributors of the anthology provides an insight as to why the funeral is a common setting:

> The funeral kind of contains a snapshot of all the Filipino Chinese things, which does not happen in broader Filipino community. It brings your entire family together . . . brings you to the temple, and whatever Filipino Chinese traditions dictate. It's either that or a wedding, [but] a wedding has a weird subtext to it because of "The Great Wall."[30]

In these stories, the funeral setting serves as the stage, and every person/character in setting is called upon to perform—to be in white (costume), to burn incense, to mourn, to remember, etc. In turn, these acts allow the characters to be recognized as Chinese, and the whole story or plot to be "characteristic" of the lives of Chinese Filipinos. I cite the following descriptions or

definitions of ritual to further my argument about its purpose in establishing Chineseness:

> Ritual has performed the work of solidifying collective identity and embedding the cultural system in individual actions. (Alexander et al. 17)

> Rituals are episodes of repeated and simplified cultural communication in which the direct partners to a social interaction, and those observing it, share a mutual belief in the descriptive and prescriptive validity of the communication's symbolic contents and accept the authenticity of one another's intentions. (Alexander et al. 29)

In addition to these descriptions, Alexander cites Schechner who states that "all performance has at its core a ritual action," and then proceeds to say that the reverse is equally true if not more so—that "all ritual has at its core a performative act" (38); for this study, that performative act pertains to Chineseness.

The most prominent element or image is the incense. The incense is a recurring image in the Chinese Filipino stories, presumably because its presence establishes (and reinforces) the Chineseness of the story.

To establish context, the usual move is to turn to history as a means of validation. The use of incense can be traced to the Chinese (though not limited to them), who used it for medicinal and aromatic purposes. It was a fixture in virtually all sorts of settings, solitary or otherwise ("Chinese Incense Culture" n.p.). With the introduction of Taoism and Buddhism, incense became a form of offering to deities, and thus a ritual easily identified with the abovementioned belief systems, although there are others that claim that Buddhism does not include burning of incense as a practice, but it is something that the Chinese added to their adoption of Buddhism. Furthermore, while burning of incense is often done during funerals, it is also done during celebratory events such as New Year, or even simply to create a certain mood (Perkins n.p.).

While the use of incense is established as historically Chinese, its multiple uses and meanings demonstrate its iterability as a sign. For the younger generation who may not know of these uses and meanings, incense

constructs a portion of Chineseness and is simultaneously considered as something "Chinese" by virtue of repetition through different means, whether it be as read or seen in stories, heard from previous generations, or literally performed, mostly during funerals or at homes with family altars.

Hereforth, I cite all the recurrences of the incense in the stories of the two anthologies. In Benito Lim's "The Burial," the story begins with the death of the patriarch of the Chinese family and the ensuing conflict over funeral rites that ought to be performed. There is a conflation of Chinese with Buddhism, and thus the story also begins with the image of the incense: "The first thing I saw in the house was the coffin laid on two bronze brackets. Incense burned in jars at either sides . . . [There] was a round yellow table on top of which was a gilded porcelain Buddha . . ." (2). Fidelis Tan's "The Stranger at My Grandmother's Wake" also makes the same association (that Chinese are Buddhists) in this particular passage: "monks from the local Chinese temple came to perform wake rites, with incense and sonorous chanting . . ." (n.p.).

What should be noted at this point is that the burning of incense is presumed to be done by characters who are Chinese, recognized so either due to it being mentioned outright and/or implied through certain acts, which includes this burning of incense. The circuitous nature of this relationship between the object (incense) and the subject (Chinese) demonstrates performativity/iterability of Chineseness and of incense as a sign.

Charlson Ong's "Mismanagement of Grief" also includes the recurring image of the incense: "beside Sophie's coffin . . . she had also placed an incense urn . . ." (108); "suffer Grandmother's infernal incense" (110). In this instance, the burning of incense is construed as the doing of the older generation that is subsequently described in this story as bothersome for the younger generation.

The same association occurs in Andrew Drilon's "Two Women Worth Watching": "That was at her grandmother's house . . . It was Ghost Month, and they had been lighting long sticks of *xiang* at the family *shen tan* . . ." (n.p.). What makes this more interesting is the use of pinyin (Romanized Chinese) in naming the incense and the family altar. The use of Chinese

language here is a strong reinforcement of the association of incense with Chineseness. Even non-Chinese readers or readers who do not understand the language would be compelled to (re)cognize the association.

In Yvette Tan's "Fold Up Boy," the Chinese ghost belonging to the 1600s is unable to move on to the afterlife because he "had no living family to burn incense, pray for [his] soul, to send [him] off to heaven." Here is a more forceful association of the incense with the "historical" Chinese, thereby making it "essentially" or "unquestionably" Chinese. The ritual that is burning of incense is crucial to the passing on of the Chinese, and is subsequently done by the contemporary Chinese character, after the latter does research online (by Googling) on how to perform the ritual (n.p.). This particular scene shows the loss of the "original" text—the "Chinese" rituals for the dead—as the contemporary Chinese character knows nothing about it. Yet, by researching on it and subsequently performing it (literally, in the story), the contemporary Chinese character reestablishes the act of burning incense as "Chinese."

Kenneth Yu's "Cricket" also begins with the image of the incense: "In their movement, [the incense smoke] seemed more alive than the blank eyes and expression of the woman that the multiple red joss sticks had been lit for . . ." (n.p.). What is particularly interesting about this description is that the incense acquires an almost character-like nature, as it appears "more alive" than the photograph of the woman. While the matriarch of the family is dead, the incense keeps (the memory of) her "alive" by requiring the children and grandchildren to constantly burn and wave them every so often: "Unlike the smoke, the long lines of the family Chuang, extended family, and long-time friends and associates had long since dissipated. Everyone had made their obeisance, waved their sticks, and stuck them in the sand-filled pot." (n.p.) The use of the surname Chuang establishes the Chineseness of the characters, and by so doing, (re)establishes that incense burning is a "Chinese" act.

Another funeral rite for the Chinese is the burning of paper money—more officially termed as joss paper or ghost/spirit money, which is based on the belief that there is an afterlife that is of certain equivalence to this life

in that the dead also require financial resources. Alternately, it is also used as an offering for deities and ancestors, following Taoism. Burnt offerings for the dead also includes paper renditions of objects used in daily living, such as "paper passports, flight-, rail- and bus tickets, paper credit cards [. . .] rice cooker, dishes, a flash lamp, a fan, TVs, entertainment equipment [. . .] clothing, jewelry, mobile phones, accessories, cars [. . .] paper villas [. . .] medicine, fancy foods and liquors, cosmetics and others" (Nations Online, n.p.).

In "The Burial," it was the Chinese mother who expressed clear loathing for the family's Filipino relations that kept on with the burning of the incense:

> So [offering flowers] is against your Chinese custom! . . . It is not our custom to . . . burn incense to the dead. But . . . we let [your mother] burn incense as much as she likes . . . (Lim 6).
>
> Mother . . . knelt before the coffin, burning incense papers. Her eyes were fixed on the dragons. She seemed to be conversing with them (Lim 11–12).

Again, in this story, the association of incense (papers) with Chinese is clear. But beyond that, the story shows the characters to be particularly adamant to defining what is Chinese and Filipino very clearly. The Chinese mother repeatedly rejects the flower offerings by the Filipino relatives, and this, occurring alongside the continuous incense burning, makes that latter act appear not only Chinese but also of the purist Chinese. In this instance, the burning of incense papers occurs alongside the figure of the dragon, also reestablishing the figure as particularly of the Chinese.

In "Mismanagement of Grief," the grandmother keeps up the burning of the joss paper, which the grandson sees to be fitting for the occasion, albeit with a more irreverent outlook toward it:

> She's doing it again, burning gold-colored paper that clouds up the place and gets Mother so riled up. I don't see what's eating Mom. I find the whole thing rather touching. Inhale enough of the smoke, and you might just imagine yourself tripping on some bad joint. And it does provide proper ambience. (Ong 106)

In this story, I wish to highlight a particular display of mimicry, following its definition as an "ambivalent mixture of deference and disobedience" (Gandhi 149).The main character in this story, the grandson, mimics the grandmother in the performance of the Chinese rites, but also pokes fun at it by burning an application form for immigration to Canada, suggesting that his dead cousin may want to tag along (Ong 115). While he knew that the incense was primarily burnt for the dead, the grandson perceived its effects more on the living, such as making his Christian mother incensed (angry), causing the undertaker to tear up when he had no reason to, and mostly provoking him to do 'outrageous' things such as speaking back to his father. Toward the end of the story, he perceives himself as an equal recipient of the incense burnt, as his refusal to migrate with the family and follow his parents' dictates translates to him being as good as "dead" to the family (Ong 116).

In Gabriela Lee's "August Moon," what follows the funeral setting that included the incense was a description of the deceased as recognizably Chinese:

> There was a large gilt frame with a picture of a man—*slanted eyes, straight black hair . . . skin the color of parchment.* He wore a brown collared shirt and smiled with his lips, not with his eyes . . . a guestbook was flipped open. The lines carried names, unfamiliar names in unfamiliar scrawls. *Anita Lim . . . Jason Lim. Caleb Lim. Cat Lim. There were a lot of Lims in the book. Perhaps the family name?* (n.p.).

It is in this passage that "race" becomes prominent, following the description of the man's phenotype—eyes, hair, skin. The Chineseness of the characters is also established by the common surname of the visitors—Lim—who are then presumed to be related; this particular description points to context as well, such that it is common for Chinese Filipinos to be thought of as being related to one another by virtue of having similar surnames.

The abovementioned scene again facilitates a reinforcement of the association of incense with Chinese and vice-versa; having established that the

deceased is Chinese, in the next scene, the joss sticks and paper appear alongside each other: "there was a narrow vase filled with joss sticks, the smoke trickling from the blackened tips. A fat white candle sat beside it. Beside the candle was a stack of what seemed to be paper money."

In this story, the incense, beyond serving as an ornament for the "Chinese" setting, also has another purpose. The smoke figures quite prominently as a device, stemming from both the incense sticks and paper burnt and creating a mystic atmosphere that is conducive for speculative fiction:

> Someone had started burning more of the paper money; the almost-invisible smoke seemed to writhe and take shape above the casket. It seemed to me that they looked like long fingers, spreading above the heads of the few mourners . . . reaching towards me . . . (n.p.).

The character, who, at this point, is only about to realize that she had already died, is gradually brought to this realization through this particular device. Not only that, the continuous burning of incense also stirs up memory in the character, who continues trying to remember who she was, even after realizing she was dead.

> "The smoke filtered through the gaps . . . quickly wrapping me up in its grip. I could smell charred paper, carbon and, underneath it all, a lick of fire . . . I remembered.
> Somehow, the pieces were all swirling in my head, puzzle bits attempting to fit their uneven edges together to form a picture. The smell of smoke encircled me, made me feel lightheaded.
> The flame touched the delicate surface of the paper, heat causing the sheet to cull, blacken, ash drifting downwards. The scent of it assaulted my nose, causing my head to hurt. Again, and again, and again, the acrid smell hit me, filling my runes with smoke. I coughed, my eyes watering. This was too much—
> And then, and then, and then I remembered" (n.p.).

From being an offering to the dead, the incense becomes a means to compel the "dead" (ghost) to remember her past, which includes her misdeeds. The (re)appropriation of the incense in this manner that is conducive to the horror story can be construed as a display of mimicry by the younger gener-

ation of Chinese Filipino. In the *Intsik* anthology of stories, the incense as a device is used to invoke a more serious tone for the story, to evoke sadness. In the story "August Moon" (part of *Lauriat* anthology), the placement of incense allows for the "smoke and mirrors" effect sought after in speculative fiction stories, and instead of highlighting its purpose as offering to the dead, it is (mis)appropriated as a means to force the "dead" to remember and to somehow "return" to the living by way of this painful remembering.

As a summary, I note a distinction in the use of incense in the stories in *Intstik* versus its use in the stories in *Lauriat*. In the earlier stories, the use of incense is largely related to keeping to certain traditions or rules concerning Chineseness, and this insistence on rules creates the tension between the generations. However, in the latter stories, the use of incense appears perfunctory at first glance. It is mostly shown to be a ritual performed for the old or by the old, and, at times, its function in the story is mostly decorative, helping to create the "set" or "backdrop" for the story and establish the mood. However, it is also tropological, based on its appearance in the stories "August Moon" and "Fold Up Boy." In these, the incense becomes a means for the ghost characters to "move on" to afterlife proper after a process of "remembering" past.

Another Chinese funeral ritual, based on the stories, is the wearing of color white:

> The mourners seated at the end of the room were silent . . . sweating profusely in their white clothes . . .
> At the dark corner near the door, a woman's figure in white crystal silk dress wiped her face and inhaled with great effort . . . I knew it was Mother.
> (Lim, "The Burial" n.p.)

> I didn't actually want to attend the funeral . . . But when you enter a room full of people you resemble to some degree, the same dark hair and dark eyes, all in the white of mourning, you get that sense that it's your duty to be there. She was in a white shirt, white pants, and white sneakers. Mourning clothes.
> (Tan, "Fold Up Boy" n.p.)

Interestingly, it is not clear whether white is the color to be worn by the family and relatives in a Chinese funeral. Some claim that black and blue are the colors to be worn by the blood relations, while other more distant relations can "wear brighter colors, such as white" ("Chinese Funeral Customs"). However, others claim that white is the color chosen by Asians (including Chinese) to symbolize death, and wearing of dark colors became acceptable only because of "Western influence" ("Chinese Funeral Customs"). One source claims that wearing of white is acceptable because the deceased also wears white (Buzzle n.p.) while another claims that the deceased cannot wear white (Magar n.p.).

Thus, white as the color of mourning is established through the repetition in the stories, and as practiced by Chinese Filipinos in actual funerals. As a sign, it gains meaning as a Chinese practice and also establishes the Chineseness of the characters who are wearing white at the funerals. This is another example of iterability at work.

Theater 2: Home—Relations as performance

The home is another primary "theater" based on the stories. The persisting "reenactment" of issues related to Chineseness in a home setting shows that for the Chinese Filipinos, Chineseness mainly revolves around the family. This also explains its commonsensical nature—why most Chinese Filipinos do not really think about what constitutes "Chinese" for them or think of themselves as particularly "Chinese."

While we turn to Confucianism as the "context" for "validating" the Chinese values and practices identified in the text, it is first necessary to acknowledge that any basic understanding of Confucianism requires awareness concerning its protean nature:

> The Analects . . . is a collection of sayings *attributed* to Confucius [and] are the roots for a large literature that comments and *embellishes* on the principles set forth. Confucianism also includes the Five Classics . . . As the classics exist today, they were written after Confucius's time, but some version of them probably predated Confucius and influenced his thinking. Throughout the centuries, scholars *have selected preferred ideas* from the vast canon, sometimes *combining them with notions from competing ideologies*

> such as Taoism or Buddhism, and called their selections "*Confucianism.*" (Tamney, emphasis mine).

The ambiguity of what Confucianism constitutes or covers suggests its iterability, which contributes to the idea that Chineseness is performative, despite the compulsive urge to claim Confucianism as giving "essence" to Chineseness. Rosenlee makes the same argument in her attempt to integrate Confucianism with feminism:

> Confucianism as a living tradition thrives on incorporating others into its expanding self; its adaptability has been proven again and again in history. For instance, the first wave of expansion of Confucianism occurred in its incorporation of the theory of *yinyang wuxing* during the late Qin and early Han in order to survive politically . . . and subsequently to compete (with other ideologies). The second wave . . . occurred during the Song period and the result is the rise of Daoxue and Lixue—that is "Neo-Confucianism"—which in reality is more of a mixed plate of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism. (159)

As previously mentioned, the Confucian view of person is necessarily relational, and this is grounded by five primary relations—between father and son, ruler and minister, husband and wife, elder brother and younger brother, and one friend and another; although, on a side note, it is helpful to know that the identification of some of these relations predated Confucius, and also that Confucius' contribution to the understanding of these relations stems from this particular statement in the Analects:

> Duke Ching of Ch'i (d. 490 B.C.) asked Master K'ung about government. Master K'ung replied saying: Let the prince be a prince, the minister a minister, the father a father and the son a son. (Waley, cited in Hsu 27)

Even a basic understanding of Confucianism lends to a better idea of how Chineseness is performative, because at the heart of Confucianism is recognizing the utmost importance for a person to keep to the "role" that has been assigned to him or her. Confucianism as an aspect, if not the primary aspect, of Chineseness ultimately requires role-playing by the Chinese

people, and their submission to performance of these roles in turn establishes Confucianism as "inherently" Chinese.

Filial Piety

The structure of the home—characterized primarily by the relations between father and son and between the husband and wife—is the foundation for the Chinese society. Specifically, the relation between the ruler and the subject emulates the relation between the father and the son. The latter relation is guided by the principle/value of filial piety, defined as such by Confucius:

> Now filial piety is the root of (all) virtue, and (the stem) out of which grows (all moral) teaching . . . Our bodies—to every hair and bit of skin-are received by us from our parents, and we must not presume to injure or wound them. This is the beginning of filial piety. When we have established our character by the practice of the (filial) course, so as to make our name famous in future ages and thereby glorify our parents, this is the end of filial piety. It commences with the service of parents; it proceeds to the service of the ruler; it is completed by the establishment of character. (Legge, *Sacred Books* 466–467)

Filial piety begins by hinting at parental ownership—because the parents have given to and raised the child, the child owes his or her person to the parent; again, this demonstrates the relational nature of the person in Chinese culture—there is no concept of the "individual" in the sense of possessing full freedom and detachment. Thus, filial piety goes beyond mere compliance and involves an attitude/disposition of devotion and deferral ("Xiao")—placing the parents' wishes above the child's in all circumstances. The primary purpose of this social structure is to establish order not only within the home, but also in society at large; in Confucius's terms, society in disarray is symptomatic of familial disorder.

By using the home as the usual theater for the stories, it allows for establishment of the roles of the father and son (parent and child), and this assignment of roles and the subsequent role-playing are means of remembering that to be filial is the way of the Chinese and to be Chinese means that one understands the importance of filial piety.

Hence, the conflict in the stories almost always revolves around the relationship between the parents and the children, and the ways the children adhere to or defy the wishes of the parents serve as a mark of how "Chinese" or "un-Chinese" they are.

In "The Burial," the conflict between the parent and the child is implied in the conflict between the Chinese mother's desire to severe ties with the Filipino side of the family and the son's desire to deepen the relations with these Filipino relatives by professing love for his Filipino "cousin." Although the child is never accused outright of not being filial, his choice to "side" with the Filipino relatives, despite his mother's claims that continued interactions with them would be damning, can be construed as being unfilial. It becomes implicit that being filial means choosing to be "Chinese" or to do whatever is characteristic of the Chinese.

In Grace Pe-Bacani's "Starting Over," the main character does not agree with her parents' choice for a son-in-law, which largely had to do with being "Chinese":

> Her parents had been enthusiastic about him, pronouncing him a capable and successful businessman . . . He had been polite and correct with them, *speaking impeccable Hokkien*—much better than hers, at any rate . . .
>
> They told her she was not getting any younger . . . and that she should be happy that someone still wanted to marry her.
>
> She did not . . .consider him husband material, he was *too Chinese* for her taste . . . (135, emphasis mine).

Although she did wind up marrying the Chinese man, if she had refused to marry, it would have been interpreted as being "illogical," not being considerate of her parents' wishes, and choosing to remain a burden to her parents.

The character's relations with her in-laws also establish not only filial piety as of the Chinese, but of an old and oppressive tradition:

> Though the people she lived with were Chinese, she felt the difference in values, in their way of living . . . [she] rebelled against her in-laws' expec-

> tations of her as a dutiful and submissive daughter-in-law. Her in-laws, unfortunately, believed in the old ways. Her mother-in-law especially, felt that Julie should defer to her in everything (136).

Erin Chupeco's story, "Ho-We," also demonstrates such conflict and stereotyping. The father is established to be a stereotypical Chinese father: "the chairman and CEO of a company . . . Father disapproves of a lot of things . . . of lazy people . . . big Filipino families, because they always throw big fiestas in the provinces and ask him to help pay afterwards." He establishes when his daughters ought to marry and to whom they ought to be married:

> I am not married, but that's because father said I can only have a *ho-we* when I'm in college . . . Ho-we means "boyfriend" or "lover" in Hokkien Chinese . . .
>
> Achi didn't like Gary . . . but father began treating Gary like he was really Achi's boyfriend . . .
>
> "I forbid you to date that hwana! . . . I'll disinherit you!" Father was always threatening to disinherit Achi . . .
>
> "He isn't even Chinese!" . . .
>
> "Being Chinese is still better than being just two-thirds god and Arabo!" (n.p.).

The father's primary (sole) requirement for marriageability of a boy to his daughter is for him to be Chinese. The daughter's refusal to follow the father's orders (showing a lack of filial piety) is associated in this instance with refusing to choose a Chinese boyfriend; being filial now becomes synonymous with choosing the "Chinese." This is echoed in "Cricket," where the main character's youngest sister "had gone against her father, shunned the Chinese-Filipino he asked her to meet, and instead married a Swiss Canadian" (Yu n.p.).

