

Book Review

GIVING BACK: Filipino America and the Politics of Diaspora Giving.
By L. Joyce Zapanta Mariano. Temple University Press. 2021.

While the enduring influence of the expatriate (or balikbayan) on the Philippine nation and its economy has been a long-studied phenomenon within Filipino, Filipino American, and Philippine studies, L. Joyce Zapanta Mariano offers a new critical way to explore questions about diasporic practices as they lie within the myriad structures of the global economy. Mariano's monograph, *Giving Back: Filipino America and the Politics of Diaspora Giving*, theorizes the politics of giving as a mode for studying the complexities of Filipino American belonging to the homeland and outside of it, shifting U.S.-Philippine relations, and circuits of development under the regimes of globalization. Mariano centers the practice of "giving back" as a key feature of Filipino American diasporic communities through which diasporic subjects send remittances to the homeland as both obligation and responsibility. Challenging the unidirectional movement of this immigrant narrative, however, the concept "diaspora giving" reconceptualizes giving back as a set of processes that attempt to stabilize homeland and Filipinoness in the name of diaspora. For Mariano, both "diaspora" and "giving" are sites of multiplicity that hold several different practices, identities, and arrangements that underscore the transnationality of Filipino American attachment to the homeland. Diaspora giving identifies Filipino Americans as development actors often recruited to participate in the neoliberalizing economy of the Philippine development state.

Moving away from discourses that highlight "love" of homeland as the foundation of the remittance economy, the book disrupts the linearity of this narrative to argue that both migration and distance are themselves transnational spaces that cultivate ideas about connection and responsibility. To this end, Mariano skillfully points to the ways that Filipinoness is never a stable entity, and the interrogation of giving practices offers insight into the ways that these acts regulate and produce alternative Filipino American diasporic formations, what Mariano calls the resubjectification of Filipino Americans' roles for national development under globalization. *Giving Back* relies not upon the "policy-oriented evaluations" that measure the impact of remittances on homeland states (13). Instead, its archive follows the paths of resubjectification, using ethnography and textual analysis to trace the complexities of charity and philanthropy, which are critical operations for international and global development. Mariano historicizes charity as a colonial discourse that "brings abstract citizens together into

nations, constructing home or the domestic in relation to foreign spaces populated by the colonial other" (13). The four chapters of the book conceive of different forms of diaspora giving, turning not only to individual remittances but also to transnational anticolonial activism.

Where the Filipino American immigrant is often configured as distinct from the Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) based on the terms of citizenship and settlement, the first chapter traces the ways that these figures are mutually constituted by a political economy structured by labor migration and state development. Mariano argues that although Filipino American diasporic subjects might not see themselves as connected to other diasporic Filipino workers, both share histories and experiences of mobility and return and have been positioned to serve as key actors for national development. Mariano's work to disrupt the logics of Filipino American choice and OFW duty is imperative. It reveals that both choice and duty are embedded within the structure of feeling of neoliberalism. In Chapter 2, Mariano studies writer and organizer Ninotchka Rosca's activism to provide examples of counterhegemonic giving that does not subscribe to the logics of U.S. imperialism and global capital. In doing so, Mariano theorizes homeland "disorientation" as an analytic for locating moments of disruption within the progressive pathways of state development. Disorientation interrupts the singular orientations that Filipino Americans have toward homeland. The third chapter follows Philippine Development Foundation (PhilDev), a transnational nonprofit organization, as a model of philanthropy that frames itself as the singular vehicle for addressing suffering and precarity in the Philippines, especially in its collaboration with the Philippine state. Corporate social responsibility through PhilDev and earlier Ayala foundations regulates giving by imagining itself as "doing good" and existing outside of the contradictions of the global economy even as its growth depends upon that very framework. Throughout the chapter, Mariano traces the ways that corporate philanthropy calls upon Filipino Americans to participate in development programs. Its discourse of "community" produces the homeland and the Filipino diaspora. The final chapter focuses on FACES, a U.S.-based environmental organization that organizes against neocolonial structures in the Philippines through coalition work and diasporic solidarity networks between Filipinos in the United States and in the Philippines. FACES centers its work near the Subic Bay Naval Base, where group members learn from local groups and organizations. For Mariano, FACES is attentive to the limitations of diasporic politics, which often focuses upon navigating the law. Its work focuses on the ways that Filipino Americans are connected to the Philippines not through a shared Filipinoness but through the realities of material conditions. Its "disorienting politics" promotes responsibility, accountability, and mutuality. The book ends with a moving epilogue of the author's familial connection to the complex questions that surround love, homeland, and giving.

Giving Back is required reading for students and teachers of postcolonial studies, Ethnic Studies, and American Studies, especially scholars and organizers seeking to understand the limitations and possibilities of diaspora giving.

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