Here I wish to make a temporary digression by highlighting the penchant of some of the writers in the *Intsik* anthology for portraying the Chinese as necessarily having issues with interracial relationships. Erin Chupeco's story "Ho-We" is one of the stories more preoccupied and outright with this issue, portraying the Chinese not only as ethnocentric, but possessing a superiority complex akin to being racist. Another is Isabel Yap's "Pure," where one of

the main characters—a Filipino girl—takes desperate measures (choosing to drink a potion) in order to become Chinese and acceptable for her Chinese boyfriend's parents, because "his parents . . . want him to date a pure Chinese girl. He says he can't do anything to change their minds!" (n.p.).

Other stories also mention this issue in passing. In "August Moon," the characters talk about the reason behind the marriage of the main character:

> Her father was happy, and so was Papa . . . And it was a good match . . . We know Adele's family . . . Plus Papa's like, coming from some medieval fantasy film and we "*have to preserve the purity of the blood line.*" (Lee, n.p., emphasis mine).

First, the deference of the girl to her father's wishes can be considered a filial act; second, the preoccupation with preserving purity by ensuring that Chinese marry only fellow Chinese suggests that implied in the desire to preserve "culture" is to preserve the "race"—or perhaps, a more accurate description would be, the possibility of preserving the "culture" depends on the preservation of this "race." The same is hinted at in passing in the story "The Stranger at my Grandmother's Wake": "my family had never been comfortable admitting full-blooded Filipinos into the fold . . ." (Tan, n.p.).

Returning again to the almost "symbiotic" relationship between filial piety and Chineseness, Marc Yu's "Chopsticks" has a different scenario. The grandmother talks about her past, when she defied her parents' wishes by refusing to have her feet bound. Her actions led to disgrace falling on the family, and she ends up getting thrown out of the house (n.p.). Her unfilial act is a rejection of a known Chinese tradition, foot binding, and the importance of filial piety in keeping "order" in society is demonstrated by the villagers' disapproval of her defiance, although, paradoxically, it was their very disapproval that led to the boiling over of an internal/familial conflict.

In Gad Lim's "Sunday Dinner," the idea of filial piety is described as a non-questioning submission toward the elderly:

> I wanted to speak up and correct her . . . But then I decided to keep quiet . . . I could almost hear my parents remind me of a phrase oft repeated when I was younger . . . they would say that children can have ears but should not have

> mouths. Then again, if the young were to always *defer to the elderly*, why was this scene happening at all—a daughter lecturing her own mother—against everything I had ever been taught? (143, emphasis mine).

Here one begins to see signs of ambivalence in Chineseness. The characters—the older generation who establish filial piety as the way of the Chinese—are also the ones who fail to "perform" this particular act of Chineseness by questioning their elders.

This is also manifest in "Mismanagement of Grief." In this story, the father has his own mother relocated to a different house because his wife refused to have an ancestral altar set up at home (Ong 108–9)—something that can be identified as characteristic of a Chinese household, following the tradition of ancestor worship. Yet, he rebukes his son for mocking his wife, the son's own mother, as improper following the "Chinese" value for respect toward the elders (108, 113).

The son/grandson, although willingly going along with the grandmother's Buddhist and Taoist practices, recognized that it was not the grandmother's place to burn incense for his dead cousin if they were to follow Chinese customs, as the deceased was only an in-law (109). He also chastises the father for not having enough self-respect to recognize that the in-laws were not actually considered as part of the family, and for not acting as a proper head of the family by allowing "[his] wife to chase [his] own mother out of the house" (112). Later, the son confronts his father with the unspoken family "secrets" (114), a move that is frowned upon by the Chinese as it is not only disrespectful but also stirs up scandal which causes shame.

What appears contradictory in the son's actions is his identification of and adherence to certain practices as "proper" following the way of the Chinese, while simultaneously questioning and chastising his father (which can be termed as "unfilial" and therefore "un-Chinese") and not acknowledging his proper "lineage." He acknowledges his relationship with the grandmother and the father despite knowing that the father was possibly not his real father, not to mention that the grandmother was also not the real mother of the father. Meanwhile, his relationship with his mother appears to be immaterial to him, and in his narration of their family secrets, he refers

to his grandfather (the father of his mother) by his name, "Lim Tay . . . the foremost importer of automotive parts from the U.S." (109), instead of acknowledging his relation to him.

In Doug Candano's "The Way of Those Who Stayed Behind," an understanding of filial piety is identified in a religious text dictating that one ought to stay with the family amidst danger and hardship, and is thus portrayed as part of the beliefs and practices of a Chinese sect. The "Chineseness" of this (aspect of) filial piety is not only established by its incorporation in the sect's belief and its being written in Chinese language; it is also established through the references to kidnapping incidents in the story, that is, the danger and hardship experienced by the characters in the story is facing the threat of being kidnapped, and the call for filial piety is to remain with the family in the Philippines despite this threat.

It is now necessary to mention that being victims of kidnapping has been established as characteristic of the Chinese Filipino at certain points in recent history, and this is mainly attributed to their being Chinese. This is also seen in "Mismanagement of Grief," where the deceased was a Chinese Filipino girl who was kidnapped and killed in a botched rescue attempt. The same story also mentions another victim of kidnapping who is also identifiably Chinese, judging by the name: "Mike Sy, whose family reportedly ransomed him for three million bucks recently, is describing his ordeal at the hands of abductors for the umpteenth time" (Ong n.p.). The father emphasizes their Chineseness through this particular statement: "What do you want to stay in this godforsaken country for? Hasn't it hurt us enough? . . . We're not wanted anymore. It's time to go" (110).

This portrayal of Chinese as kidnap victims is repeated in Candano's "The Way of Those Who Stayed Behind" in the same manner:

> It had been nearly two decades since the abduction of my cousin Raul brought to a close that month that had already seen the high-profile death of Charlene Mayne Sy during a botched rescue attempt. And while Raul was released unharmed after a couple of days (and around $15,000), the shock of the whole incident prompted Miriam and me to seriously consider starting our family in a less hostile environment. (n.p.)

Returning to the matter of filial piety, this story repeats the historical narrative of the overseas Chinese, whose departures, if permanent, were construed as acts of betrayal (Wang, *Chinese Overseas* 44). Historically, the "home" was China; however, in later contexts—as depicted in the stories, the "home" has become the Philippines. Regardless of the actuality of this "home," the act of leaving is still considered as "unfilial" and a turning back against "Chineseness." This is further demonstrated by this particular passage of the religious text: "Because of blind ambition and cowardice, you've forgotten your home / Your journeys to the east and the west have confused you / Now you are lost and have no memory of your ancestors" (Candano n.p.). Implied here is by going east or west, the character has left the "center"/"middle" (that is also the place of origin), and remembering that China is called the "Middle Kingdom," leaving this center/origin is leaving the "Chinese" behind and forgetting ancestry. This story is another demonstration of how the Chinese as filial and filial piety as Chinese are reinforced.

Marital Piety and the Position of Women

Another primary relation in the five relations that constitute part of the Confucian tradition is the relation between husband and wife. This relation necessitates an examination of gender roles in Chinese culture. According to Legge's translation and commentary on *The Analects*, Confucius says:

> Man . . . is the representative of Heaven, and is supreme over all things. Woman yields obedience to the instructions of man, and helps to carry out his principles. On this account she can determine nothing of herself, and is subject to the rule of the three obediences. When young, she must obey her father and elder brother, when married, she must obey her husband; when her husband is dead, she must obey her son (*Confucian Analects* 103–4).

What follows this explication is an important prerequisite or condition also identified by Confucius—the "personal correctness of character on the part of those in authority" (104), although how this can be specifically achieved, he does not say. Nevertheless, reciprocity is said to be implicit in Confucianism, despite the hierarchical nature of the relations identified. Thus, Rosenlee argues that the authority accorded to husband over the wife,

following Confucian ethics, is not an echo of the oppressive patriarchy characteristic of the Western tradition (157).

Nevertheless, the primacy placed on the relation between father and son is also indicative in itself of the position of women in this society. Following the Chinese tradition, daughters are never worth as much as sons, because the primary lot of women is to marry, and once married, they become part of their husband's family, along with everything they own; the sons, on the other hand, continue to bear the name of the family.

This tradition is expressed in several stories. In "Starting Over," beginning with the main character's marriage, her relations with her in-laws, her giving birth to a daughter, and her falling out with her husband and his family:

> Her parents had demanded that she tell them what was wrong with him... They told her she was not getting any younger...and that she should be happy that someone still wanted to marry her. [. . .] Her in-laws . . . resented the fact that she did not bring any dowry or capital with her into the marriage . . . (Pe-Bacani 135)

> He was jubilant when they discovered she was pregnant . . . The jubilation turned to quiet disappointment when she gave birth to a daughter . . . After that her husband seldom touched her. (137)

> The parents would not turn her away . . . but they would ask her to go back to her husband; that is where she belonged . . . they would tell her she was lucky he did not beat her and brutalize her . . . (139)

Despite the claims of Confucianism that the submission of the daughter/wife is supposedly dependent on the goodwill of the father/husband, in this story, what is deemed to be the way of the Chinese is only the unquestioning subservience of the woman.

In Erin Chupeco's "Ho-We," the father is frustrated that his eldest daughter remains unmarried and sees no value in her intelligence and educational achievement if these "didn't help [her] find a husband anyway." In addition, every time the daughter attempted to reason or argue, the father

would simply ignore her, along with the mother's plea for him to listen or reconsider (n.p.).

In Kenneth Yu's "Cricket," marriage as the highest priority for women is repeated: "She was not unintelligent . . . though she did only a couple of year's work . . . before she married . . . It seemed so natural. She was no great beauty, and her family was not rich, so she knew her prospects were narrow" (n.p.).

The wife was also portrayed to be submissive, keeping her discontent about having to do most of the work in the household only to herself while listening to her husband complain about the amount of work, not to mention that her resentment had developed mostly because of her husband (almost hinting that for most part, she did not have much of an opinion or a mind of her own): "She had not known what to think of marrying a youngest son, and so thought nothing of it herself, until the days . . . stretched into the weeks, months, and years of being anchored to a filial duty that her husband resented, and infected her with" (n.p.).

The repetitions and variants of this misogyny in the Chinese home becomes not a failure of Chineseness following the "supposed" way of Confucianism, but instead characteristic of Chineseness itself. Even in "Fold Up Boy," the slight against Chinese women (in history) is hinted at in this one line: "There were . . . Chinese men with their hair in braids, long tunics and soft pants. There were women too, but Kat could hear them more than she could see them..." (Tan n.p.).

In "Amah," the grandmother talks of the horrors experienced by women—specifically with the case of foot binding (so that they would remain with their husbands) and the selling of women to be wives, servants, or prostitutes. However, she also talks of the women as "a superstitious and vile lot" (Laurel 119), as well as her own case of being in a polygamous marriage, wherein her husband allowed his other wives to order her about. She then summed all these up as representative of China (120). The grandfather also talks of his own mother's plight, who "threw herself from a staircase, just to show *her great grandmother* that she felt sorry she had given birth to a girl" (119, emphasis mine). This story showcases not only the oppression

of women but also the woman as an ambivalent figure—being oppressed but also perpetuating oppression. In Marc Gregory Yu's "Chopsticks," the same is repeated, about foot binding as a means of imprisoning women—the mother in this case (n.p.). These stories repeat the historical trauma of the Chinese women.

A repetition of trauma experienced by women is seen in Gabriela Lee's "August Moon," although no longer following the same historical narrative. The main character is a ghost of a woman who had ended up murdering her husband after he had decided to abandon her for a lover. At the beginning of her marriage, she immediately becomes a victim of domestic violence:

> The tight, almost painful grasp of someone's hands on my shoulders. Bruises blossoming along my arm . . . a wedding ring choking the fourth finger of my left hand. Delicate cuts, healing into invisible white scars.
>
> He was unbound by tradition in the way that I was bound by it. A good wife did not complain, did not cry, did not say that the world was unfair. A good wife forgave and forgot. (n.p.)

Although the family remains uncertain as to whether the woman is alive or not, and whether she did kill her husband or not, given that the circumstances seem to be against her, one of the elderly members of the family claims that it is better for her to be dead, as "the family will never forgive her. She'll be forced out . . . Her name will be forgotten . . ." (n.p.). Regardless of the situation, the death of the husband will necessarily speak against her, and thus her being dead is a better option than bringing continuous shame to the family by living through such a heinous crime.

Propriety and Shame

Propriety is of utmost importance in Chinese tradition and is considered by Confucius as instrumental to the cultivation of a person's character, but also indicative of the character or virtue of a person (Dawson 98–99)—demonstrating again a cyclical/circuitous nature to it, which hints at performativity (always at the cusp of what is constituted and constituting). It is from the import accorded to propriety that the sense of shame has become an

important matter/issue for the Chinese: "Mencius thus laid bare the very foundation for the sense of propriety: 'The sense of shame is of great importance to man'" (100). Propriety largely depends on the proper acknowledgment and performance of the roles enunciated in the five primary relations, and shame stems from failure to recognize and perform accordingly the roles assigned.

In the stories, there are slight differences in how ideas of propriety and shame are demonstrated. For instance, in "Sunday Dinner," the usual habit of the Chinese family to gossip about others' acts of impropriety—"families quarreling over inheritances . . . distant relative who lost big amounts of money gambling . . . girl who got pregnant out of wedlock, and by a foreigner"—over dinner comes to a stop when they found out that their own grandfather had run away with his Filipino masseuse (Lim 142). First, the improper act is not only the running away with the masseuse, but compounded by the fact that she was a Filipino, a *huanna*, who, according to the most abrasively outspoken member of the family, "cannot be trusted" (143). Thus, here is a portrayal of the "improper" as having to do with the non-Chinese. This is repeated in "Ho-We" and in Isabel Yap's "Pure"—a romantic relationship between a Chinese and Filipino is considered fodder for gossip, which communicates again the idea that to act "proper" means to choose a "Chinese partner or spouse" (n.p.).

But beyond that, there is also a gossip habit that can be identified in the story "Sunday Dinner." This habit, instead of being perceived as an indictment of the failure to abide by Chinese culture, becomes also characteristic of Chinese culture itself—that is, the Chinese culture appears to be inclusive of a "shaming" culture on top of a culture of shame (over socially improper acts). The smallness of the Chinese community that could supposedly "well fit in the space of [a] restaurant," in addition to the penchant of a particular family member to air such family issues in public all facilitate this gossip/shaming culture.

Yet, the shame here is implied and not outright, as seen in how the main character's supposed girlfriend knew about the family scandal, but did not want the two of them to explicitly talk about the issue, and also in this partic-

ular scenario: "In the always noisy clan reunions . . . nobody said anything about grandfather's absence, or at least I did not hear them say anything. Grandma attended the reunions dressed in silence, her head held a little lower, her hair a little whiter" (146). This is repeated in Fidelis Tan's "The Stranger at My Grandmother's Wake." Here, the gossip that usually plays out in the home is repeated in the funeral setting: "The black sheep came—the family members we all whispered about when their backs were turned . . . my cousin who came out of the closet . . . my aunt . . . who rumor had it was already several hundred thousand pesos in debt . . ." The main character had later on decided to leave home by running away with a married man (who is incidentally Filipino as well), and thus making herself part of the black sheep of the family (n.p.).

Hence, these passages work to show that any violations of propriety leads to an implicit ostracizing by the Chinese community; however, to be Chinese is to acknowledge the violation and the shame that comes with it and to live with that particular shame, which implies that one remains *in* the community while being "outside" of it. These also demonstrate the "social" aspect of Chineseness, or how "Chinese" works as a social or public act; following the circumstances, to be Chinese is to deem how other people see (and therefore judge) oneself as the most important thing. This again points to the relational orientation of the Chinese.

In "Mismanagement of Grief," the main character's choice of a girlfriend is deemed as going against propriety because of her previous broken engagement with someone else (Ong 112). The preoccupation with propriety and shame of the Chinese is repeated in the story, and the options are either to avoid lack of propriety and shame or, in failing to do so, hide any act of impropriety to avoid being shamed, while simultaneously experiencing shame within. The father supposedly married the mother after she was pregnant with a child of another man, but tells the son off for wanting to marry someone who might have had sexual relations with another man; later on he acquiesces to them marrying under the condition that they all move to Canada, where no one (from the Chinese community) knows them (112–3).

In "Amah," the Chinese grandfather, who was proud of the Chinese "heritage" and wanted his grandchild to preserve that, became the figure of gossip by simply becoming "too" friendly to a neighbor who was an old Chinese woman. Because the Chinese community (presumed to be so because of the setting that is Ongpin, and because of the grandfather's claims that that is the only place for them to be truly Chinese) gossiped about them, saying that "it didn't look nice," his son urges him to avoid her because "people have loose tongues" and he should not "put the family name to shame" (Laurel 120). Again, being Chinese is associated with having a sense of shame by avoiding gossip, and by so doing, not bringing shame to the family.

Business (Money) Matters

The topic of business belongs to this theater, as it highlights the relations between family members and between families in the community. Success in business is not only dependent on hard work (although this is the primary trait touted following the "Chinese" tradition of business), but also, if not more so, on social capital. On the other hand, business also has its historical context. Even with the different waves of migration of the Chinese to the Philippines, they have either come as merchants, known as the Sangleys (business people) during the Spanish period, or as workers who have come to make a livelihood to send enough money back home (some of which have winded up establishing small businesses), or the entrepreneurs from the new wave of migrants, who have capital and are looking to increase it further. The significance of this historical backdrop is evidenced in the text. However, to readers unknowing of this history (and unaware of the notion of history as a text in itself that is not only produced by context, but also produces "context"), the repetition of *business* in the text then serves to reinforce the association of Chinese with business or money.

In the story by Paolo Chikiamco, "The Captain's Nephew," the historical Chinese character (a Chinese Katipunero) is described, among other things, as "the Republic's single most successful fund raiser" (n.p.), suggesting that the role of Chinese in Philippine history is undoubtedly tied up with providing finances.

In "The Burial," business is described as a "calling" for the Chinese, and the primary reason for leaving China:

> He told me stories about my ancestors who left China and wandered about . . . and returned successful. Grandfather explained their wanderings as the fulfillment of the tradition of dragons . . . his insistence on success in business made me feel that he was afraid. Sometimes grandfather would say mysteriously: "This is the end of our wanderings." (Lim 8)

The fear of the character is symptomatic of a fear of losing an aspect of Chinese tradition and thus becoming removed from the great Chinese legacy, which is expected to happen when one does not succeed in business, or when one chooses to not go into business altogether.

In R. Kwan Laurel's "Amah," the Chineseness of the characters is immediately apparent at the beginning of the story, with the hint at use of Chinese medicine (as opposed to "Western medicine [that] was no match against his inheritance from one of the world's first civilizations [China]), and their living in Ongpin, the heart of Chinatown. The story then proceeds to highlight the characters' entrepreneurial sensibility by making them owners of hardware stores and a restaurant (118). The name of the restaurant pays homage to the difficult past of the Chinese women who were at one point in time or another objects of business, sold "to become wives, servants or prostitutes" (121). There appears to be an inclination to attach a "story" to business—ideally one that follows the rags-to-riches formula or that communicates a triumph over oppressive circumstances—as a means of "marketing," of communicating a sense of earnestness or sincerity in engaging in business, or at the very least to attract people's interest (gossip). This portrayal may, in turn, make the Chinese appear more opportunistic. As seen in the text, the initial objection of the family to the "shady" name given to the restaurant was forgotten once "money started coming" (121).

Another aspect of Chinese business as portrayed in the story shows the Chinese's operation of business to be incompatible with the modern. This "non-progressiveness" is due to their fear of losing huge a portion of profit by complying with the rules for accreditation by financial institutions. An

indictment of the corrupt Philippine government is also implicit in this scenario:

> Grandfather called on Franklin to tell his friend from American Express to visit the place . . . he came back saying it was impossible. There were too many requirements . . . permits . . . inspections . . . security bond . . .
>
> Calling the health, sanitary, fire or any other inspector from City Hall would only drive-up prices; bribe money must be allotted, and government people always tried products free of charge. (123)

Thus, business in the aforementioned stories is associated with keeping to the Chinese tradition (including its pre-modern methods) and legacy, but also associated with a certain triumph over a past of oppression. In Gad Lim's "Sunday Dinner," the son/grandson being called to join the family business is a call for filial piety:

> The business they built from the ground up was for me, the eldest male in the family. Why else would they work that hard? On particularly difficult days, dad would come home and declare just loud enough for me to hear: If no one wants the business, why we can just close it now. (145)

Although in this story, the father does not make any outright demand, if the son refuses, it would have been a sign of ingratitude and indifference toward the family's state. It is most apparent in this story that the family and the business are inseparable—the state of one necessarily affects the other.

In "Mismanagement of Grief," the father attempts to persuade the son by offering to provide capital for a start-up business if he chooses to migrate along with the family and stop "pursuing . . . nonsense"—staying behind, keeping the old house along with its Buddhist and Taoist icons. Business is the ideal and sensible option for the younger generation, and Chineseness is redefined as not keeping to the old ways but going along with the majority of the family and following the instinct of self-preservation. Wealth (money) is also evidently "characteristic" of the Chinese, following this story, because of the kidnapping incidents.

Even in the context of a funeral, money is present in the form of the incense papers and the paper objects burnt. Also, apart from offering money to the dead, money is also offered to the living—the family of the deceased. Funeral guests would often feel compelled to give money not only as means of expressing sympathy and respect but also to help shoulder the funeral costs ("Chinese Funeral Customs"). This is particularly shown in Fidelis Tan's "The Stranger at my Grandmother's Wake":

> We were at the door, accepting donations from the uncles and aunts. They'd sneak wads of thousand-peso bills into our hands, and we'd write their names and the corresponding amount on white ribbons to be put up on the wall. The ribbons were tacked vertically so you could read the Chinese names from top to bottom (n.p.).

In "Starting Over," the main character is resented by her in-laws largely due to her lack of monetary contribution to the family, whether it was her lack of dowry or her refusal to hand over her entire salary, no matter how infinitesimal the amount was (Pe-Bacani 136). Here, the Chinese is again typified as a businessman. In addition, marriage is also seen as a business dealing, suggesting (reinforcing) that the business-oriented nature is intrinsic in the Chinese: "She had told him . . . that she did not love him . . . He had said it was all right . . . She had found out shortly after her marriage that her husband wanted to establish a business in the Philippines . . ." (Pe-Bacani 135). This is repeated in Gabriela Lee's "August Moon": "Her father was happy, and so was Papa. After all, they would never have gotten a better business deal than that. And it was a good match . . ." (n.p.).

In Erin Chupeco's "Ho-We," two of the daughters are married to businessmen from Mainland China and Taiwan (n.p.), suggesting that business is a crucial factor for marriageability of men in the Chinese community, and these were the men that dutiful Chinese daughters must marry. The daughters who were able to marry (and marry well) were the ones who incidentally had softer features that appear to be more characteristic of delicate Chinese women: "*Dichi* and *Sachi* both resemble my mother, who has a pointed chin and soft slanted eyes and a pretty complexion" (n.p.). The father continues

to try to marry off his eldest daughter by setting her up with the son of his friend and business colleague; he qualifies as a candidate because he is Chinese, in business, and "hardworking, just like his dad," (n.p.) and can therefore inherit the business of the father (-in-law) after he marries the daughter, which again makes the marriage a business deal.

In Marc Gregory Yu's "Chopsticks," the mother was easily persuaded to purchase a pair of chopsticks (a business transaction) from a fellow Chinese after knowing that the vendor, a new Chinese migrant, is also from the same province, Jinjiang, and that they could possibly be related one way or another (n.p.). In this instance, one sees the Chinese's inclination to do business with "their own," still somehow inhabiting an old mindset of the Chinese village, where everyone is somehow related to each other, and thus any trade necessitates some form of goodwill or proffering of some benefit (which explains how she was able to acquire the precious porcelain chopsticks for such a bargain). However, the grandmother proceeds to question the authenticity of the chopsticks, and thus cast aspersions on the vendor, suspecting her to be "one of those crooked imposters who feast themselves on monkey business . . . [and] get shipped back to where they rightfully belong" (n.p.). This statement is a commentary on the new Chinese migrants, who are seen by the old migrants as shrewd (and deceitful) businesspeople and thus have no place in the Philippines that is now considered "home" to the old migrants and Chinese Filipinos.

The primary difference in terms of how business is viewed in the *Intsik* anthology versus in the *Lauriat* anthology is that in the former, the Chinese's engagement in business does not necessarily always result in success, but they persist in this pursuit because it is considered part of the tradition and legacy; however, in the latter, to be Chinese means to be necessarily involved in business, and somehow that business always spells success (money), which strengthens the stereotype of Chinese as rich.

Theater 3: Chinatown—History/memory as performance

Beyond the funeral and the home theaters, the third common theatre for the stories is Binondo, the "oldest Chinatown in the world" (Sembrano

n.p.). "Chinatown" as a place has a history of containment; in the case of the Philippines and even of the United States, Chinatown was created not only for the Chinese to have their place but also—and more importantly—to put them in their place. During the Spanish colonial period, many Chinese people settled in Binondo. With the Spaniards fearing that the increasing number of Chinese may lead to upheaval, Binondo then became the prescribed site for the Catholicized Chinese, while those who refused to convert to Catholicism were placed in the Parian (Wickberg 157; Chu 58). Thus, Binondo was also the site for conversion and interracial marriage; the Catholicized Chinese were the ones allowed to marry local women (Chu 148). It may seem natural to conclude from this "conversion movement" that the "distinctiveness" of the Chinese was primarily a cultural issue; however, the Chinese were still kept in specific areas regardless of conversion, which implies that race is an underlying issue, based on their fear of the number of Chinese. By segregating, pushing for conversion, and encouraging interracial marriage, the Spaniards were working to diffuse a potential racial threat—a race (or nation as a variant of race) that possessed a different cultural (religious) background and political allegiance and superior economic prowess. Later on, Binondo also became the "commercial capital of the colony by the nineteenth century" (Chu 59), on top of it already being inhabited by Chinese who were "mostly small entrepreneurs and artisans" (Wickberg 157), thus making it also the site for business.

Yet, considering the persisting presence of the Chinatown in contemporary times and the changes it has undergone, Anderson provides an explanation for this continuity:

> "Chinatown" is not "Chinatown" only because the "Chinese," whether by choice or constraint live there. Rather, one might argue that Chinatown is a social construction with a cultural history and a tradition of imagery and institutional practice that has given it a cognitive and material reality. ("The Idea of Chinatown" 3)

In this section, I wish to argue that Chinatown is the space for various performances of "Chineseness"—that any person or action or object placed in

Chinatown becomes a contributing element to the "Chinese," that the function of Chinatown changes through time, and that it facilitates a remembering of "history."

In addition, I also wish to talk about the instances in the stories when the characters revisit the past by narrating their history, recalling it in their memory. According to Megill in his essay concerning the intertwined nature of history and memory in the contemporary age:

> The common feature underpinning most contemporary manifestations of the memory craze seems to be an insecurity about identity . . . when identity becomes uncertain, memory rises in value [. . .] The memory of having always been an X supports an identity that might otherwise seem insufficiently justified. When such a move is made, issues of "memory" and "history" come directly into play (194).

In "Amah," the characters lived in Ongpin (part of Chinatown), and the grandfather declared that that was the only place that they can "truly be Chinese," because "nobody beyond Ongpin understands [them]" (Laurel 118). One first sees that the grandfather's notion of identity is comprehensibility or similarity; being Chinese meant speaking the language and having the same culture. However, being Chinese is also clearly a matter of difference, as there would not be any notion of "being Chinese" in the character's mind if there was not any issue of being misunderstood. Awareness of "Chinese" identity is heightened because of others/non-Chinese who do not understand. The grandfather also sees Ongpin as a "country" (presumably a little China), wherein beyond the street, it is "foreign country."

The grandfather manages to befriend his neighbor, an old Chinese woman whom the main character calls *amah* (grandmother), because they are from the same province in Xiamen. The two old people proceed to "talk about China," recalling the difficult past that made them into the hard-working and persevering people that they are today. Here, the characters establish a "relation," hailing from the same province, and proceeds to flesh out this common background by reliving the past, while living in a place that allows for the expression of this commonality that is Chineseness. The repetition of the Chinese here on so many levels can be construed as mani-

festation of an anxiety about this Chinese identity, such that this identity can only be firmly "established" by having the Chinese live in a Chinese place, recite their Chinese past, and set up their Chinese business.

In "Sunday Dinner," one family member owns a fast-food franchise and is also known to be the rich and loud person who is fond of laundering dirty family secrets. In this story, the restaurant, the Chinese community, and Chinatown appear to have achieved some sort of equivalence:

> Virtually every customer of her fast-food and everyone in Chinatown had since heard her story (Lim 143).
>
> Then it was suddenly clear to me why . . . the short answers and curt replies . . . I could picture her parents hearing of the news in whispers, the way people always speak of scandal. The Chinese community is not that big after all, could well fit in the space of Auntie Rosa's restaurant (146).

Chinatown becomes representative of the Chinese community that prescribes judgment on the impropriety of its members. Chinatown as a dwelling then compels the Chinese characters, who are always somehow linked to it, to act in a certain way that is acceptable in "Chinese" terms.

In Christine Lao's "Dimsum," the setting of a restaurant in Chinatown is repeated; however, the emphasis now is on the exact location of the restaurant being in "one of Chinatown's oldest buildings—a structure so ancient and unreliable that the city government periodically attempts its demolition" (n.p.). The seemingly dilapidated state of the structure creates an image of Chinatown as archaic, unchanging, on the verge of being demolished and reconstructed, but with the government never daring to because of the number of people that habitually visit this place. Crystal Koo's "The Perpetual Day" also employs Binondo as the "stage" to establish the story as "Filipino-Chinese." This Binondo, inhabited by the Chinese characters (identifiable by the use of Chinese surnames), also appears to be an old place, with "arrays of abandoned scaffolding and small shops" (n.p.).

It is important to note at this point that in three of the stories mentioned—"Amah," "Sunday Dinner," and "Dimsum"—the restaurant is always present in Chinatown, emphasizing the Chinese's particularity with food as an expres-

sion of their Chineseness, as business, and as means to "satiate that simplest, most elemental desire." However, there is also a shift in the stories, from the "Chineseness" having to do with the people in the earlier stories, now having to do with food. In this latter story, it's never clear whether the characters are Chinese or not. Only the food is clearly Chinese. Chinese as "culture" is no longer limited to specific historical background or preserving a proper image in society, but now primarily an object to be consumed.

The shift in Chinatown, from being a place of the Chinese people to "Chinese" objects, can also be seen in other stories in the *Lauriat* anthology. In "Pure," one of the main characters visits Binondo to procure a potion that is meant to turn her into a "pure Chinese" woman. This not only hearkens to a history of Chinese as "herbalists" among other professions (Chu 61), but (re)constructs Chinese medicine as something related to "magic" or something of questionable nature. In Candano's "The Way of Those Who Stayed Behind," the character also remembers his grandmother's Chinese medicine, questioning its effectiveness: "We never really knew if the [Chinese] medicine was effective since it was always given to us to drink when we were at the tail end of our antibiotic cycle" (n.p.).

"Pure" by Isabel Yap also gives the image of Binondo as the ultimate "authority" or source of true/pure Chineseness, and conveys the idea of objects as means of becoming (performing) Chinese. The story "Chopsticks" by Marc Gregory Yu also works to demonstrate this. The mother finds a pair of porcelain chopsticks, which she claims to be genuine, having purchased it at 168 Shopping Mall (in Chinatown) from a Chinese woman who came from the same province as their family.

The purchase of the chopsticks in the short story then launches a discussion of history. The mother proceeds to tell her child that the dexterity developed from use of chopsticks is what makes the Chinese the best surgeons in the world (n.p.). For the grandmother, her insistence on using chopsticks stems from her desire to remember her past in China, specifically how she managed to break free of tradition with the help of her friend, who eventually gave her a pair of chopsticks before she had to leave the country with the grandfather in order to avoid the war between the Communists and the

National Party. The grandmother shows ambivalence in that she abhors tradition, claiming that her family had been poisoned by it, but then creates a tradition of her own with her insistence on using chopsticks and reciting her past to give a different meaning to chopsticks.

The compulsive, almost fetishistic return to the traumatic past can be seen in two other stories in the *Lauriat* anthology. These mention the other area where the Chinese were confined—the Parian, where they were subsequently massacred in 1603. Chu provides a short summary for that historical event:

> In that year, three Chinese envoys were reported to have arrived in the Philippines in search of a mountain of gold. This visit alarmed the Spanish colonial rulers, who, being outnumbered twenty to one by the local Chinese alone, began to suspect a possible Chinese invasion from China aided by the local Chinese. When a rumor went around Manila that an order of massacre was going to be carried out against the Chinese, the Chinese revolted, and the Spaniards, with the aid of locals, took the offensive and reportedly killed 23,000 Chinese, reducing their number to 457 (55).

In "Fold Up Boy," the ghost character is said to have died during the 1603 massacre in the Parian. He has been haunting his place of death since—where a school now stands—and has been waiting for someone to acknowledge his presence. The ghost works as the embodiment of a trauma that refuses to dissipate on its own until it is acknowledged. His gory state at the beginning gradually heals, as the main character, a student in the school, began to acknowledge his presence and allowed him to tell his story.

The story attempts to convey that the history the Chinese Filipino ought to be preoccupied with is the history of Chinese in the Philippines, beginning from the Spanish colonial period; the traumatic past is hence considered part of the Chinese Filipino identity, despite there being multiple waves of migration of the Chinese to the Philippines, and despite the Chinese during the Spanish colonial period being mostly ancestors of the mestizos, and not quite of the Chinese Filipinos who are, following current definitions, mostly of pure Chinese descent.

The main character is frustrated for most part with what is being taught in school, believing that studying Confucius had no relevance in real life. Her interest in the "Chinese" was stirred by her encounter with the ghost. The story demonstrates how Chineseness is something that literally haunts the Chinese Filipino and prohibits him or her from forgetting her Chineseness. It is interesting to note how the ghost was dressed in a way that made him distinctly Chinese: "He was dressed in a dirty tunic and pants so old-fashioned even her grandfather refused to wear them. His long hair was kept in a braid that hung low on his back. He looked like an extra in a Jet Li period film, one of those who got beat up, or killed" (Tan n.p.). The contemporary Chinese's (or Chinese Filipino's) image of the Chinese is primarily derived from media representations that have contributed to a certain look of the Chinese, and emphasized Chinese characters as being necessarily placed in China, or perhaps extended to parts of Greater China such as Hong Kong or Taiwan. Thus, the main character in Yvette Tan's "Fold up Boy" easily jumps to the conclusion that the ghost was from China:

> "Tell me why a ghost from China is wandering around Manila . . ."
> Sui Duan seemed to take offense at this. "I didn't. I'm not from China. I was born here."
> *You could have fooled me.* (n.p.)

By marking the Parian as the origin of the Chinese ghost, the story attempts to highlight the inclusion of the Chinese in Philippine history. Yet, the ghost remains distinguishably Chinese because of his outfit and his "broken Tagalog." The use of the Parian as the site of the Chinese implies that all the ethnic Chinese in the Philippines share in this history of being contained and oppressed, of a difficult past/beginning that contributed to the persevering "nature" of the Chinese today. Although the main character—the contemporary Chinese—has no experiential knowledge involving such oppression or difficulties, she "inherits" this from her encounter with the ghost and a subsequent revisiting of his past that appeared to be an ambiguous mix of flashback/time travel. This encounter then forges a connection

between the historical Chinese and the contemporary Chinese, and this plot development can be construed as echoing the teleological function of history.

In Paolo Chikiamco's "The Captain's Nephew," the Parian is mentioned in passing as the previous home of the Chinese Katipunero. The *tikbalang*, who the Chinese Katipunero recruits to help in the war against the Spaniards, goes about Manila in disguise; while disguised as a Chinese man, he gets beaten for entering the Walled City during siesta hours (n.p.). Not only is there a repetition of the Chinese as oppressed, but also a different portrayal—of the Chinese as a hero and a contributor to the freedom of the Philippines from its colonial oppressors.

However, prior to the Chinese man's recruitment of the tikbalang, in his first encounter of and negotiation with the legendary creature, the latter repeatedly refers to him as the "banyaga," accusing him of being foreign to this land, clearly "smell[ing] of *longan*, tea leaves, and foreign hills" (n.p.)—a reference to or description of China. The Chinese man admits to himself that, unlike his fellow Katipunero who's Filipino, he has a deep thirst for exploring his "adopted home," having only been there for six years; however, he finds offense with being thought of as "foreign" in this home, primarily because he shares in the sufferings of the people under the Spanish rule, if not more so by virtue of being Chinese. What is worth noting is that he sees his current oppressed state as a continuation of the oppression he experienced while he was still in China, stating that the reason he has not cut off his braid is that it is a sign of being enslaved to "foreign masters." The queue that has been deemed characteristic of the historical Chinese has been reconfigured in this story to symbolize enslavement. The character also shows a shift in his outlook or choice of action, when previously, he left China to be free from foreign masters, he now realizes that oppression should be fought against and not avoided by escaping.

In this story, the Chinese is portrayed as even more "knowledgeable" about the Philippines than the Filipinos to certain extent—daring to track down legendary creatures, more committed to their cause than his fellow Katipunero, who seem to "[forget] who the enemy was or what they were fighting for." It is also interesting to note how the tikbalang even chooses to

disguise himself as a Chinese instead of a Filipino in order to join the battle: when he says to the Chinese man, "If I join your revolution, it must be as one of you," (Chikiamco n.p.) combining that with his Chinese disguise, it conveys the idea that the Chinese, regardless of physical differences, must be considered as part of the Filipino people. This story works as a fictional re-presentation of history that highlights the contributions of the Chinese to Filipinos' striving for independence, which also results in the Chinese finally finding freedom—when the Chinese Katipunero, having survived the war, finally gets to cut off his braid.

As a conclusion to this section, I posit that Chinatown/Binondo and the Parian may be perceived as chronotopes in these stories. Following Bakhtin's description of the chronotope, it is when "spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out whole," "the inseparability of space and time" ("Forms of Time" 15). What occurs in these stories is the "weaving of historical and socio-public events together with the personal and . . . private side of life" (20). Chinatown and the Parian as the settings allow for the condensation "of historical time as well as of biographical and everyday time" (20). To link this to performativity, Peeren argues that the chronotope is performative in itself, because its function/meaning is "established and maintained by means of repeated social practices . . . time and space are not something we find before us, but something we do by enacting its cultural laws (chronology, linearity, distance, and so on) time and time again" ("Forms of Time" 71).

Text as Performance/Performative

Alexander, Giesen, and Mast's *Social Performance* discusses how performances become successful and achieve authenticity through what they term as "re-fusion" of performance: "The attribution of authenticity . . . depends on an actor's ability to sew the disparate elements of performance back into a seamless and convincing whole" (55). Thus, the writers of these stories, in their attempts to write about the Chinese Filipino community, work similarly as the actors attempting to sew elements into a comprehensible fabric—

of Chineseness, for this particular group. Alexander et al. attribute the seamless nature of the performance to

> the merging of text, context, and actor, a merging that resulted in the loss of self-consciousness and a lack of concern for—even awareness of—the scrutiny of observers outside the action itself. Because of "the merging of action and awareness," Csikszentmihalyi (1975: 38) wrote, "a person in flow has no dualistic perspective." The fusion of the elements of performance allows not only actors but also audiences to experience flow, which means they focus their attention on the performed text to the exclusion of any other possible interpretive reference. (56)

I cite this passage in my attempts to explain how or why the stories come across as "natural" and "representative" of the Chinese experience of the Chinese Filipinos, such that even readers "recognize" and extract specific elements and themes in the stories and relate it to their circumstances as members of that community. Their doing so, in turn, reinforces the "truth" of these experiences as particular to the Chinese Filipinos.

I include here a brief section on responses of a few readers of the stories,[31] as well as of selected writers of the *Lauriat* anthology. After going through the assigned story, the reader is asked to identify familiar elements and themes and to mention and discuss how the story is considered a "Filipino Chinese" story. As for the writers, they were asked about how they developed ideas for their stories, based on their ideas concerning the "Filipino Chinese" or Chineseness.

As one writer puts it, when she was asked to contribute a story: "It got me thinking about what actually constituted 'Fil-Chi' enough for a story to be one. Admittedly, I thought long and hard about that one because like I said, I'm not usually one to dwell upon what it is to be Fil-Chi . . ." This writer thus attempts to define "Fil-Chi" as involving the placement of Chinese values in Filipino context, about something "full-blooded Chinese living specifically in the Philippines" would understand and empathize with; it subscribes the "Chinese" as the act, and the "Filipino" as the circumstances, time, or space. The attempts of the writer to define and represent the "Fil-Chi" constitute a performance or production in itself.

Another writer echoes the "full-blooded Chinese" definition in her understanding of what constitutes "Filipino-Chinese," based on the usual responses of people who, when asked if they are Filipino, respond that "I am 100% Chinese" or "My family is pure Chinese." Sometimes, "I am actually pure Chinese." She also claims to be an outsider to the Chinese/Chinese Filipino community, yet her "*last name* [and] facial features usually make people think otherwise." In connection to the last point, for the story "The Perpetual Day," the reader identifies the Chinese surnames as a familiar element, saying that "they could very well be names of real people I might know." But beyond that, she also admits that if the names were changed, it could be anybody's story and not necessarily "Fil-Chi." Thus, by virtue of the characters being recognizably "Chinese" based on their surnames, the story becomes "Fil-Chi" and thus somehow representative of the community.

Again, when talking about Filipino Chinese, it is the Chinese that is highlighted or given more emphasis. One writer makes a specific comment on this: "I personally do not fully agree with the exclusion of Filipinos from the anthology or the need to set it apart by way of it being Chinese-Filipino. I think that people in diaspora are very obsessed with identity and trying to set themselves apart from the rest . . ." Although the statement is not quite accurate, in that "Filipinos" are not necessarily excluded in the stories, and the Chinese Filipinos do not really belong to the diaspora, strictly speaking, although they do inherit some "diasporic sentiments" or simply feelings of being displaced, the point remains that Chineseness is placed at the limelight in these stories, and the instinct of the writer and of the reader is to identify the "Chinese." An example would be, for the story "Dimsum," the reader automatically assumes that the customers of the teahouse are Chinese, and thus derives her insights about the Chinese based on this assumption:

> The Chinese are deeply resourceful . . . willing to do whatever it takes to survive/get what they want . . . cutthroat/dangerous (based on the guard's account of how the crowd beat up the robber [of the teahouse]).

This reader proceeds to view the teahouse (and its dilapidated state) as symbolic of the Chinese culture—a "dilapidated heritage" that the (Chinese)

customers work to protect. Meanwhile, another reader of this same story talks about how restaurants in Chinatown are primarily concerned with quality of food, and care nothing about the interior or structure of the establishments, and this hence being the context explaining the state of the teahouse in the story.

As another instance, in "Two Women Worth Watching," although it is not absolutely clear to the reader whether the characters are "Fil-Chi" or not, the themes (values and practices) the reader extracts from the story are predominantly Chinese:

> [I]t captures some of the important aspects in the life of a Filipino-Chinese, such as pleasing/praising people up front, working hard to achieve more and be more, to make people proud and look up to you, remembering our elders' words and obeying them, and acknowledging the dead and the life they lived. The Filipino Chinese cannot live . . . for himself/herself, because it has become important to live up to the expectations and demands of his/her family . . . *to make a "face" that is prim and proper in public, no matter how uncomfortable he/she is with it in actuality, upholding the values, teachings and traditions of Chinese . . . Putting this "mask" on all the time* has become necessary, because [being] immersed in [this] community, pleasing others seems more of a must . . . (n.p., emphasis mine)

It is interesting that for the reader, *Chinese* is a "mask," and this can be construed in two ways: the literal mask that is the face that contains the phenotypic features characteristic of a Chinese, and the more "abstract" mask that speaks of social propriety, always maintaining a façade of success and piety by way of keeping to tradition.

In the responses to two other stories, the readers also mention tradition as a sign of Chineseness. For "August Moon," the reader identifies the burning of paper money and arranged marriage as part of the Chinese tradition; in "Cricket," the reader identifies ancestral worship and sibling hierarchy as particularly Chinese. The reader for "The Way of Those Who Stayed Behind" identifies the theme of "clinging to tradition," as evidenced by the keeping of "shrines in the family house." In addition, this reader also recognizes the tendency to link Buddhism with the Chinese, and simultaneously recognizes arbitrariness in this association:

> I find it weird how we tend to associate Buddhism to the Chinese, even though it came from India and is about as Chinese as French fries are French. But then, mankind has a history of adapting existing imagery/teachings to suit their own needs.

One writer also makes the same association in her narration of her family background: "We identify as being Chinese . . . and my grandparents on both sides were traditional, practicing Buddhists."

Continuing on the matter of tradition, a reader of the story "The Tiger Lady" posits that this story is trying to argue for a change of "traditional view of women." When asked what makes this story particularly "Fil-Chi," she points to "the unfair treatment of men and women" as a possible characteristic, while subsequently maintaining that she doesn't "see much resemblance from the story to a 'Fil-Chi' story in general." The latter sentiment is an echo of the writer's impression of her own work—that it was not particularly "Filipino-Chinese," but only referenced an obscure Chinese myth. The implicit "agreement" between the writer and the reader on what constitutes "Filipino Chinese" is indicative of a seamless performance of Chineseness.

Returning to the story "Two Women Worth Watching," another reader finds the topic of death most familiar:

> I think the story's focus on the dead is something very familiar and very Chi-Fil, though I really can't say with finality that it's totally Chi-Fil as it may apply even to the Chinese people in the mainland. Speaking for my family, in terms of prioritization, there's just a higher level of importance given to paying tribute to deceased elders than actually celebrating birthdays even of elders who are alive. Our family is usually more complete for death anniversaries . . . Which is why, death, for me and probably also for my relatives, is something that binds our Chi Fil family more than the usual Filipino family.

Although this story does not involve any funeral setting or family gathering, the presence of ghosts/the dead in the story evokes the memory of this particular Chinese tradition in the reader.

All these responses work to show how while the text is subject to various interpretations, its label as "Filipino Chinese" makes certain elements and themes seem particularly "Chinese" to readers, although some of them eventually do realize that there is nothing definitive about associating these with Chineseness.

A (RE)TURN TO SAMENESS

This point onward, we turn from individual and textual performances to group performances. This latter performance may appear more cohesive than the previous two, as forming an organization requires establishing commonality on different possible terms, such as background, interest, expectations/goals, etc. The appeal of the collective remains in the present world that celebrates differences and diversification, as the collective allows increased visibility or presence of the people involved, provides them a channel for them to be heard, in and out of the group, and fosters stability or security through belonging.[32] Coupled with the desire to foster belonging is the goal of preserving normativity; through the organizations, the Chinese Filipinos work to extend the space/place ("stage for performance") that contains the people and culture most familiar to them.

This chapter involves looking into performances of Chineseness on and off screen/camera, and focuses on collective production and consumption (of Chinese culture) as performances in themselves. In this chapter, one can easily sense a return to sameness, which is explained by Hamid Naficy in his study of exilic television:

> Cultural productions not only air the tensions of communitarianism and fragmentation, ethnicity and acculturation, liminality and incorporation, but also often disavow or displace them by *ideological rearchaisation and reconstitution under the sign of some type of essentialist collectivity* . . . (556; emphasis mine)

Postmodernism, Popular Culture, and Performance on Television

Since the primary text in this chapter is a lifestyle television show, I include a brief discussion of theoretical concepts related to this text and medium. John Storey discusses the relationship between postmodernism and popular culture in his text *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture*, where he defines the postmodern culture as "a culture that no longer recognizes the distinction between high and popular culture" (12). This can be interpreted either as a welcoming of popular culture as a proper culture in its own right, or merely resignation to the inevitability of the tide of capitalism/commerce that is hastened through popular culture, following the idea of popular culture as "mass-produced commercial culture" (6).[33]

Returning to the matter of postmodern culture, Storey refers to the television, citing Jim Collins who describes it as "the 'quintessence' of post-modern culture." Storey ascribes this view of the television to two possible reasons: either due to it being a manifestation of a "flatness" or "depth-lessness" of culture (following Jameson's negative characterization of the postmodern), or, on a more positive note, its capacity to facilitate what is described again by Collins as "sophisticated *bricoleur*," allowing for creation of meaning through various elements (198). The former sees television as exposing a certain passivity of the audience in its absorption/consumption of meaningless images, while the latter implies that members of the audience are able to create different meanings depending on what particular aspects of the television (show) they wish to "receive."

Not only is television a postmodern text, it is also a key medium of popular culture, following Raymond Williams' four definitions of the latter: "well liked by many people," "inferior kind(s) of work," "work deliberately setting out to win favour with the people," and "culture actually made by the people for themselves" (237). The presumed inferiority of the form is attributable to its popularity (which betrays a continuing inclination to distinguish "high" culture from popular culture or mass culture) as well as its "hopelessly commercial" nature (Storey 199). But beyond these, Stuart Hall adds a dimension to popular culture by identifying it as "a site where

'collective social understandings are created': a terrain on which the politics of signification are played out in attempts t*o win people to particular ways of seeing the world"* (4, emphasis mine). Henceforth, I identify *CHInoy TV* as a popular culture text following Williams' latter two definitions as well as Hall's, and as a performance of Chineseness by the younger generation.

As to how television constitutes a "performance" of identity: in a study on gender and sexuality, Sarah Chinn mentions how television, as part of an array of cultural texts, ensures the success of performance of gender by making them unconscious/normative (Storey 162). The same can be said of how Chineseness is performed on *CHInoy TV* and how the performances contribute to an unquestionable and cohesive image of "Chineseness"—that is, the choice of people and segments can come across as very matter-of-fact for viewers. Edensor, in his work *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life*, discusses how national identity is performed through popular rituals such as sports and dance, which are often televised, and result in "television commentators seek[ing] recourse in fairly repetitive stereotypes" (79). This penchant for stereotyping can also be seen in the narrators' script, and this is attributable to the desire to establish coherence of identity, which is afforded primarily by repetition (96). Finally, Naficy's analysis of exilic television includes certain ideas that may be extended to this study of *CHInoy TV*. He explains that the exilic supertexts[34] "*both inscribe and erase* cultural, racial, ethnic, historical and linguistic differences and tensions . . ." (541, emphasis mine). Although *CHinoy TV* does not seem to be exilic, since Chinese Filipinos are born and raised in the Philippines, the show does possess exilic undertones and its various segments also work similarly to "inscribe and erase" differences between the Chinoys and the general Filipino public.

Stage on-screen: *CHInoy TV*

CHInoy TV is a lifestyle magazine show that was launched in 2010 in the hopes of creating an actual lifestyle program that does not simply feature "Chinese events" in news format. According to CEO/producer Alvin Tan, the show was created to draw in the younger generation of Chinese Filipinos; being a member of the younger generation of Chinoys himself, he expresses

his desire for the show to be interesting and relatable for his peers, including himself. The show aims to achieve normativity of Chineseness by going beyond the intention to communicate "Chinese culture" and by choosing to create a lifestyle magazine show, the impulse is to "do" the "Chinese."

Apart from increasing the show's appeal and relevance for the young Chinoys themselves, *CHInoy TV* also hopes to "bridge Filipinos and Chinese, to showcase the culture, at the same time . . . for the younger Chinoys to appreciate the language and the culture." Tan's idea of creating a bridge between Filipinos and Chinese belies the presumed complete integration of the Chinese in the Philippine society after decades, if not centuries, of being in this country. It speaks of the insularity of the Chinese community, their possessing an "enclave" mindset (willfully keeping to their own community), such that "Chinese culture" remains unfamiliar to most of the Philippine society. The bridging is not only a cross-cultural matter but also a cross-generational one, as the creators of the show acknowledge that many of the younger generations are unable to speak the Chinese language, which is why they've decided to make language a significant component of the show. Concerning the culture, it is interesting to note how the show hopes to teach the younger Chinoys to appreciate "Chinese culture," while, based on the producer's earlier statements about the show, it is implied that a particular culture is created in the process of making the show, to capture the interest of the younger generation or allow them to identify with the culture thus showcased; hence, one cannot presume this culture to be the objective "Chinese culture" that the show hopes to represent and impart to the young people. Overall, the show's desire to bridge between cultures and teach the culture all point to the ultimate goal of winning people to a particular way of seeing the "Chinese."

Concerning the matter of viewership, Alvin Tan, in a personal interview, surmises that majority of the viewers are Filipinos, based on the profile provided by research agencies and the responses the show receives. He notes that it is mostly the Filipinos who participate in the promos offered by the show, which includes having viewers answer questions about the program and giving prizes in return. From this, one may infer a perceived class differ-

ence between the Chinese Filipinos and the Filipinos. Tan also mentions the Filipinos' particular attraction to the "Asian," as evidenced by their interest in K-pop. This suggests that other "Asians" or even the Filipinos themselves do not consider Filipinos as "Asian," and thus their perceiving the Chinese and the Korean as "Asian" implies consciousness of not only cultural but also "racial" differences between the East Asians and those of the Malay race. Hence, Tan's subsequent statement that the Filipinos find people speaking Chinese "cute," even if they don't know what is being said, might be indicative of a certain exoticization on their part. The decision to emphasize use of the Chinese language not only feeds this particular interest, but also contributes to a "successful" performance of Chineseness—the Chinese must speak Chinese.

Actors on- and off-screen

> Television magazines rely on a regular cast of anchors and reporters—stars of the format—who supply public image, a sense of continuity . . . knowledge, authority, reliability. (Naficy 543)
>
> The hosts . . . are the chief producers of continuity. (544)

I include here a brief discussion of short interviews conducted with two of the segment hosts of the show (through online Q&A). Both mentioned that *CHInoy TV* first sponsored a workshop in 2011 (for acting, singing, dancing, hosting). One mentions that it was his father who came across the ad in the Chinese newspaper, which was why he was able to join. This not only confirms that the Chinese newspaper primarily caters to the older generation of Chinese (as most of the younger generation are either uninterested in the content or are unable to read in Chinese), but also suggests that the show chose to advertise to the older generation as well to attract participants (and subsequently, applicants) who may possibly be "more fluent" in Chinese, given that their parents/grandparents subscribe to the Chinese newspaper. As the host confirmed, "definitely, those who can speak Mandarin well have an edge." This is in line with the producer's aim of making the Chinese

language appeal to the younger generation, by selecting hosts who can speak the language, which ensures that that particular performance of Chineseness appears "natural" and thus "successful."

The audition for the hosting positions required the applicants to introduce themselves in three languages—English, Chinese (Mandarin), and Tagalog, and the hosts were selected based on the demonstration of language skills as well as "hosting skill," "on-cam personality," and their performance during the culminating show of the workshop (as the producers also wished to build a talent bank). For the workshop conducted in the following year, the auditioning process became more formal, and participants who wished to audition were given a couple of lines in English and in Chinese to learn and then present on camera. One of the hosts notes that not all of the participants knew how to speak Chinese, but majority of them were Chinese, while others looked like they were mestizos. Apart from the ability to speak Chinese, the primary consideration for selection was age, given the younger generation as its targeted niche audience.

In a separate interview, the producer expressed the need for "professionalism" in the show. During their initial recruitment, the hosts were sourced from "within the community" (due to Chinese language being a primary skill required), and due to their lack of experience and formal training, the show ended up appearing "amateurish," based on the feedback received by the producer. They then addressed this problem in their third year by recruiting a mainstream host of GMA 7, Valerie Tan, and for this year, they also tapped a host from ABS-CBN, who, the producer emphasizes, is still Chinoy—thus suggesting that the hosts being Chinoys is definitely crucial to the show.

The hosts also mentioned the importance of the training during the initial workshop, the specific instructions or tips given by the director and the segment producer during shoots, and the subsequent formal training they received later on to enhance their performance. As one puts it, it is not simply a matter of hosting, but also acting and projecting; meanwhile, the other host talks about often being prompted to "speak louder," "to have more energy," and to "speak [in a] livelier [manner]," which are all necessary to engage the audience. A more important point brought up was the need to

practice speaking in Mandarin, since "it is not usually being used." The usual process is that the hosts wait for their script, then study it (which includes looking up Chinese words that they don't know), then memorize most of it.

In terms of attire and makeup, these are provided by Chinese-owned businesses. The host comments that the current official makeup artist is better because he is "more used to Chinese":

> Our current official makeup artist . . . [seems] more used to Chinese, [because] some don't know how to do the "Chinese eyes" . . . Chinese eyes are smaller, no *tieng sun* (double eyelids). Other people, the way they do makeup for Filipinos is similar to the way they do it for Chinese, which is not suitable—you end up not looking like yourself. Sometimes we do our own makeup [when the artist is not available]. (Chong)

What the makeup does for the hosts is not to deliberately make them look more Chinese so much as it is to ensure that they look like themselves, and based on the host's observations, it appears that the Chinese would know better how to maintain the original (Chinese) look.

When asked if they perceived any difference in terms of their idea/understanding of Chineseness while on screen and in their "everyday life," one host says that being on TV is in fact, unusual, if not tacitly disapproved of, for the Chinese:

> [T]raditional Chinese people do not want exposures; they do not want to be shown on TV. Most are shy and timid . . . others are scared, or are not allowed by their parents or other relatives to be seen on TV. Parents and older people do not welcome the idea of being an artist or a "public figure." For them, anything related to arts will not bring any money at all. [. . .] In being a host, you have to put that behind [you] . . . sometimes you have to go against your parents or grandparents; I know one of our hosts who did that. (Chong)

It is interesting to note how becoming a proponent of "Chinese culture" (by being a host on the show) can require some to set aside or even go against the more restrictive aspects of that very culture. The producer also echoed the fear of the Chinese of being exposed, and attributes this to fear of being

kidnapped. He then explained that the show hoped to "overcome the barrier" and change the impression that the Chinoys were wary or afraid of being involved in media.

As a whole, the show works to make the "Chinese culture" not only accessible but also exciting and appealing for its viewers, which then requires the hosts to project enthusiasm about and knowledge of the elements of this culture. In explaining how the daily is "performed," Erving Goffman points to certain "front-stage" situations wherein "impression management" is necessary, and so certain enactments are required:

> In order that such performances are convincing—that they transmit the meanings we intend—Goffman usefully suggests that we acquire competence, that we reproduce performative conventions which are recognizable . . . this insistence on the instrumentality of role-playing—especially on the front stage—conjures up a continually self-reflexive individual, intentionally communicating values to an audience. (Edensor 89–90)

Script: Languages used and "CHInoy Speak"

The show puts primacy on using Chinese Mandarin to deliver its script, as a means of differentiating it from other lifestyle shows, and having young Chinese hosts who can speak the language, to inspire the rest of the younger generation to follow suit. What is apparent here is the desire to showcase the Chinoys (Chinese) speaking in their "language" as the first step to establishing Chineseness. The show chooses to use Mandarin, as it is the "official" and "acceptable" language, and is considered "more formal" by the producers as compared to Hokkien, although the latter resurfaces every so often when the hosts have to communicate with some of the older generation.

However, the show also allows a more nuanced performance of Chineseness for the Chinese Filipinos, as the hosts also speak in English and Filipino. Beyond showcasing the multilingual ability of the Chinese Filipino, the show also demonstrates the fluidity in the use of these languages, such that the hosts are able to carry on conversations while switching back and forth between the three languages, specifically in the manner that a question or statement by a host may be answered by another using a different language, without any pause in between for translation. The demonstration

of this peculiar multilingual ability/orientation makes a more distinct performance of Chineseness by the Chinese Filipino. While the use of multiple languages enables the show to have a wider reach, the intertwined use of languages by the hosts speaks to a very specific group of Chinese Filipinos who are adequately proficient in all three languages. This particular performance through language hints at both an "inside" (Chinoy) and an "outside" (Chinese/Filipino).

"CHInoy Speak" was developed to help the audience (supposedly the young Chinoys, according to the producer) learn the Mandarin language. The producer repeatedly emphasizes the importance of language when asked about the culture of the Chinoys (Chinese). As Gramsci writes about language in the *Prison Notebooks*:

> Language also means culture and philosophy . . . and therefore the fact of "language" is in reality a multiplicity of facts more or less organically coherent and coordinated. At the limit it could be said that every speaking being has a personal language of his own, that is, his own particular way of thinking and feeling. Culture, at its various levels, unifies in a series of strata, to the extent that they come into contact with each other, a greater or lesser number of individuals who understand each other's mode of expression in differing degrees, etc.
>
> From this one can deduce the importance of the "cultural aspect," even in practical (collective) activity. An historical act can only be performed by "collective man," and this presupposes the attainment of a "cultural-social" unity through which a multiplicity of dispersed wills, with heterogeneous aims, are welded together with a single aim . . . great importance is assumed by the general question of language, that is, the question of collectively attaining a single cultural "climate" (349).

Following Gramsci's arguments, there is no "culture" or cultural unity to speak of without language, and without this "culture," there is no history to be made; thus the persistent preoccupation with learning the Chinese language.

Yet, there remain differences in what constitutes the "Chinese language." Between Hokkien and Mandarin, it appears that the former is becoming less

relevant, as the producer acknowledges that it appears "more informal," possibly due to these factors: lack of a systematized means of teaching this language, it being a dialect used by most Chinese Filipinos only at home, and finally, it being a patois, given how certain Tagalog words are often slotted in at the beginning or end of phrases (*eh*, *kasi*, *ba*, to name a few). However, some of the interviewees of the show still use Hokkien. For some of the younger Chinoys, it appears easier to insert Hokkien into the conversation as most are not conversant in Mandarin, and Hokkien remains relevant because most are required to use this language when talking to their parents and relatives of the older generation. In a paper about young Hokkien speakers in Malaysia, Su-Hie Ting and Yann-Yann Puah identify Hokkien as vernacular language and how it is often used in more informal settings, such as within the family and in the marketplace (5–6). An earlier article by Ellen Palanca on Chinese education in Malaysia and in the Philippines attests to the comparability of the two countries to a certain extent, in which Palanca also mentions that for the younger generations of Chinese, Hokkien is a more familiar language than Mandarin, as it can be picked up from the older generations in the family (47).

In an episode of one of the latter seasons of the show, the "CHInoy Speak" segment evolved to include Chinese characters in addition to the pinyin (Romanized pronunciation) and English word for the vocabulary introduced. However, the use of traditional Chinese characters appears to be incompatible with the use of pinyin, as the latter is often used together with simplified Chinese characters, which is the set of characters officially used in Mainland China and is also what is being taught in most, (if not all) Chinese schools in the Philippines today. The shift from traditional to simplified characters is reflective of a supposed shift from Taiwan to China as the cultural homeland for the Chinese in the Philippines. However, there remains a significant number of Chinoys (those who are considerably proficient in the Chinese language) who insist that learning the traditional characters is a better option. The debate is presumably among those of the older generation or those who have made the effort to study the Chinese language, whether in the country or elsewhere. The general assumption is that the

majority of the younger generation are mostly not proficient in the Chinese language, and so presumably disregard it as unimportant; another possibility is they might not be knowledgeable enough to distinguish between traditional and simplified characters, which would not allow them to express any preference, or even realize this particular "inconsistency" in the use of Chinese in this show. In the more recent episodes, the show has worked to address this "discrepancy" by posting on their Facebook page both traditional and simplified characters of the words being taught. This can be read not only as an attempt to differentiate but also to enable a transitioning from the traditional to the simplified. In the newer episodes of the segment, the characters used have been switched to simplified characters, and this shows the desire to be aligned with the "official" Chinese language as set by Mainland China. Thus, the use of Mandarin contributes to a homogenizing of the different Chinese in Metro Manila—old migrants, new migrants, and the locally born Chinese. But prior to this recent revision, it is more likely that only a Chinese/Chinoy would have detected the "discrepancies" in the use of Chinese language(s). The common Filipino viewer would not be able to detect these "inconsistencies" and would only continue to view all the "foreign languages" as one Chinese language.

In effect, the Chinoys contend with two kinds of homogenization in this scenario—that while, externally, they face the homogenizing gaze of Filipinos and other non-Chinese and possibly work to correct this view, internally, a number of them also work toward homogenization by choosing to learn Mandarin, recognizing its usefulness and "prestige" over the Hokkien vernacular.

Act 1: The Chinese/Success Story

According to the show's website, this segment contains "interviews [of] successful *Chinese or Filipino* personality. From politics to business . . . how they achieved success and how they embraced Chinese culture" (emphasis mine). What is worth noting is not only the clear dichotomy between Chinese and Filipino—which distracts from their attempt in fusing the two by using the term Chinoy—but also, it appears that the personalities included

in the profiles are generally of Chinese descent, whether they are "pure" Chinese or "part" Chinese. The "Chinese or Filipino" description becomes confusing because it seems that the show is simultaneously trying to differentiate the Chinese from the Filipino while showing how the Chinese is also Filipino, or perhaps more often, how the Filipino is somehow also Chinese, to some extent. For almost all of the interviews, the narration emphasizes the "Chinoy" or the Chinese aspect of the profiles (i.e., highlighting the personality's values as influenced by Chinese culture).

As the study focuses on the accounts of the younger generation, one Chinese value often emphasized is prioritizing education. In the interview of Chris Tiu, a well-known basketball player, he mentions education as one of his advocacies, and advises the audience (in Hokkien) to "study hard" and (in Mandarin) to "listen to your mom and dad," thus communicating that being a Chinoy (Chinese) means (again) upholding filial piety, specifically through academic achievement. Another student athlete, Johansen Aguilar, also makes the same case for education, stating outright that it's always "studies first," even as an athlete.

Beyond education, the underlying Chinese value that all the personalities acknowledge is the value of hard work. Although all success stories would involve mentioning values such as "hard work," "perseverance," "discipline," etc., in these profiles, these values are repeatedly linked to the Chinese tradition, or simply part of being Chinese.

In an informal interview with Meah Ang See of Kaisa Para Sa Kaunlaran, she shares that industriousness, as a trait, should be properly identified as part of a migrant culture and not necessarily Chinese culture. She cites the OFWs as an example, who are also hardworking, primarily because the tendency is to hone oneself to become more competitive in an environment where one is considered a foreigner/outsider. However, given that the Chinese Filipinos are locally born, their perception of the "Chinese" and the "migrant" are one and the same, in the form of their grandparents; this explains the insistence that being hardworking is a Chinese value.

Thus, "hard work" as a performance of Chineseness continues, albeit in slightly different shades. For many of the younger generation, the parents

remain a primary source of motivation for working hard, thus equating the latter to an expression of filial piety: "Chinese parents are stricter; you have to follow certain rules, culture, boundaries . . . There's really the discipline there. You have to sacrifice unproductive things . . . It's all about productivity and efficiency" (Aguilar siblings – a student athlete and an artist). Laureen Uy (fashion icon and blogger) adds to this when she mentions that it is her father who taught her how to work hard; her parents also taught her the importance of respect, which may be construed as filial piety, yet she is quick to claim that respect should not really be considered a "Chinese" tradition or as something exclusive to the Chinese. Her attempt to distinguish what is learned from her parents from what is Chinese is indicative of a desire to perform differently by breaking the repetition of respect as Chinese.

Another interviewee, Diane Chua (daughter of Gil Chua of DDB Group Philippines), talks about the pressure she and her siblings face, working for her father, having to deal with a lot of expectations, in addition to her father's background of coming from nothing and being able to make such significant achievements in business. The pressure stems from a fear of failure, as voiced by Jamille Aguilar. Those of the younger generation are compelled to continue the legacy of success of the older generation, which is somehow equivalent to keeping the Chinese tradition. Chinese tradition becomes a success story on its own. Failure thus becomes uncharacteristic of the Chinese, as it can bring embarrassment or shame to the family, which is something that the Chinese desperately avoid, as part of their culture. According to Katrina Chan and Pamela Gaw (student entrepreneur awardees), Chineseness has to do with an Asian stereotype of being driven to succeed. This may be interpreted in two ways: either that the Chinese dictates what is "Asian," or vice versa. It is also interesting to note that the "Filipino" is clearly left out of the "Asian," presumably because of its Westernized orientation. Nevertheless, the student entrepreneurs claim that it is a combination of Chinese and Filipino values that contribute to success, and a translation of this combination are the advice to "take it easy in life" and to "strive for your dreams." As the latter appears to be closer to the "success" goal of the "Chinese" or "Asian," the former sentiment might then

be construed as the "Filipino," which may be further interpreted as hinting at a more laid-back nature of the Filipinos. It must be noted that these are only possible interpretations of the statements; however, it is also worth noting that the interviewees also do not explicitly say what constitutes "Filipino values," making the Filipino side of the culture seem vague/indefinite.

Continuing the "success story," Sherwin Tan (artist/painter) also cites hard work as the ultimate Chinoy value, adding that recognition follows hard work. On top of fame, the student entrepreneurs express that hard-earned money comes from hard work, thus suggesting that wealth follows. Apart from hard work, another factor is (controlled/minimal) spending. While the entrepreneurs claim that thriftiness should not be translated to being miserly but learning to spend wisely, Gretchen Ho (previous student athlete and one of the earlier hosts of the show) says in an early interview that being Chinese is being *kuripot* (stingy), but this means spending little on oneself but remaining generous toward others.

The notions of recognition and generosity toward others, in addition to wanting to succeed out of fear of failure/disappointment, all speak of the Chinoy/Chinese's preoccupation with self-image or reputation. Cheryl Tiu (publisher of a lifestyle magazine, writer for *CNN Travel*, and sibling of Chris Tiu) talks about the importance of maintaining her reputation and a good name, in keeping with the Chinese heritage/legacy and for business purposes. It becomes necessary to bring up again the notion of *guanxi* (relation) as an important aspect of the Chinese's history and culture. The Chinese's way of doing business has always depended greatly on establishing relations and trust. In the words of Donald Nonini and Aihwa Ong:

> Taken as authentic features of an essential "Chinese culture," both the Chinese family and *guanxi* particularism have been thoroughly fetishized as objects of cultural analysis by scholars studying overseas Chinese. In particular, familism, *guanxi*, *ganqing* ("sentiment"), and *xinyong* ("trust" or "credit") had been emphasized by an earlier generation of functionalist scholars as crucial to Chinese business operation. (21)

Thus, as Anne Mariposa (social entrepreneur) says, integrity of one's name and honesty are crucial to the success of business. Meanwhile, the Chua

siblings (daughter and son of Gil Chua of DDB) have somewhat opposing views concerning "trust" in business/Chinese culture. According to Anna Chua-Norbert, the beauty of being Chinese is that there is trust within the community; hence, there is no need to spend on promotions for business because word-of-mouth marketing remains effective. On the other hand, Jonathan Chua talks about how he did not study Chinese, but he learned enough to avoid being cheated or being insulted without knowing. This sentiment reveals that the general assumption about "trust" in Chinese business/culture has to be accompanied by extensive knowledge of the language. One can rely on trust and established relations in doing business with/among the Chinese, provided one knows enough of the language—which is ironic, as this "knowing" as a prerequisite would imply that trust cannot be assumed simply by virtue of "being Chinese." This is also a reiteration that "Chinese" is performative/a performance.

Many of the interviewees profiled repeatedly refer to "business" as something of the Chinese, particularly when asked how they are Chinoy in terms of values and practices. Jamille Aguilar, when asked about what she wanted to do eventually, said that she "might go into artistic side of business," thus betraying the urge of the Chinoy to return to business as both symbolic of identity and symptomatic of pragmatism, while viewing art or aesthetics more as a means of making money. Gretchen Ho also talks about business-mindedness as a Chinoy value that she inherited from her Chinese descent, as does Laureen Uy, who talks about acquiring business skills from her father. These examples show how "business" as a trait has become more "hereditary" than cultural. Slater Young (engineer), describes his background as 100% Chinese, having grown up in a "*very Chinese* family" that values hard work (emphasis mine). He ascribes going into his own business as part of keeping to the "Chinoy tradition."

There are also moments when some of the personalities appear less gung ho about the business tradition, in that they find the repeated reference to it as the primary preoccupation of Chinoys too limiting. These are often the personalities who are either athletes, artists, or engaged in non-entrepreneurial professions; not only are they relatively less enthusiastic, their desire

to go beyond the "business" story is also reflective of how they are less gung ho (*gong-he*), which is the (Chinese) etymology of the term that means "work together." In this sense, their attempts to distance themselves from "business" show less of a "togetherness" with the community and thus a desire to be more individualistic or simply well-rounded/multifaceted. Gretchen Ho mentions how "the Chinese are very conservative," and thus encourages her peers to "try new things" but "within the boundary of our values." Chris Tiu's responses during his interview can amply demonstrate this particular disposition:

> (Advice to the Chinoys) "We are always encouraged, pushed by our parents to get into business, to help out with the family business; nothing wrong with that, it's our responsibility also . . . But I also want to remind/encourage you to explore other fields you're passionate about—media, arts, sports. It broadens your perspective, you meet a lot of people, different personalities, you become more exposed."
>
> "I know Chinese families are just about business, and you stick to your circle of friends who are also Chinese, so that somewhat restricts and limits you as a person."
>
> "I encourage all the young Chinoys . . . who are trapped in a closed environment . . . But at the end of the day, don't lose your values . . . hard work, I think that's really something very unique about the Chinese families, that's what makes them so successful with their business. That's what sets Chinese apart when it comes to business."

This discussion is again a demonstration of ambivalence the young Chinese Filipino desires to break away from the "business" stereotype, but acknowledges its "truth," its being characteristic of the Chinese. Tiu implores his fellow Chinoys not to forget hard work as a value, but ultimately marries this value to business as the purpose/outcome; hard work and business become almost inseparable in these terms. The constant struggling between adherence to "tradition" (structure) and venturing into the "new"/"novel" (agency) again points toward the balancing act that is performativity. This disposition appears to be either inherited from or merely echoed by those of

the older generation. One of the interviewees belonging to the older generation describes the capabilities of the Chinoy youth today and offers advice in relation to this:

> "They are very intelligent, open-minded, aggressive . . . talk well . . . Do not lose self-discipline, and those traditional Chinese attitudes. It's okay to move forward, but adhere to basic principles."

The personalities' persisting attempts to establish sameness (in terms of values and practices) and difference (in terms of fields of expertise and interests) may be read as symptomatic of ambivalence.

However, in organizations it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to detect any ambivalence, as the nature of organization requires a sense of unity and cohesiveness among its members. As a representative of an organization puts it, culture is "shared values, shared traits, shared personality." This definition of culture is easily extendable to organizational culture.

In an episode featuring the Chinese Filipino youth organizations, De La Salle University's Englicom and Ateneo de Manila University's Celadon, the narrator of the show mentions that one of the goals of Celadon's activities is "to mold the *rich culture of Chinese*" (emphasis mine), although the word *rich* would be more properly interpreted as referring to the "Chinese culture" in terms of the variety of its traditions and practices, this may also be processed both consciously and subconsciously to mean "rich" in terms of wealth or affluence. This is a possible interpretation given these organizations' consistent emphasis on entrepreneurship, as well as their display of a consumer culture (to be discussed later on).

In my interview with the representative of Celadon, he elaborates on the notion of "Chinese Filipino tradition," which he subsequently rewords as "culture of the Chinese tradition" and "Chinese culture in the Philippines," and identifies all these as primarily referring to "business." Given that the organization wishes to focus on social responsibility (as mentioned on *CHInoy TV* and during the personal interview), Celadon not only makes its outreach programs focused on "entrepreneurship" and "microbusiness," but also promotes "social entrepreneurship awareness." "Business" becomes

knowledge or skill that the Chinese Filipino works to pass on to the rest of the population, in the hopes of lifting them out of their poverty. The concept of social entrepreneurship in this context is a variant of "business" that incorporates philanthropy and environmentalism. These can be seen as attempts to correct the general public's view of the Chinese as preoccupied with only moneymaking and possibly having no regard for social issues. He attributes this social awareness and concern to one of the key Ignatian values, *Cura Personalis*, "care for the whole person" by being a person for others.

When asked about the importance of culture in developing leaders and how the organization puts that to practice, he repeats the same storyline, albeit with an emphasis on nation-building as the end goal: "The Chinese culture of *striving hard, to do good business*, to drive the economy and bring it to greater heights". He cites SMDC and Robinsons as examples of (Chinese-owned) businesses that contribute to the country's GDP, and explains how politicians are able to venture into politics due to the financial backing afforded by being in business. To continue (performing) the "business" culture/tradition, the organization sets up business events, such as the Taipan Business Summit, where they invite taipans to give talks to encourage and mentor the members of the organization (mostly from the School of Management) on how to achieve success in their business endeavors.

To conclude this section, I wish to incorporate a discussion by Michael Pinches that would effectively summarize the relationship between entrepreneurship and the Chinese identity. Pinches' piece "Entrepreneurship, Consumption, Ethnicity and National Identity in the Making of the Philippines' New Rich" contains a thorough discussion of the conflation of ethnicity and class in the Chinese Filipino identity as performed through production, by way of entrepreneurship and consumption, as indicative of being of a certain economic class. He begins by describing the ethos of private enterprise that is characterized by the entrepreneurship phenomenon, facilitated by factors such as "hard work," "business acumen," "initiative, vision, diligence, resourcefulness and perseverance" (284), which are the same keywords recited in various speeches of the Chinoys, on or off screen.

According to Pinches, this ethos is fueled by the desire of the Philippine government to be at par with the other Southeast Asian countries (284). But in the context of the Chinese-Filipinos, it is not so much about elevating their status as it is pointing to an already established elevated status they continually maintain because their business acumen is attributed to their "race"/ethnicity. Both the Filipino Chinese/Chinese Filipinos and non-Chinese Filipinos are quick to attest to the innateness of this particular characteristic (285). While most people focus on Chinese as ethnicity and continue to attribute "positive" characteristics to it, Pinches also identifies how race is involved as an undercurrent that facilitated the formulation of this stereotype. He writes: "The stereotype . . . ignores the historical role that racism has played in containing many Chinese in commerce, as well as fostering among them relations of mutual trust, which are often seen as central to their economic success . . ." (286).

Pinches finds it ironic that the Filipino Chinese continue to be touted for entrepreneurship when the members of the younger generation are joining the ranks of "salaried professionals" (286). Perhaps it would be reasonable to say that being an entrepreneur and being a working professional are not far from each other, as both seem to require certain common skills such as management of finances and of people, not to mention both are generally viewed as the more practical career options in order to make a decent living. The latter can be related to "the money-making prowess of the Chinese" that Pinches identifies as one of the usual references used to describe the entrepreneurship trend (290). This particular understanding allows one to see how business as a performance of (Chinese) identity is (or becomes) normative/normal," as it appears reasonable/rational that people would want financial stability and better living. Thus, a sign that people—including the Chinese Filipinos—that have "made it" in terms of this financial stability, is their purchasing power, or what Pinches calls "conspicuous consumption." (291)

In the subsequent discussion on consumption, Pinches focuses on the new rich and how the group's pattern/s of consumption are derided for failing to show a certain "cultured" (civilized) sensibility:

> Today, it is often the Filipino-Chinese who are singled out for ridicule . . . for their alleged lack of refinement . . . While the older generation of Filipino-Chinese are widely known for their frugality, the younger generation of those who have become wealthy are usually portrayed as conspicuous consumers.
>
> As one highly educated professional said of the Filipino-Chinese new rich: "Money can't buy taste. They're still ill-mannered like they were in Binondo (Chinatown). They still wear slippers in public. But they know how to spend money on fast cars and cellular phones." (294)

It must first be mentioned that this particular description/understanding of the Filipino-Chinese is problematic as it betrays lack of a more nuanced understanding about the heterogeneity of the Chinese in the Philippines—the differences between the old migrants and new migrants, the older generation and younger generation. Nevertheless, it does illustrate why stereotypes are lasting because of their compulsive, fetishistic nature.

The Chinese were credited earlier for their entrepreneurial skills that are accompanied by diligence and thriftiness. This set of characteristics is identified by many as something "innate" in the ethnic Chinese and thus passed on to its next generation—thus explaining the continuity of this particular (ethnic/class) identity. Yet, on the other hand, the Chinese are also mocked for the crassness/lack of "culture" displayed by being members of the new rich. Being new rich is defined as an "easy-come easy-go affluence." It is vividly seen how stereotyping (in Bhabha's term) works, that the subject possesses both desirable and repulsive traits that are contrary to each other. The Chinese are seen as hardworking, but also lazy; thrifty, but also extravagant or wasteful. Their affluence is interpreted as a product of hard work, but also of luck or chance. In any case, what is agreed upon is that the Chinese have money, and they know how to spend it. Yet, in connection to their spending and culture, there is also ambivalence in that it is possible to view their spending as a lack of "culture," or as a means of acquiring (buying and/or consuming) "culture."

Act 2: Consumption as (of) Culture

Certain segments of *CHInoy TV* point to the presence of a consumer culture that is styled as part of Chinoy culture such as *CHInoy Active*, which features new gadgets and other technology-related products and services, as well as sports that can improve the daily living of Chinoys; *CHInoy Style*, which features fashion items (clothing, accessories); and *CHInoy Wellness*, which features health-related products and services. Some of the companies offering these products and services appear to be owned by Chinese Filipinos as well, which again contributes to the "entrepreneur" image of the Chinoy. Also, the show does its best to incorporate "Chineseness" into these segments as much as possible. For example, in an episode of *CHInoy Style* featuring accessories and a clothing line, the color red is mentioned repeatedly as "the dominant color in the Chinese fashion." Another example is in a couple of segments related to health where acupuncture and a Chinese pharmacy are featured as parts of traditional Chinese medicine. On another episode featuring sports, Wushu, "a mix of martial arts and Chinese boxing," is introduced as a practical means of self-defense, and as "an important component of the cultural heritage of China."

In the interview with the Chinese Filipino student organizations, the representatives were asked to describe the younger generation of Chinese Filipinos in terms of "culture." One representative suggests that they are "more liberated, not conservative . . . go out more . . . more balanced . . . believe more in fun than achievement, having a good time, enjoying their youth." Another representative proposes that the organization remain attuned to the "current trends of the younger generation," which he translates to include organizing and holding parties.

The consumption culture can be seen in one of the programs of Alliance of Filipino-Chinese Students (AFICS), the AFiCS Privilege Card Program:

> This year, AFiCS aims to reach more members within its 4 member organizations. In order for this to happen, the Alliance has decided to spearhead the AFiCS Privilege Card Program, a yearlong activity for the academic year 2014–2015 that hands out Privilege Cards to all AFiCS members *for the*

purpose of instilling into each member a sense of belonging and prestige for being a part of this organization.

The AFICS Privilege Card will provide benefits, particularly discounts offered by its partner establishments. (AFICS sponsorship letter, emphasis mine)

Membership in the Filipino Chinese organization is thus equated to a certain prestige and purchasing power. It contributes to the continuing formation/establishment of a class identity for the Chinese Filipinos/Chinese. AFICS also mentions its affiliation with the Chinese Filipino Business Club as a selling point to companies looking to expand their markets, further heightening the notion of Chinese Filipinos as money:

[T]he Alliance works hand-in-hand with *the Chinese-Filipino Business Club,* composed of *Chinese-Filipino businessmen from a variety of industries all over the archipelago, which will no doubt give your company more access to various markets and publicity.* (emphasis mine)

For the representative of Englicom, *culture* is repeatedly referenced without any attempts to explain precisely what this culture is, thus showing its commonsensical nature. Contrary to the show's emphasis on "culture of Chinese," the organization's representative talks about Chinese Filipino culture, which he describes as "the best of both cultures. Consisting of both cultures, it has become unique and special." Part of the organization's mission is to help foster "appreciation of both [Chinese and Filipino] cultures." In these statements, one may identify a tension between exhibiting a syncretic culture and differentiating between and thus compartmentalizing two cultures. In the subsequent parts of the discussion, he reveals the workings of these cultures further:

The younger generation of Filipino Chinese are diverse. There are those who are well versed with the culture and traditions of being Tsinoy. On the other hand, the majority of the Tsinoy in this generation are *starting to forget or lose their knowledge about their culture and traditions,* due to culture integra-

> tion and influences from other cultures ([including] foreign cultures, such as America, Korean, and Japanese).
>
> [By culture integration, I mean] unbalanced culture integration, where one culture overshadows the other. In this case, the Filipino culture overshadowing the Chinese culture, thus leading to it being forgotten. The organization also aims to re-awaken that consciousness through our activities to further promote the Chinese culture not only to those that are unfamiliar with it, but to those who have forgotten it. (emphasis mine)

Hence, there is a Chinese Filipino culture that is supposedly composed of the best of both cultures, but is actually a struggle or balancing act involving the two (assumed to be opposing) cultures. Instead of merely saying that the Chinoys' culture is the Chinese Filipino culture, he says that the Chinoys "are starting to forget or lose . . . their culture"—implying that it is again, the Chinese culture, that is the main concern. Thus, the organization must "foster cultural growth and integration," which requires "reviv[ing] what was lost amongst the community" and "sharing with those who are not familiar with it." The latter statements may sound peculiar as the Chinese Filipino claims to have lost the culture but simultaneously claims familiarity with the culture, and defines integration as more of an imparting of knowledge of the "Chinese culture."

Englicom works to "restore" this culture to the consciousness of the young Chinese Filipinos by organizing exhibits to showcase photos of past events, food, and Chinese art. Photo and art exhibits serve as snapshots of specific performances of the Chinese Filipino members. However, a food exhibit involves more interaction as it invites the audience to partake in the "culture" by eating the food. Whether eating "Chinoy food" makes one "Chinoy" might be ambiguous or debatable for some (although most would probably say not), not to mention what constitutes "Tsinoy delicacies" is also unclear. But what appears certain here is that food is likely considered to be a more effective means of exhibiting "syncretism." This can be seen in the descriptions of one of Englicom's key events, the Englicom Café:

> [T]he ENGLICOM Café (ELC Café) has been one of the major activities for the past years. It continuously provides an extraordinary experience to its members . . . by serving as a *culture-impartation ground* . . . as an avenue for the youth to appreciate and understand *both cultures* . . .having entertaining booths that also give out various Tsinoy delicacies. It has been a belief of the organization that giving out of these Tsinoy products is the best way of promoting *the essence of both cultures* . . . [The event contributes to] bridging the gap between the Filipino and Chinese students. (Englicom sponsorship letter, emphasis mine)

Ambivalence may be detected in the opposing desires to "separate" cultures and to "combine" them. In the abovementioned passage, the event supposedly allows the youth to understand the two cultures, implying a clear separation, while "promoting the essence of both cultures," implying an integration of the two in the form of food. This "integration" may be construed in two ways—in the making of the food ("fusion") or in its consumption (everything goes to the same stomach).

Celadon's representative describes the Chinese culture at one point in the form of events such as "Mid-Autumn Festival, teachers' appreciation week, calligraphy contest . . . film festival, [and] Chinese New Year"—showing that for the Chinese Filipinos, it is still primarily about the Chinese culture. The focus on events, however, makes the nature of this "Chinese culture" more occasional as opposed to it being something that belongs to everyday life. Thus, every occasion/celebration facilitates a remembering of "Chineseness"—the Chinese Filipinos organize these events to "commemorate" their being Chinese, and invite the rest of the (school) population to participate and thus recognize what is "Chinese."

Festivals: Mid-Autumn Festival and Chinese New Year/Spring Festival

In "Festivals as eventifying systems," Hauptfleisch describes the festival as the space "where the everyday life event (performing a play . . . a dance, exhibiting a painting . . .) is turned into a significant *cultural event*, framed and made meaningful" (39, emphasis mine). In the subsequent examples of Chinese festivals, one can see how the festival demonstrates how "culture"

is simultaneously produced and consumed. Sauter also contributes to this discussion with the notion of playing culture. He describes playing culture not only as an art form that is relatable to "film . . . visual arts, dance, music," but also emphasizes its "playful" ("performative") nature that links it to "sports, games, races, and . . . competitions." What distinguishes playing culture is its "strong physical elements, which have to be *learned by doing* . . ." (19, emphasis mine). This playing culture is most prominent during the festival.

For instance, celebration of the Mid-Autumn Festival primarily revolves around eating mooncake and playing the "dice game" to win prizes (in cash or in kind). It is interesting to consider the historical contexts of the Mid-Autumn Festival. A feature article mentions that the celebration "dates back 3,000 years ago when Chinese emperors worshiped the moon for a good harvest" (Arsua n.p.). The fifteenth of the eighth month on the lunar calendar is also the day when the moon is at its brightest and fullest, thus alternative names for the date include "moon-chasing day," "moon-playing day," and "moon worshipping day" (original characters: 追月节, 玩月节, 拜月节). The fullness of the moon supposedly symbolizes and/or reminds the people of the need for all the members of the family to be gathered together, to come to a "full circle" in the same way that the moon appears.

Meanwhile, the mooncake was created during the Tang Dynasty by Emperor Li Yuan to celebrate their victory in the war against the north. It was initially called the *round cake*, and was first offered to the moon god before eaten; later on, another emperor renamed it as *mooncake*. It became part of the tradition that a mooncake would be divided into equal portions for each member of the family to have a piece; for those who were unable to reunite with their family on that day, their portions will be kept for them until their return. The mooncake also functions as an auspicious object that is offered to the moon goddess in hopes of having a good marriage (for the unmarried) and bearing children (for the married). It is also used to symbolize plentiful harvest (Xinhuanet n.p.).

Other sources explain the origin of the dice game, that this is a 300-year-old custom that began with General Zheng Chenggong of the Qing Dynasty, who invented the practice of dice gambling for mooncakes in order

to uplift the spirits of his troops who were homesick amidst war (*China Daily* n.p.; What's on Xiamen, n.p.). However, according to another source, the game was started as early as "1500 years ago by scholars craving success in imperial exams," which explains why the combinations/prizes are named after the imperial titles the scholars sought. In addition, the source labels the story about the mooncake/dice game being a preoccupation for homesick soldiers as legendary (Brown n.p.).

Regardless of these "stories" or contexts, Mid-Autumn Festival as a tradition, from the perspective of the younger generation, gains its meaning as "Chinese" primarily from its annual "performance" (eating and playing). The primacy of the object or product can be seen in how this event is oftentimes referred to as the "Mooncake festival" (or as Englicom describes it in its sponsorship letter, the "Roll the Dice Mooncake Festival Celebration"). The descriptions made by both organizations of the event clearly demonstrates the consumerism that marks the culture, which also results from the organizations' attempt to "modernize" the tradition and make the "Chinese culture" relevant and appealing:

> "Any Mid-Autumn Festival will not be complete without mooncakes! Let's stop and thank our great sponsor Eng Bee Tin for giving us a hefty amount of mooncakes."
> "Bring Mi home! We're going bigger and better! Go to tomorrow's Mid Autumn Festival Culminating Night and get a chance to win a brand-new Xiaomi Mi3 along with other awesome prizes like Bluetooth speakers as well as quality earphones among others! There are lots of prizes to be given away!" (Ateneo Celadon)

> Come and Celebrate with us Englicom's 50th year Mid Autumn Festival Dice Game with lots and lots of surprises! With only 250 pesos, you get a chance to win HEADPHONES, EARPHONES, X-MINI SPEAKERS, LINE DOLLS and USBs, gift checks from our sponsors! BAGS, FOOD and lots and lots of other surprises!!! The 250 pesos also include BUFFET from Sincerity Chicken and lots and lots of freebies and food from our sponsors! (Englicom DLSU)

According to Edensor, "festivals are increasingly used as a means to advertise commodities through sponsorship" (84). At the same time, festivals

can afford a "more social perspective such as . . . allowing a community to reflect its identity . . . attain recognition . . . juxtapose itself to the prevailing culture" (Cremona 7). Thus, these annual celebrations can be seen as means of recalling to consciousness the Chinese identity for the Chinese Filipinos, which includes simultaneous participation in consumerism.

Another main event celebrated by the Chinoys—and is considered the most important celebration for the Chinese—is the Chinese New Year, or Spring Festival. The idea of a (Chinese) new year is said to have more than 4000 years of history, on the day when one of the earliest emperors, Shun, upon becoming emperor, brought his group of officials to worship "the heaven and the earth" (original characters: 祭拜天地).

However, there was no agreement on the exact date for this "new year," as the earlier dynasties kept changing the "first month," following different calendars (from January to December to October), until during the Han Dynasty, Emperor Wu designated the first month of the lunar calendar as the start of the year. New Year's Day only became an official holiday and named also as Spring Festival in 1914, when a government official proposed a specific holiday for each of the four seasons, and the first day of the first month was the only holiday approved. Common practices among the Han ethnic group, the Manchu ethnic group, and the Korean ethnic group are eating year cake and dumplings, hanging lanterns, setting off fireworks, and performing lion and dragon dances (Xinhuanet n.p.). For the Chinoys (majority of whom are descendants of the Han ethnic group), celebration includes an elaborate dinner/feast, eating and giving *tikoy* (meaning *sweet cake*, another name for year cake), giving and receiving money in red packets, and also the usual performance of dragon and lion dances.

Compared to the Mid-autumn Festival celebration, Celadon's Spring Festival celebration includes more "informative" and aesthetic activities, in the form of music, arts, and cultural talk. What remains similar is the emphasis on food and prizes and fortunetelling, which shows the continuing preoccupation with consumption and wealth:

> Celebrate the coming of the Year of the Wooden Horse with a bang! Enjoy a sumptuous dinner feast! Appreciate the serenade of Chinese musical orchestra! *You might just get an angpao or tikoy and many more from the raffle!*
>
> Enjoy cultural performances and participate in Chinese arts and crafts. Be informed in 'The Chinese Way of Life' cultural talk. *Have your fortunes told.* Experience something Chinoy from friends and professionals across the metro! ("Join Ateneo Celadon's Chinese New Year Week!" emphasis mine)

Meanwhile, Englicom's celebration of the 2014 Chinese New Year appears even more like a production, choosing to name the event (stage for performance) "Little China."

> Welcome the Year of the Horse as Englicom brings LITTLE CHINA - the Grandest Chinese New Year Cultural Celebration in campus! Watch out for the live dragon dance, free Chinese food, and a whole lot more. (Englicom)

This staging of Chineseness involves language (Chinese 101), food (A Taste of China), fortune (On-site Fortune Teller), cooking (Make Your Own Lumpia), dragon dancing, and contest (Chopsticks Challenge). The naming of the particular event/stage and the succeeding activities—speaking, eating—facilitates the perpetuation of a "consistent" Chineseness: the Chinese are in/come from China, speak Chinese, eat Chinese food (using chopsticks), and are particularly concerned with their "fortune" (luck/wealth).

Returning to the on-screen "performances," *CHInoy TV* also celebrates the two main events, Chinese New Year and Mid-Autumn Festival. The special event, *CHInoy Hao Bang* (*hao bang* meaning excellent), was launched in 2012, the year when Chinese New Year became a special non-working holiday in the Philippines. The name not only means excellent, but the onomatopoeia *bang* is often associated with fireworks, which is an important sound or image in the context of a new year celebration; thus, the name Hao Bang can be read differently—as a "good" "bang," a good, explosive start to a new year. Moreover, the choice to hold this event at the Mall of Asia also highlights, or rather, heightens the commercial aspect of this holiday, not to mention the fact that SM as the biggest mall/conglomerate in the Philippines, happens to be owned by Chinoys as well.

The program for this celebration has mostly followed the same format, featuring food, dragon and lion dances, and fireworks, although they also attempt to vary the "performance" by featuring a new activity/segment for each year. For example, in 2013, the celebration included a cosplay ("costume play," a known Japanese performance art) competition that was to feature "Chinese-themed" costumes, which resulted in a number of participants portraying characters related to martial arts and a lot of costumes in red (playing to stereotypical images of the Chinese). Meanwhile, the highlight of 2014 is the finale of the reality TV (an American influence) singing competition, *CHInoy Star Ka Na*, the initial requirement of which was for contestants to sing songs in three languages (Mandarin, English, and Filipino). These performances are examples of culture as necessarily a product of "mixing," following Clifford's definition of diasporic cultural identity ("Diasporas" 323).[35]

Finally, as Schoenmakers writes, in the context of a festival, every performance "becomes a 'sign' for something, though what that 'something' is or could be is difficult to indicate in general terms" ("Festivals, Theatrical Events" 33). To extend this idea to the study, the individual performances in the festivals and the festivals as performances in themselves can be construed as "signs" of Chineseness, but specifically how it is "Chinese" is difficult to pinpoint precisely.

"CHInoy Chow"

In relation to these two major events, the producer of the show simply mentions the food associated—tikoy and mooncake. In the episodes featuring the celebration of Chinese New Year, the more prominent segment is "CHInoy Chow," in which the food most symbolic of the event—tikoy—is featured repeatedly, with content revolving around the etymology of its name, where it is sold, its different flavors, how it can be cooked in various ways, how it is made, etc. The same process is repeated during the Mid-Autumn Festival, wherein the host visits and revisits the store known for selling mooncakes and other Chinese delicacies, and asks about the process of making this

particular delicacy. Murcott's short piece, "The Cultural Significance of Food and Eating," describes how food serves as a means of performing identity:

> [W]hat people are prepared to take inside their bodies reflects their social identities, and their membership of social groups. [E]ating marks the characteristic way people are simultaneously biological and social [. . .] Human beings belong to the worlds of both nature and culture. Repeatedly people make sense of this double membership. As Leach (1976) has observed: "Food is an especially appropriate mediator because when we eat, we establish, in a literal sense, a direct identity between ourselves (culture) and our food (nature)." Food, then, has both a material and a symbolic significance. (204)

Food as a marker of both nature and culture, as material and symbolic, allows not only a demonstration of duality, but also implies a certain ambiguity. While food can serve as a cultural marker for the Chinese,[36] it can also transcend or go beyond culture; after all, Chinese food is not limited to the Chinese, and not all Chinese/Chinese Filipinos eat only Chinese food. However, food can also be a form of cultural knowledge for the younger Chinoys who are not well versed in the Chinese language/s and other traditions.[37] The ease of accessing this cultural knowledge lies in its "universal" nature (everyone has to eat, and everyone appreciates good food), as well as its compatibility with the postmodern consumer culture. The Chinoy becomes both "in" the culture and beyond culture because of food.

Given the thrust of *CHInoy TV*, the urge to emphasize "sameness" in terms of Chineseness is stronger. This explains the show and segment's emphasis on Chinese food, as mentioned in an episode (Chinese voice over, translated): "Our program has always focused primarily on Chinese cuisine . . ."

Chinese restaurants are often given names that signify luck or prosperity or wealth (e.g., Longfu Seafood Restaurant, *long* meaning "dragon," *fu* meaning "wealth"), or contain "Chinese" objects/images (e.g., Red Lantern, Crystal Jade), or use names of actual places (Lugang, a place in Taiwan). Beyond that, in the episodes featuring these Chinese restaurants, there is repeated emphasis on "Chinese" and "authentic," as mentioned by the restauranteurs and by the show itself:

> [T]o extend Chinese dishes to Chinese and Filipino public. (Long Fu Seafood Restaurant)
>
> The need for an authentic taste of Chinese cuisine . . . our chefs are from Hong Kong and Mainland China. (Gloria Maris Restaurant)
>
> [*A*]*uthentic* Cantonese cuisine coming from Singapore . . . (Crystal Jade Restaurant)
>
> The show's overloaded with authentic Chinese dishes . . . (Feature on *King Chef*)

One of the episodes also features a Mr. Chow, a host that appears to be the actual human version of the original cartoon character of the show named *Mr. Chow* that is placed alongside the food promotions in the show. Apart from talking about the particularities of Chinese food, the host speaks with a distinct Cantonese/Chinese accent, which contributes to the "authenticity" of the Chinese/Cantonese food being introduced.

This particular emphasis or repetition of authenticity also exhibits a certain ambiguity. Crossman mentions this in her essay on food as means of performing cultural/immigrant identity: "the performance of cultural identity through food, wherein [they] describe the ever-present, but never defined idea of a cultural authentic . . ." ("Tastes Like Home" n.p.). Although there is no straightforward definition of "authentic," certain claims do hint at it, such as chefs being sourced from Mainland or Greater China, the restaurant originating from parts of Greater China, elements of dishes highlighted as particularly "Chinese" (ingredient commonly used/preferred, name of the dish and its "meaning"). Aiming at authenticity betrays a desire to capture the elusive "essence" of Chineseness; yet, this attempt results in a vagueness that can only be masked by repeatedly introducing and ingesting Chinese food. It is then implied that "authenticity" can be better understood if one partakes of Chinese food; the "cultural authentic" is a knowledge transmissible only by experience, accessible by way of performance through consumption.

One episode of "CHInoy Chow" features a Binondo Tour that includes visiting restaurants in the area and trying out Chinese food. The show often features Binondo to highlight its various facets—as a historical site, a major business center, and home to "gastronomical places" (that are more often than not Chinese restaurants).

To digress a little, it is curious to note how another segment of the show, *CHInoy Travel*, often involves a trip to Binondo, because Binondo is always emphasized as a place of the Chinese/Chinoys. Yet, by placing these visits under the travel segment, it implies that the Chinoys are not necessarily in Binondo. Thus, the frequent returns to Binondo is a mark of ambivalence, when audience recognizes that the Chinoys are both "in" and "out" of Binondo; there is a fetishistic nature in this continuing visit/revisit, as the Chinoys continuously (re)establish Binondo as the site of the Chinese (or for the performance of Chineseness).

Returning to the matter of food, the episode begins with the hosts inviting viewers to gain more (experiential) knowledge of Binondo/Chinatown by eating their way around the area. The segment features the "Binondo Food Wok (Walk)," wherein the tour guide alternates between mentioning a fact about Binondo and introducing a particular Chinese food/restaurant. It is interesting to note that some of the restaurants featured include one that sells Chinese Indonesian food, and another that sells dumplings from Northern China (while the tour guide emphasizes that most of the Chinese in the Philippines originated from Southern China); this only works to show that the emphasis is on "Chinese," regardless of where this "Chinese" originated and its "connection" (or lack thereof) to the Chinese Filipino culture; "Chinese" in the form of food is multiple, hybrid, but also one (as it is still Chinese).

The inclusion of food works not only to please the palate, but also to make history more "palatable" to people who may find continuous spouting of facts and trivia uninteresting or irrelevant. Furthermore, establishing a connection between the two may facilitate recall every time one eats Chinese food. However, most of the participants of the tour are clearly foreigners or non-Chinese (based on their physical appearance and languages spoken);

thus, this performance/remembering is not exclusive to the Chinese/Chinoys. Nevertheless, it is the Chinese/Chinoy that acts as the tour guide and the host, thus appearing to assert knowledge of the "Chineseness" in the form of history and cuisine. What is interesting, however, is the host of this segment also expresses a lack of knowledge, saying that while he grew up in Binondo, he still hasn't tried all of the local preserves; he also claims that the tour has helped him gain new insights about the rich history of Binondo. The hosts appear to be "ambassadors" of the culture, yet they also work to relate to the viewers by learning alongside them about certain aspects of the culture.

Conclusion

I end this chapter by returning to Naficy's case study, which explains the penchant for repetition in the television magazine, as demonstrated by CHInoy TV's repeated features of Binondo and of the usual food eaten during the major Chinese holidays. This also extends to the organizations' specific performances (events) of Chineseness:

> Repetition and redundancy are encouraged by the . . . magazine format and its postmodern pastiche style, which tend to suppress narrative singularity in favour of expository diversity and segmentation. Repetition takes many forms . . . especially true of the commercials and certain fetishised and stereotyped icons, which are repeated a number of times during any one programme . . . repetition is a way of reassuring the self that it will not disappear or dissolve . . . Two contradictory processes seem to be involved: one an affirmation of the 'old' identity . . . (relatively unified, usually familial), the other a confirmation of the 'new' identity . . . (syncretic and generally individuating). ("Making of Exilic Cultures" 559)

Ambivalence stems from the show's attempts to balance between establishing ethnic/cultural identity through the repeated icons (people, food, place) and showcasing a certain cosmopolitanism of the Chinoys through their variety of interests that allow for expression of individualism. This results in an oscillation between different forms of sameness—as "Chinese," but not just "Chinese" because of lifestyle preferences dictated by global

trends (thus, subscribing to the sameness resulting from globalization). The "desire" to be resinicized ("return" to Chineseness) is not unidirectional, as spelled out by Naficy in the conclusion on his explication of repetition:

> [T]his 'return' is not wholehearted; it is charged with potential choices about which there is much ambivalence: a return to the old, originary identity, or a turn toward consumerist subjectivity, or a move to construct a third, syncretic identity. Thus the repeated circulation of narratives and fetishes that embody both . . . search for the schema and for the permanent, and the craving for the current and the new . . . not only rewards our ability to textually foresee narrative developments but also serves to reinforce the internalisation of a split subjectivity and of a syncretic identity . . . (560)

CONCLUSION

"Chinese" as an identity is simultaneously a matter of "choice" and an imposition; "choice" in terms of a "culture," recognizing how "tradition" and "upbringing" work to shape identity. In this sense, identity can be learned and unlearned, adopted and set aside but also imposed in terms of "race"—because as Anderson writes, "racism dreams of eternal contaminations" (*Imagined Communities* 149).

"Chinese" is also a commonsensical notion in the way racial identities are generally assumed to be, and also in the sense that when one claims to be "Chinese," what immediately comes to mind is that the person must be from China, or at least his or her ancestry must be traceable back to China—thus, a view of identity that ties to the concepts of nation-state and/or "homeland." Yet, as to precisely what constitutes Chineseness, or even who are the "Chinese," Hau expounds on this in *The Chinese Question* where she explains that the term *Chinese* has been historically used to refer to the so-called mestizos/mestizas and even Filipinos who were raised in China at one point (9); however, some—perhaps the so-called "pure" (or purist) Chinese—would likely disagree with these particular usages. Yet, even among the "pure" Chinese, there are disagreements on how much of one's "Chineseness" can be attributed to "race" (lineage, ancestry, "blood") and how much ought to

be supported by "culture" (practices, values, beliefs). The resulting tensions can be read as either contributing to or symptomatic of ambivalence in themselves.

To apply Butler's description of power and its ambivalence (*Psychic Life of Power* 198), the term *Chinese* provides both power to the Chinese Filipinos to differentiate themselves from the Filipino polity and marks a restriction on the Chinese Filipinos to continue performing and perpetuating what is expected of their being "Chinese." By claiming to be Chinese, the Chinese Filipino calls attention to his/her difference and capitalizes on the perceived superiority (in terms of financial background or "backing," credibility, linguistic and arithmetic skills, etc.) of the Chinese, done most likely for career advancement or entrepreneurship. Yet, their doing so establishes the "veracity" of the stereotypes, and any future decision on their part to "break away from the mold" can result in the questioning of their "Chineseness" such as not choosing a "profitable" career path (business) and marrying outside the "culture" ("race").

In an article entitled "Asian American Stereotypes as Circulating Resource," Angela Reyes shows how stereotypes can simultaneously be negative and positive, depending on how they are dealt with and reappropriated. She writes that a crucial prerequisite to the reappropriation of stereotypes is "interrogating the very notion of stereotype as a performative resource" (45). Reyes' application of the nature of stereotypes in relation to the Asian Americans can be linked to what this study has worked to achieve; that is, to trace how stereotyping is linked to performativity (and ambivalence) in that it is both positive and negative, true and not true, created and "creative."

The tension between continuity and change, tradition/history, and modernity/contemporaneity that characterizes the (re)formulation of Chineseness also points to performativity and the Derridean concept of iterability—that is, "Chinese"/"Chineseness" gains its meaning(s) as a result of various repetitions and deviations in performances of it through time.

Chineseness is a text that is (re)produced through the selection and presentation of certain themes and elements in both literary and cultural texts, in popular culture and in everyday life. In the short stories, the recur-

ring themes include death and the accompanying rituals, family and the importance of filial and marital piety as well as entrepreneurial and financial acumen, the position and roles of women, and the historical and cultural implications of Chinatown as the site/setting. The stories demonstrate the performativity of text and of Chineseness by showcasing "performances" (in its traditional sense) put together through the themes and elements that make up the "theatres" in the text. As such, these performances are not only repetitive, but also contain ambivalences, so that the contexts that supposedly give credence to or legitimize the texts are in turn further established by the texts themselves.

In media and organizational activities, the idea of "Chinese" involves a deliberate stylizing of "culture" that concedes to and embraces "positive" stereotypes. All these "performances" serve to concretize the Chinese's, Filipinos', and others' understanding of Chineseness. The concept of cultural identity as performed by media and organizations primarily follows the traditional definition Hall mentions: "one, shared culture, a sort of collective 'one true self', hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed 'selves', which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common" ("Cultural Identity and Diaspora" 223).

The most prominent aspect of Chineseness based on the discussion in the last chapter is "Chinese" as a class identity; Chinese as money, in other words. In *The Chinese Question*, Hau has devoted an entire chapter to discuss "capital" as an important facet of Chineseness, in which she traces how "capital" as part of the Chinese identity has transitioned from being a "Marxist 'pariah capitalist' or 'bourgeoisie'" to now "liberal 'middle-classes' and 'entrepreneur'" (147). (Confusing open and close single and double quotation marks. Please check if these are accurate.) The change in the nature and scope of their "capital-related" activities today has resulted in "the "Chinese" [becoming] an object of fascination and aspiration" (219– 220). It is to this particular "tune" (image?) that the Filipino Chinese student organizations and the Filipino Chinese lifestyle shows have chosen to stylize their "performances."

In summary, I have worked to demonstrate how ambivalence is present on two levels in the process of grappling with the "Chinese" part of the

Chinese Filipino identity. This "Chinese" identity is predominantly built on stereotypes, and the nature of stereotype is ambivalent because it establishes itself by way of continuous repetition, and its fetishistic nature ably counters attempts to de-mythicize it. The other expression of ambivalence can be found in the individuals' responses (as seen in the interviews conducted for this study and on *CHInoy TV*), when they attempt to redefine "Chinese" while simultaneously resorting to the (stereo-) typical cultural attributes. Yet, the repetitions by the younger generation are not always the same, and not mindless, but can be viewed as a response to this "call" to "be Chinese." All these point to the continuing, underlying anxiety concerning identity, and this anxiety about the need for (or lack of) essence to this identity reveals how it is performative in nature. The study has not aimed at producing a (new?) metanarrative for the young Chinese Filipinos, which has resulted in its "episodic"/fragmentary presentation. I attribute this to the overdetermined nature of this "Chineseness" and to the postmodern influence on the concepts of identity and culture.

An Autobiographical Response

One of the advantages in writing this project is being part of the demographic that I am writing about; however, this also has its own set of difficulties that I have had to overcome, foremost of which is the necessity to distance myself and compartmentalize some of my personal and more "subjective" opinions on the issues relating to Chinese Filipino or "Fil-Chi" identity, so as to not superimpose my own sentiments on the answers of the informants/subjects of this study.

Nevertheless, the conceptualization of this project also involved a significant amount of personal reflection on the matter that has largely served as the impetus for this study. The primary anxiety is that being "Chinese Filipino" is not as straightforward as many seem to think it is, in the sense that despite the countless studies done by scholars on the subject matter, the disciplines in which the scholars are in obviously color the nature of the study: sociologists seek to present the more general viewpoints, the choices and the sentiments of the "general public" (for the lack of a better term),

historians revisit and examine different periods in the past and identify selected findings as factors that significantly shape the present, and literary critics read and reread established texts of well-known ethnic writers that either perpetuate or overturn traditional representations/depictions of the ethnic group. To resort to the thinking that one discipline's representation of the Chinese Filipinos is somehow "more accurate" than another would not be beneficial to gaining a more multifaceted understanding of Chineseness in this society, not to mention how it would paint one as being churlish and resistant to a transdisciplinary orientation that is required in today's complex world. Moreover, the anxiety of scholars about explaining and defining "Chinese" can also at times result in a tendency to speak for other Chinese Filipinos who may not easily agree with what has been said. Or while they may find that while the "findings" of these studies do seem to be quite true/accurate, agreeing wholly to these "findings" about Chineseness may not necessarily make the person feel completely satisfied. The anxiety can persist, and new studies continue to emerge in order to "appease" that anxiety.

Another point is that many of the younger generation (and by this I refer to members of my generation/ or my "peers") continue to accept or presume a "cohesiveness" to this identity, which, while crucial, is also often oppressive and debilitating if the "cohesive" view largely revolves around the idea that the "Chinese" aspect of their identity can only be a non-choice, a "prison-house" that we can never escape from. Yet, to simply overturn "Chinese" as an identity can result in anxiety, if it is interpreted as a loss of identity. What I hoped to have achieved through this study is for myself, foremost (and hopefully my peers as well), to arrive at an open-ended view of Chineseness. Such a view can be described by a set of cultural attributes, but cannot be fully reduced to them, and that these attributes are "true" not only because of historicity as so many other studies have shown, but also because of how the younger generations continue to perpetuate and perform them, despite not being aware of their "origins."

Finally, to restate the position of this particular research and how it contributes to the already extensive knowledge regarding Chineseness,

I have focused on texts produced more recently by the members of the younger generation, the millennials, while including some older selections as references and points for comparison (i.e., short stories from the *Intsik* anthology and the study by Pinches). This is not in any way to counter the numerous insights that have been gleaned from established "Fil-Chi" texts, but to hopefully add perspective to the perennial Chinese question by explaining how it relates to performativity. As a point of differentiation, the analyses of the texts have mostly focused on the contemporary and more recent circumstances in the attempt to show that even without constant recourse to historical occurrences, it is still possible to see how "Chinese" is defined and reinforced through present circumstances. Another point is that some scholars may easily assert "hybridity" of their Chinese Filipino identity and culture because of their "mestizo" lineage. However, for the Chinese Filipinos who are "pure" Chinese (racially) and who are raised "Chinese" (culturally), it becomes difficult to perceive this notion of "hybridity." Thus, what I hope to have achieved through this study is to challenge the notion of "Chinese" even for the "purest" among the Chinese.

Postscript: Transculture

Given the current trends of globalization/globalism and multiculturalism, people are perpetually shuffling between the homogenizing hail of the former and the defensive stance of the latter via glorification of traditions. Between these deterministic models, where can one find the exit? In the Chinese Filipino context, how can the Chinese Filipino choose to not be labeled as Chinese or as Filipino without being accused of having surrendered to the easy, "cop out" identity as a global citizen or having succumbed to a Westernized/colonial mentality?

This is the point where the notion of transculture enters the picture and affords an alternative, albeit a very abstract one. While it is almost similar to Bhabha's notion of cultural difference, transculture differentiates itself by positing a more disengaged position, rather than the enmeshed position that cultural difference or hybridity proposes:

> Transculture is viewed as the next level of liberation this time from the "prison house of language," from unconscious predispositions and prejudices of the "native," naturalized cultures [. . .] Transculture . . . is "being beyond" in relation to the entire cultural realm . . . the sphere of all possible differences from existing cultures inasmuch as we cognize them and *distance* ourselves from them. (Epstein 327–332)

The danger of transculture lies in its inexplicability because it refuses any definitive description (332). It *transgresses*, but precisely because of that, it is anti-essentialist and it affords liberation. Based on certain portions derived from the interview responses, one senses this desire in some of the informants—the desire to leave the racial and cultural questions behind. This desire to "leave behind" should not be interpreted as cultural destruction or ignorance, but as cultural transcendence—"freedom . . . to live on the border of one's 'inborn' culture or beyond it" (334).

I insert this explication of transculture by Mikhail Epstein as the potential means of countering the deterministic hails of race and culture, of assimilation, diaspora, and globalization. Applying transculture in the case of the Chinese Filipinos, the desire to go beyond the Chinese culture, should not be interpreted as embracing of Filipino or American cultures. Epstein cites Charles Chesnutt, who says, "It seems to me a modern invention of the white people to perpetuate the color line . . . Why should a man be proud any more than he should be ashamed of a thing for which he is not at all responsible?" (336).

Thus, the insistence that one ought to be proud of being Chinese is an imposition of the orientalist and majoritarian culture from which we ought to be liberated. What transculture really allows for is an irreducible difference, best explained through this metaphor: "transculture integrates many cultural traditions and sign systems and embraces a universal symbolic palette, from which individuals can freely choose and mix colors in order to paint their self-portraits." (343)

Notes

1. This research was completed under the supervision of Dr. Oscar Campomanes and with the help of Dr. Stewart Young and Dr. Shirley Lua.
2. The term *pure* follows the modern (Eurocentric and thus problematic) notion of racial purity. In this instance, for the sake of definition and setting of parameters, by *pure* we refer to lineage—that is, "pure" Chinese refers to not only those of Chinese descent, but also implies that there were no instances of interracial marriages in the family tree. In some cases, it is also used to refer to those who have predominantly "Chinese blood." Chu also mentions the creation of a "pure" Han racial identity that supported the spread of Chinese nationalism (314).
3. A source mentions several time-frames that the millennials were born in, the earliest being 1976 and the latest 2004 (Rouse n.p.). For the Philippines, an advertising agency points to the "segment aged 20 to 34 years old and born between 1979 and 1993" (Bayani n.p.). This generation is described as having been raised in an environment that is saturated by electronics, social media, and information, which has shaped their demand for instant gratification. Furthermore, they are also described as highly individualistic and "tolerant of difference" (Rouse n.p.).
4. For more details concerning the profiles of the respondents, refer to Appendix G.
5. Williams' tracing of race's progression from "natural" to "cultural" allows one to segue into Michael Omi and Howard Winant's *Racial Formation.* Omi and Winant argue that race is not an essence, but a subjectivity, a "process," a production (55; Lee, "Transitivity of Race" 58). For them, not only is race performative, but it also has "no biological basis," unlike gender, which has sex as biological basis (55). It may be too dismissive to claim that race has no biological basis. One might consider instead that, unlike the more definitive characteristics of sex, biological attributes for race are multiple. Skin is presumably the most popular sign of race, yet given the gradient nature of color and how it can be easily affected by climatic conditions, it is hardly definitive. Other signifiers, such as eyes and hair color, also show gradations, and these question their effectiveness in providing solid categorization for individuals.
6. According to Hall, identity is "the meeting point" of two processes, and one of the processes involves the formation of subjectivity that enables us to "be 'spoken'" ("Introduction" 5–6). One identifies a passive nature in this process—"spoken"—which implies that the subject is always formed vis-à-vis another, and the other's perception of the subject gives shape to the latter's subjecthood.
7. Some respondents explain that they do not voluntarily mention that they are Filipino for a couple of reasons: they presume (correctly in most cases) that this

leads to more questions about their "background," because they "know" that they look "very Chinese" or they don't look "Filipino" anyway, or they are raised as "Chinese" and may thus find the Chinese identity as the more sensible option, since it is the most familiar and possibly more "prestigious" option, compared to the Filipino identity.

8. Pseudonyms have been assigned for the specific respondents whose answers are highlighted in the discussion.
9. *Flesh color*, as defined by *Cambridge Dictionaries* and Dictionary.com, is the color of white people's skin.
10. Prior to this study, the respondent mentioned on one occasion his experiences in the university, where he was often mistaken for a foreigner (i.e., Chinese or Korean) and assumed to be not conversant in Filipino; fellow students thus found it intimidating to talk to him. He also spoke of an incident wherein his surname has led to a professor asking him how he is related to one of the biggest Chinese Filipino taipans, much to his amusement/dismay (he is not related to the taipan).
11. Byrne states this in the context of the blacks and the whites, and how some groups like the Irish became identified as "white" over a long period of time.
12. I found it important to ask respondents about their impressions of/interactions with the new Chinese migrants, primarily because the process of defining and embracing the "Chinese" identity should, in my opinion, involve reflections on how they view other Chinese, especially the ones who are geographically closest to them, but who are viewed by most of them as of different "culture." For one, if they subscribe to the idea that there is such thing as a "Chinese face," it should "logically" follow that all Chinese (whether Chinese Filipinos, new migrants, or mainland Chinese tourists) look more or less the same; and regarding this idea of "Chinese" as "cultural," then what must "logically" follow is that all Chinese should have the same "basic cultural values," which does not seem to be the case.
13. In response to the earlier questions about claiming to be Filipino or Chinese, she admits that she does not look Chinese, and therefore people are more surprised when she claims to be Chinese. This may explain why she claims physical appearance as a point of difference between the Chinese Filipinos and the new Chinese migrants, possibly insinuating that Chinese Filipinos may look more "Filipino" than "Chinese." However, one can also infer from her answers to the previous questions that she does have this preconceived notion of a "Chinese" look.
14. G.I. stands for "Genuine Intsik," which is another (pejorative) term used by Chinese Filipinos/Filipinos to refer to either new Chinese migrants or other Chinese Filipinos who look/act very "Chinese."
15. The instinct of most respondents to answer "culture" suggests that culture remains the more familiar concept, as opposed to "race"—which, as discussed in the previous chapter, may have to do with the Philippines/Manila not being as

racially diverse as other countries/cities. Beyond that these respondents' backgrounds can also be considered a factor—most of them reside in (downtown) Manila (near Chinatown), and are thus (presumably) surrounded by "Chinese" and (more) immersed in "Chinese culture"—which, in turn, makes "race" seem like a foreign concept. In my discussion with a colleague, she suggests that this automatic turn to "culture" as the answer might be due to the fact that the poll is a dialogue between Chinese Filipinos only (both respondents and researcher are Chinese Filipinos), and "culture" is something that creates affinity among people. In simpler terms, it is sensible to say that people do not really bond over similar looks, but rather over similar interests and values.

16. For the few who claim that "Chinese" is more "racial" than "cultural," this may be due to a couple of reasons: these respondents are often identified as Chinese, but do not feel very Chinese "culturally"; they travel more to other countries where their phenotypic markers and (possibly different) accents become more noticeable, which increases their "racial consciousness."
17. She says about the culture she is in: "The background/culture I grew up in, I can describe as very traditional Chinese. Wherein I am trained to be modest in my action and words, trained to speak the main language of Fukien or Mandarin as my first language, to work hard in order to have a worthwhile future (business minded—as much as possible), these are some of the practices and values that my parents have passed on to me."
18. The respondent talks about her culture that is "a mix of both traditional and non-traditional Chinese culture," the non-traditional parts of which she claims to be due to their being Christians, and so do not perform traditional Buddhist practices such as "feng shui, burning of incense, burning of paper money for the dead."
19. The respondent mentions principles in their family that include being "conservative, reserved, and want[ing] to maintain harmony among people." For her, culture matters because it is not only about belongingness, but also about proper identification and upbringing, suggesting that a person's disposition and worldview are undoubtedly shaped by the culture he/she grew up with.
20. Though the statement is arguably problematic, Pascale explains the basis for this sentiment. As testified by history, power (and oppression) is implicit in race, which translates to any use of such labels becoming automatically tainted with racism (27–28).
21. "[T]he presence of race is itself an effect of power. A system of oppression *racialized* particular phenotypes. In this sense, *the categories of race, in and of themselves, can be understood as expressions of racism"* (Pascale 27–28, emphasis mine). This supports the convergence of racialism and racism. However, others make the effort to draw the line between the two notions. Schuck provides a clear (and ideal) distinction between the two: "[There is] widespread confusion

between racism, which is hostility to blacks based on their supposed inferiority, and what I call racialism, which is a heightened consciousness of the race of others . . . Racism is irrational, contemptible, and toxic. Racialism is rational, morally neutral, and inevitable in a society with our history of slavery, discrimination, and white-black social differences in so many areas" (n.p).

22. Gilroy provides an insight on this matter when he identifies the deep-seated desire of people to belong, no matter how momentary the belongingness is: "However dissimilar individual bodies are, the compelling idea of common, racially indicative bodily characteristics offers a welcome short-cut into the favored forms of solidarity and connection, even if they are effectively denied by divergent patterns in life chances and everyday experience" (*Against Race* 25).
23. According to Jarrod Hayes, the repetitive and thus excessive nature of stereotyping makes it a double-edged sword—it reinforces, but also allows possible weakening: "[Stereotypes'] constant and excessive reproduction constitutes, at the least, discrimination, and, in harsher forms, racial terror. The same excess, however, can also prove to be the stereotype's weakness. If one could perform the stereotype according to Irigaray's paradigm of miming, one could repeat Orientalist clichés without being totally reduced to them" (235–6).
24. Halion's rephrasing of Derrida explains this process: "[E]very sign is determined in its signification by all of the other signs which it also participates in determining; it is also determined by its iterability. That process is never finally completed. What a sign means is therefore determined by all the other signs and by all those contexts in which it is iterated."
25. For this, I borrow John MacAloon's definition of performance: "[An] occasion in which as a culture or society we reflect upon and define ourselves, dramatize our collective myths and history, present ourselves with alternatives, and eventually change in some ways while remaining the same in others" (Alexander et al. 13).
26. Given that this is a scholarly take on an autobiographical issue, I am compelled to examine and explain how I decided on the subsequent elements/settings/themes. The simplest explanation I have to offer is that these were the recurring themes I found in the stories. However, my being a Chinese Filipino has also made these particular themes more "pronounced," that is, I find these themes familiar given my Chinese Filipino background and my exposure to the usual issues experienced by the members of this community. In the interviews I conducted during the study (see previous chapter), many respondents also mention some of these "themes" when they talked about their understanding of Chinese cultural values and practices (e.g., filial piety/respect). It may seem ironic, therefore, that while one "accuses" my fellow Chinese Filipinos of succumbing to repetition of these themes, I can very well be accused of being equally repetitive by deliberately placing the limelight on these issues. Yet, repetition is precisely the point of this

study—in order to demonstrate how "Chineseness" is repeated, I repeat as well; this compulsion, coupled with the multiple attempts to problematize, expresses both the ambivalence of Chineseness and of the Chinese Filipinos (including myself).

27. It becomes necessary to look into a historical view of death for the Chinese to explain this preoccupation with it. Although the Chinese's histo-cultural understanding of the afterlife begins with "the idea of Heaven, transformed from the idea of the omnipotent devilish spirits with angry demands in prehistoric China (up to 800 BC) to the concept of the benign ancestral supporters" (Lee, "East Asian Attitudes Toward Death" 57), what Confucian principles deem more important than afterlife is to live life by closely adhering to moral principles, which includes the management of the five relations, the primary being that between father and son: "The continuity of a family connotes perpetuity of the self and is valued as a way to accomplish personal immortality in the Chinese mind. Having no children was one of the three vices against his parents according to Mencius. A son should respect and care for his aging parents and keep ritual sacrifices after their deaths. The individual and his or her family are closely bonded, rather than two separate entities" (Lee, "East Asian Attitudes Toward Death" 58-59).
28. Given the relational orientation of the Chinese (Mencius' emphasis on upholding the five relations), one may infer from these principles that there is no clear disconnect between this life and the afterlife for the Chinese, such that the children's responsibilities do not end even after death, and this continuing relation points toward continuity of "life" itself.
29. There is another explanation for this paradoxical outlook toward death that involves fear in two opposing senses: being terrified of horrible consequences while also possessing respect toward the dead who are now somehow of a higher ranking and possess greater power compared to the living. Michael Puett explains this outlook by describing the "multiplicity" of the human nature/body: "In early China, the body of a living human was believed to contain several elements, including different souls and energies. Some of these energies were believed to be of heavenly origin; others were from the earth. At death, the former would float up to their ultimate abode in the skies while the latter would remain on or enter into the earth" (225). Hence, those of the heaven, the spirits, would be identified as the ancestors that the living now look to for protection and providence, while the souls are deemed to be potential ghosts that may continue to haunt the living. The spirits/ancestors who are seen to be capricious must be appeased, and the souls/ghosts must be contained, all by means of performing certain rituals (226).
30. "The Great Wall" is a term commonly used by the Chinese Filipino youth today as a humorous reference to the (older generation's) prohibition of interracial

marriage between Chinese and Filipinos. The well-known Chinese monument—the Great Wall of China, which was erected to keep invaders out—is used as a trope to describe the fear of the Chinese of the erosion of their culture (race) if no boundaries are drawn between the Chinese and Filipinos.

31. Readers were sourced from the researcher's pool of acquaintances, depending on their availability. Each reader was assigned a story in the anthology and given a set of questions to answer after reading the story (see Appendix D for the set of questions).
32. In a study on identity performance of Latin American youths, Poteet cites Anne-Marie Fortier, who expounds on belonging: "[T]he 'performance' of a collective 'body' makes use of 'terrains of belonging' . . . these belongings may include . . . more broadly the 'cultural and historical belongings' reconstructed out of cultural practice itself . . . the re-negotiation of identity and space/place can be viewed as how both bodies and places are invested in and become representations of cultural identity. Belonging, therefore, can be viewed as an active struggle to reconcile the representation of cultural groups *so that the way they are viewed by others approaches the way that they view themselves"* (34, emphasis mine).
33. However, to distinguish popular culture from mass culture, one can first consider Dwight Macdonald's description of mass culture that emphasizes its unthinking/unquestioning nature: "Mass culture is imposed from above. It is fabricated by technicians hired by businessmen; its audience are passive consumers, their participation limited to the choice between buying and not buying . . ." (Storey 29). Meanwhile, in Raymond Williams' discussion of the keyword *mass*, he describes one sense of the word "as in 'there are very few original eyes and ears; the great mass see and hear as they are directed by others" (Smith, qtd. in Williams 31), from which one can infer a passivity in mass culture. In his subsequent definition of the term *popular*, Williams then qualifies popular culture as "the culture actually made by people for themselves," thus suggesting agency or ownership, although he also recognizes that both terms *popular* and *mass* are ambivalent in that they oscillate between positive and negative connotations (192, 236–7).
34. Naficy cites Nick Browne, who offers the concept "supertext" as a unit of analysis for the television: "The supertext refers to the programme and all the interstitial materials surrounding it—teasers, titles, credits, advertisements, station identifications, programme promotions . . ." (540).
35. Edensor also explains this mixing as characteristic of festivals: "Festivals . . . are increasingly likely to be penetrated by other forms of popular culture, promiscuously borrowing from film, popular song and fashion. Thus, familiar cultural points of reference are recycled through these performances in an informal, carnivalesque atmosphere . . . festivals are more protean, adaptable and

contested, can be the site of divergent performances and change from year to year" (82).

36. In a study by Yu about Taiwanese American cultural identity, she cites Robert Georges, whose article "You Eat What Others Think You Are" talks about food as a marker of not only self-identity but also identity as perceived (imposed) by others. The latter writes: "[W]e are not only *what* we eat, but . . . we also often eat what we do because of *who* we and others think we are and they are" (5).
37. "[D]oing food together as performance of cultural identity. This structure identifies the ways families (and others) gather around food as a means of linking up with one another . . . teaching each other what it means to be Brazilian, Peruvian, or Mexican" (Crossman, abstract); or, as in the case of this study, Chinese.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix A

Interview Questionnaire (1st version)

Age: Sex: Secondary school:

Part I

1. Whenever you say that you are a Filipino, how do people react? How do you respond to their reactions?

2. What is the first thing that comes to mind when people ask if you are a Chinese? Why?

3. Do you think there's a difference between the labels "Filipino Chinese" and "Chinese Filipinos"? How are they different? How do you label yourself?

Part II

4. What language are you most proficient in? (Rank accordingly, 1 – highest, 4 – lowest)

Speaking:		English		Filipino		Mandarin		Hokkien
Reading:		English		Filipino		Mandarin		Hokkien
Writing:		English		Filipino		Chinese		

5. What language/s do you speak in: (Rank according to frequency, 1 – most frequent)

Home:		English		Filipino		Mandarin		Hokkien
Work/School:		English		Filipino		Mandarin		Hokkien

6. If you consciously think about how you speak, do you ever use two to three languages (mixture of Hokkien/Filipino/English) in one conversation/sentence? How often do you do it?
   — What do you think are the reasons why you mix languages?
   — Have other people noticed you doing so? What were their reactions?
   — Have you noticed other people doing so? Or does it seem "normal" for you?

7. Do you think that knowing how to speak the Chinese language(s) heightens the desire to be Chinese? Why/why not?

Part III

8. What are some values and practices that you perceive as distinctly Chinese? How did you know about these Chinese values and practices?

9. How has studying in a Chinese school contributed to your knowledge/understanding of the Chinese culture?

10. What answers have you gotten from non-Chinese people about Chinese values and practices? How are these accurate or inaccurate, in your terms?

11. What are some values and practices of Filipinos that you know of or practice? What do you think of these practices?

12. Among these values and practices, are there any whose origins you are unsure of (whether they are Chinese or Filipino)? What are they?

13. Which ones of all of these values/practices have you willfully decided to adopt? Why? Which ones would you want to eliminate? Why?

Part IV

14. What are the works you've read about Chinese Filipinos (studies, literary works)?
    — What films/shows have you watched that focus on Chinese Filipinos?
    — What do you think of them? What insights about Chinese Filipinos have you gathered from these works?

15. What are some stereotypes that you know of about the Chinese? About the Filipinos?
    What do you think of these stereotypes? Which ones do you accept/deny? Why?

16. To whom do you think the stereotypes refer? What group/s do you know of that give a different representation of Chinoys?

17. How do the existing stereotypes affect your idea of what it means to be a Chinese Filipino?

18. Can you recall any encounter/s you've had that involved "racist" comments about the Chinese or the Filipinos? How did you respond?

19. What are the things that you think are unique to a Chinese Filipino?

20. Do you think there are any differences between the older and the younger generation of Chinese Filipinos? How would you explain these differences?

Part V

21. What is your perception of the new Chinese migrants (Mainland Chinese) in the Philippines?

22. What are some similarities that you share with these people? What are the differences?

23. How does your interaction with them help you evaluate what it means to be Chinese?

Part VI

24. From when you were young until now, how (if at all) has your perception of being a Chinese changed through time?

25. Can you identify moments or points in your life when being Chinese became/becomes particularly prominent/emphasized?

26. How (if at all) does your idea of being Chinese differ from that of the Chinese Filipino community?

27. What do you think is the value of a Chinese identity at present?

28. If it were entirely up to you, would you want to retain or change your Chinese identity? Why?

Appendix B

Interview Questionnaire (2nd version)

What is your understanding of culture? How would you define it?
How would you describe the culture you're in (based on your definition)?
Personally, do you think culture matters? Why/why not?

Part 1

1. Whenever you say you're a Filipino, how do people react? How do you respond?
2. What comes to mind when people ask if you're Chinese?
3. How would you describe a typical Chinese face?
4. Do you think Chinese Filipinos and the new Chinese migrants look alike?

5. Can you differentiate a Chinese from other similar-looking Asians? (e.g., Korean, Japanese)
6. Have you ever thought someone was Chinese, but he/she wasn't?
   — What made you think the person was Chinese? How did the person react?

7. Have you encountered someone whom you thought was Filipino, but was Chinese? What was that like?
8. When you go abroad, how do people identify you? How do you identify yourself? What usually happens after that?
9. Do you think that assuming a Filipino (national) identity would be more liberating than assuming a Chinese identity? Why/why not?

Part 2

10. What are some Chinese values/practices that you keep/do, even though you do not really agree with them or you don't understand them?
11. What are some Chinese values/practices that you think are sensible for you to keep holding/practicing?
12. What are some values/practices you have that aren't very Chinese, or are even "against" Chinese values/practices?
13. Do you think some people are more Chinese than others? How would you gauge that?
    — What do you consider to be authentically Chinese? Why do you think authenticity is particularly important for the Chinese?
14. Do you think that the younger generation of Chinese is less "Chinese"?
    — Do you think they want to be less Chinese?
    Does this mean that they are necessarily more Filipinized? How so?

Part 3

15. What are some stereotypes you know of about Chinese/Filipinos/Chinese Filipinos? What do you think of these stereotypes? How do they affect your idea of what it means to be Chinese Filipino?

16. Have you read any Filipino Chinese stories/novels? Watched any films? (Please list them)
    — Are you interested in these kinds of works? Why/why not?

Part 4

17. What do you know about the new Chinese migrants (Mainland Chinese) in the Philippines?
    — What are some similarities you share with them? Differences?

18. What do you think is the value of a Chinese identity at present?
— If you had a choice, would you want to retain it or do away with it? Why?

Appendix C

Online Poll (Quick Survey via Facebook)

Q: For you, is "Chinese" more about RACE or CULTURE? (Preferably not both). Why (if you have a reason for it)?

Culture, because even the definition of 'Chinese' varies among those of the same race Culture. Because it's not only about your nationality, but more of what upbringing you had along with its values, traditions and stuff.

Culture. Because look at 3rd or 4th gen Chinese immigrants, they usually act more like the host country's culture. In the sense that being Chinese was because of the culture of the place rather than the race, because take someone out of it, after enough time, being Chinese feels I have Chinese genes rather than I am Chinese!

Race. Culture is a fluid, constantly evolving thing; putting a label on it presupposes that it's already fully defined, when it can never be. Chinese as a race and ethnicity is definable by genes and DNA, much more concrete. And while it's impossible not to be influenced by the culture you grew up in, I'd rather like to think that you shouldn't let it define you, that you shouldn't just stick to certain assumed parameters. Being ethnically Chinese, though, that's not something you can change, even if you wanted to.

For me, being Chinese is more about the culture. A person can be 100% Chinese by blood but cannot speak the language or doesn't exercise the Chinese culture.

If I was given only two seconds to answer it would be culture, because that's the default expected answer. Without over thinking, just some level of it, I go for RACE. Because if no one told me I was "Chinese" in the first place, then I wouldn't even give it a second thought. But someone told me from childhood that I am Chinese, ergo affecting culture and my mindset of culture from then to now for as long as I continue to live with the same people. Culture is a choice. Race is not. I can choose to not live as a Chinese and all that is expected in that life. Race I cannot change, it is a genetic God-given trait. Being Chinese is a race. There will be a stereotyping once someone heard or see that you're a Chinese. You don't have a choice. Culture is the practice. These change over time. Usually not followed by the new generation. Though some practices will still be there . . . even if you don't follow the culture,

you're still a Chinese. There will still always be first impressions about a Chinese. It's a race. Nothing can change it.

For me it's Race. Let's say I saw [a] Caucasian who grew up in an authentic Chinese family, community even. When I see him I won't even think to consider him as a Chinese. So basically my viewpoint on the word Chinese would be more on the genes thus RACE for me.

I'd say culture, but that's just me and my feelings toward my Chinese ancestry. I don't think of race since by definition race is genes and physical characteristics and with the advancement of technology, those two things can be altered/changed while culture is something deeper. BUT I think the Chinese people in China would answer "race."

We all know it's both. But I think people seem to classify it first by race before culture. Hmmm . . . How to explain this . . . My mission's professor at SBC can speak fluent Mandarin, yet one look at him, one wouldn't think of him as Chinese, because he's British. My New Testament professor on the other hand speaks with an American accent, and doesn't speak Chinese, yet one look at him you wouldn't think of him as an American, because he is Chinese. The reason behind this I believe is, one word, GLOBALIZATION.

*** Generally speaking, the Chinese have always been ethnocentric rather than racist, in the sense that they always took pride in their superior culture rather than looked down on a specific race or people group. One proof is how the Chinese refer to themselves vs others ("us humans" vs "barbarians"). Notice it's "barbarians" and not "monkeys," which imply cultural rather than racial inferiority. (Turns out, we look down on ALL other people groups.) Further proof can be seen by how the Chinese accept foreigners who embrace or at least appreciate and respect Chinese culture and its people (the most famous athlete in China today? Kobe Bryant.), and by how much more common and accepted interracial marriage is among the Chinese.
Thus, I'm inclined to think that the answer to your question is CULTURE rather than RACE. I'm willing to bet that most of you, younger ones, (yes, I said "YOU," because I'm over 30! I'm old! huhuhu!) would find it less objectionable to marry a similarly-cultured foreigner than a fellow yellow you have absolutely nothing in common with culturally. PS: I don't think RACE is the answer because racially speaking, we're the same with the Japanese and the Koreans. But they're not "Chinese," right?

Appendix D

Interview Questions for Writers and Readers
(*Lauriat: A Filipino-Chinese Speculative Fiction Anthology*)

For writers

1. Can you share a little about your family background (Chinoy background)?
2. What are your thoughts on the self-identity of the younger generation of Filipino Chinese/Chinese Filipinos today? How do you think they identify themselves? Do you think that they're particularly interested in what constitutes "Filipino Chinese"?
3. Do you think that emphasizing the (Filipino) nationality allows the Chinese Filipinos to set aside the "Chinese" aspect of their identity? How so?
4. How would you describe the culture of the younger generation of Chinese Filipinos?
5. What is the interest in publishing Chinese Filipino writings (literary works)? Is it merely for representation, or are there other reasons? To whom are these stories addressed? (Given that many of the younger generation are no longer interested in reading)
6. How does your Chinese Filipino background affect your writing (of any genre, not necessarily related to Chinoy writings)?
7. In your opinion, what is the purpose of integrating the Filipino Chinese element into speculative fiction (in *Lauriat*)?
8. Have you read any of the earlier Chinese Filipino literary works (e.g., *Intsik* anthology, Charlson Ong's novels)? What do you think of these works?
9. Why is there a turn to speculative fiction for the Chinese Filipino writers? Do you think that, comparing speculative fiction and mimetic fiction, the former serves as a challenge to earlier sentiments about Chinese Filipino identity and the angst that is almost always attached to this identity? What other genres are the Chinese Filipino writers interested in today, apart from speculative fiction?
10. Speculative fiction appears to be a very broad/loose category. What are the subcategories of the stories in the anthology?
11. Why do you think that most of the stories in the anthology contain the element of horror?

Follow-up questions for both writers and readers

Personally, what is *Chinese* for you? Is it more about race or culture? How so? How much of the history about Chinese in the Philippines do you know? How much of your family history do you know?

For writers

How did you come up with the story in the anthology? What came to mind when you were asked to write a Fil-Chi story? In your opinion, what in particular makes your work a "Fil-Chi" story?

For readers

Please read the assigned story. Were there any parts (elements/themes) that you found familiar? How do you think the story is a "Fil-Chi" story?

Appendix E

Interview Questions for Organizational Representatives

For all the Fil-Chi organizations

1. What motivated you to join this organization, and to be part of the leadership?
2. Tell me about the history of the organization:
    a. How long has the organization been in place?
    b. How did it start out?
    c. What is the mission? Vision?
    d. What are some major changes that have occurred through time?

3. What makes the organization uniquely Filipino Chinese, apart from its members? Why do you think it's important to have a Filipino Chinese organization today?

4. What are the usual types of events organized? (Please list the more recent major events in the past year or so) and provide the details (e.g., goals/objectives, program flow/mechanics, participants, results, etc.)

5. How do you think the organization should position itself in the future to address the needs of the younger generation?

6. How would you describe the younger generation of Filipino Chinese today, based on your observations as a member/leader of this organization? What are their interests and preoccupations? How would you describe their culture?

Follow-up questions based on the profiles on their websites/Facebook page/etc.

For AFiCs

1. How do you think the Alliance specifically works to "foster a meaningful relationship among Chinese Filipino and Filipino people"?

2. What do you think is the importance of having a Filipino Chinese alliance?

For Celadon

1. How does the "Chinese Filipino tradition" specifically contribute to the organization's "vision of social change"?
2. What are some of the "strong Chinese-Filipino principles" the organization and its members hold that help develop competitive leaders?
3. How is understanding culture important for development of leaders and visionaries?
4. What are the Ignatian values that you refer to in your vision? How does this relate (is this related) to the Chinese-Filipino culture?

For Englicom

1. How does the organization "strengthen relationships among the Filipino and Filipino- Chinese" while simultaneously catering primarily to Filipino Chinese?
2. What culture/s does the goal of fostering "cultural appreciation" include?
3. What kind of values does the organization hope to form or develop among its members? How does the organization work specifically to ensure "harmonious molding of Filipino and Chinese worldviews"?
4. Looking at your vision, please define what is meant by Tsinoy consciousness, and Tsinoy identity, from the organization's perspective.

For Chinese Students Association

1. How has the organization specifically "helped members find their identity"?
2. How does this organization define "Chinese culture"?
3. How does the organization specifically foster meaningful relationship between Chinese and Filipinos?
4. What are the "problems of the Chinese community" at present that the organization is working to address?

For Scarlet

1. How does the organization define "Filipino culture" and "Chinese culture" respectively?
2. What other ethnic traditions and cultures does the organization introduce, apart from the "Filipino" and the "Chinese"?
3. What specifically are the "intellectual and productive practices" that the organization endorses?

4. How does the organization specifically "create and foster better relationships among and between Filipino, Chinese, and other students from different ethnic/cultural backgrounds"?

Appendix F

Interview Questions for CHInoy TV

For the producer/CEO

1. What's the vision for CHInoy TV? What is CHInoy TV's main goal? Have there been any shows before that catered to Chinoys or represented them in particular? Why choose a lifestyle show? How does a lifestyle show appeal to culture enthusiasts?

2. Who is the main audience of CHInoy TV? Is this in line with what you had in mind when the show was set up?

3. Given how the younger generation spends more time on the Internet, why choose TV as a medium?

4. How has CHInoy TV changed its direction in the span of years? What made you decide to implement these changes?

5. What are the more popular segments of the show, based on viewership?

6. What are your future plans/directions for the show?

7. How would you describe the culture of the younger generation of Chinese Filipinos today?

Questions in response to the descriptions on their website

1. Do you think that, today, the Chinese Filipinos are recognized as an ethnic Filipino group in the same way/manner that the Tagalog, Bisaya, Ilocano, etc. are viewed? How so?

2. he Chinese are also described as immigrants. Do you think that the Chinese in the Philippines today are still thought of as immigrants?

3. Why do you think it's important to emphasize the entrepreneurial mindset and skill of the Chinese?

4. What are the Confucian values and traditional customs and traditions that contribute to the entrepreneurial success of the Chinese?

5. How does the show define culture?

For the hosts

1. How did you become a CHInoy TV host?

2. Did you have to undergo any training when you were selected as a host? Can you tell me about it?

3. Based on what you know about the show, what is the show's definition of "Chinoy"?

4. What are the most popular segments on CHinoy TV?

5. Do you know the profile/s of the viewers of CHInoy TV?

6. Do you detect any difference between your being a Chinoy on the show and in your everyday life? (In terms of what you think how you feel about "Chinese", on and off the camera)

Follow-up questions:

— What were the lines they asked you to say as part of the audition?
— What did you notice about the candidates who were selected to be hosts?
— What did you realize that you had to change or emphasize about yourself, in order to get and retain this hosting job?
— What other instructions are you usually given, apart from having to speak louder, livelier/more energetically?
— How do you host a particular segment? Do you have a script?
— What you wear on the show, are these all sponsored? Who selects the attire? Do you get to keep them?
— What about the makeup? Do you feel that you look different with makeup on?
— Do they try to enhance/downplay any particular feature of your face?
— What else do you do, apart from hosting segments?

Appendix G

Profiles of Individual Respondents

Number of Respondents
45 (30 for first version, 15 for second version)

Gender
Male: 17
Female: 28

Age
18–19: 3
20–22: 17
23–25: 13
26–28: 10
29–30: 2

Secondary Schools (Chinese Schools)
Philippine Chen Kuang High School: 1
Chiang Kai Shek College: 2
Hope Christian High School: 7
Immaculate Conception Academy: 6
Jubilee Christian Academy: 6
Philadelphia High School: 1
Philippine Cultural College: 1
Philippine Institute of Quezon City: 1
Saint Jude Catholic School: 1
Saint Stephen's High School: 13
Uno High School: 4
Xavier School: 2

Universities
Ateneo de Manila University: 13
De La Salle University: 17
De La Salle –College of Saint Benilde: 1
Far Eastern University: 1
University of Santo Tomas: 5
University of the Philippines: 1
[Not Indicated]: 7

Number of Readers sourced for selections from *Lauriat* anthology
10

Appendix H

Selection of Short Stories

Lauriat: A Filipino-Chinese Speculative Fiction Anthology (edited by Charles Tan)
Andrew Drilon, "Two Women worth Watching"
Erin Chupeco, "Ho-We"
Kristine Ong Muslim, "The Chinese Zodiac"
Isabel Yap, "Pure"
Christine V. Lao, "Dimsum"
Gabriela Lee, "August Moon"
Paolo Chikiamco, "The Captain's Nephew"
Fidelis Tan, "The Stranger at my Grandmother's Wake"
Marc Gregory Yu, "Chopsticks"
Yvette Tan, "Fold Up Boy"
Margaret Kawsek, "The Tiger Lady"
Crystal Koo, "The Perpetual Day"
Kenneth Yu, "Cricket"
Douglas Candano, "The Way of Those Who Stayed Behind"

Intsik: An Anthology of Chinese Filipino Writing (edited by Caroline Hau)
Benito Lim, "The Burial"
Charlson Ong, "Mismanagement of Grief"
Gad Lim, "Sunday Dinner"
Grace Pe-Bacani, "Starting Over"
R. Kwan Laurel, "Amah"