This essay focuses on the cultural literacy that popular songs of lament in the Philippines in the 1970s and 1980s created and depended on and discusses the way this cultural literacy contributed to the popular revolt against the dictatorship in 1986. I foreground the social conditions of this literacy and the political significance of what gets lost as the popular revolt gives rise to an emergent transnational rhetoric of democratization and people power under globalization. Finally, I point to undercurrents of alternative transnational affective literacies that course through the globalization of popular music.

Keywords globalization; popular music; democratization; Philippines; transnational politics; nationalism

For three months in 1981, I lived on a ship named the S.S. Universe together with 600 ‘Americans’, a Taiwanese crew, and seven other ‘international’ Asian university students on scholarship, on an educational voyage around the world. The two Indonesian students on board occupied the cabin across from the one I shared with the only other student from the Philippines. At the time, I considered the cultural world of my two new friends in some ways more foreign, though less intimidating, than the cultural world of the ‘Americans’, which had long hovered over and served as a reference for mine. So, I was surprised one day to hear, mixing in with the strange, pungently sweet smell of clove cigarette smoke issuing daily from my Indonesian friends’ cabin, the extremely familiar sounds of the Filipino pop-folk song hit, ‘Anak’ [Child], by Freddie Aguilar. Adi, one of the Indonesian students was not only playing the recorded song but also singing along to it in Tagalog, a language that he neither spoke nor understood, with full expressivity and emotion. When he told me that the song was a huge hit in Jakarta, this fact only added to my surprise because up until the unprecedented success of ‘Anak’, what would later become known as ‘Original’ Filipino Music (OPM) did not enjoy the commercial popularity or broad respect that US and British music had in the
Philippines, so much so that it seemed almost inconceivable to me that a Tagalog song would enjoy any commercial popularity in another country. For decades Filipino music had languished in the provincialized recesses of the country’s increasingly urbanized culture, as US American and British pop dominated the airwaves and even local musical venues. As one musical reviewer wrote in 1980 about the state of local songs ten to fifteen years earlier, ‘Pinoy [slang for ‘Filipino’] music then was a Hiroshima in ruins’ (Gotera, J. C. 1980, p. 8; see also Espino 1990). The musical ruin in some ways paralleled the general political ruin that characterized the beginning of the 1970s, when the Marcos government violently suppressed the militant student, urban youth and labor movements and pushed their radical nationalist claims underground with the declaration of Martial Law in 1972. In the 1970s, as most of the country became subjected to the official nationalism of the Marcos regime, particularly in the realm of culture and the arts, a whole range of contemporary popular music sung in Tagalog – Manila Sound, Pinoy Rock, Pinoy Jazz, Pinoy Salsa, Pinoy Folk and Pinoy Disco – started to gain new and growing audiences. But even by the late 1970s, when Pinoy music found more and more commercial success, local ‘hits’ were a far cry from the ‘international’ hits of the North Atlantic musical scene. Clearly, by 1981, things had changed.

As it turned out, ‘Anak’ did not only break Philippine commercial record charts in 1979 (selling an unprecedented 100,000 copies in the first week and more than quadrupling that in the next two months, effectively redefining the scale and meaning of ‘popularity’ in the Philippine music scene) (Lanot 1999). It also hit the no. 1 spot in Japan, achieved considerable popularity in other countries in the region such as Indonesia, Malaysia and Hong Kong, and developed a sizeable following in Western Europe. To put it in cultural studies terms, the song appeared to have achieved some measure or manner of transnational legibility. What is the character of this legibility and what kind of cultural literacy does such legibility entail?

I broach the subject of Anak’s musical popularity in terms of legibility and literacy as a way of attending to the conditions of understanding (as the practice of making meaning) and codification (as the practice of standardizing communicative acts) that underlie the phenomenon of popularity. By legibility and literacy I mean conditions of understanding and codification that exceed narrow linguistic and textual definitions of ‘readability’ and that include social and cultural meanings and collectively shared modes of affect or ‘structures of feeling’. To think about ‘popularity’ through these terms allows us to consider shared forms of imagination that course through and generate different communities, whether musical or political, and the mutable and complex relations between them.

How then might we think about the form of transnational cultural literacy that this song, ‘Anak’, somehow managed to tap into or communicate in,
perhaps even helped to create? If literacy depends on the codification of particular living practices of cultural production (e.g. culturally-meaningful acts, social modes of affect) in order to render them legible and transmittable across disparate social contexts, we might also ask, what modes of affect are codified and transmitted via the circuits of transnational cultural literacy within which, for a brief historical moment, ‘Anak’ was able to travel? By 1986, World Music had formally arrived as a marketing category (with the release of Paul Simon’s album, *Graceland*). But with the exception of Aguilar’s song, which had found its way into world travel almost a decade before, Filipino music had not gained entry into the emerging circuits of global culture. While one might be tempted to argue that it prefigured the circulation of ‘local’ (i.e. non-western or world minor) musics within metropolitan spaces, which the notion of ‘World Music’ encapsulates, *Anak*’s anomalous success makes it a minor episode, rather than a precedent-setting event, in the globalization of music. Later, I hope to suggest and remark upon some possible transnational permutations of this minor signifying event and, further, to consider what falls away from the dominant transnational codes of political understanding that emerged out of the broader conditions of its communicative movement.

Before doing so, however, I would like to contend that, within the Philippine context, ‘Anak’ contributed, even if in a tangential way, to the social creation of an affective semiotic structure for an emergent nationalism, a new form of imagined community or *bayan* [people/nation] that found tentative political expression in the event of ‘People Power,’ the four-day popular revolt in 1986 that deposed the twenty-year old authoritarian regime of Ferdinand Marcos. Far from simply being a musical expression of political opposition, however, Aguilar’s hit song very much depended on and resonated with the official nationalism of the state, an official nationalism that was itself part of the Marcos regime’s ideological project to usurp and co-opt all the radical energies of the militant youth and labor movements, which had threatened to unseat him from power. Indeed, it was in part authoritarian state-sponsored efforts to promote a politically managed, aestheticized cultural nationalism that created the conditions for ‘Anak’’s production and distribution. Entered into the first Metro Manila Popular Music Festival organized by the Ministry of Culture (headed by Imelda Marcos) in 1978, ‘Anak’ won second prize, public praise from Imelda Marcos herself who was guest of honor on the final night of the festival, and a proper recording contract. With the personal sanction of Imelda (herself an avid singer of Philippine love songs) and a government decree requiring radio stations to play an hourly quota of Filipino language music, Aguilar’s recorded folk-pop song quickly skyrocketed to the top of the charts.

Many scholars of popular music have commented on the important role such music plays in creating social forms of belonging and identity. As Simon Frith argues, ‘The experience of pop music is an experience of placing: in
responding to a song, we are drawn haphazardly into affective and emotional alliances with the performers and with the performers’ other fans ... music can stand for, symbolize and offer the immediate experience of collective identity. Other cultural forms — painting, literature, design — can articulate and show off shared values and pride, but only music can make you feel them’ (Frith 1987). On this view, we might ask, what affective alliances does ‘Anak’ offer? What kind of ‘imagined community’ do these alliances help to compose? If the nation is importantly a matter of feeling or ‘fond imagining,’ as Benedict Anderson suggests in his influential work, *Imagined Communities* (1983) (‘nations inspire love, and often profoundly self-sacrificing love’), then it is possible to consider the ways that the structures of feeling and affective alliances composed through popular culture inspire or draw inspiration from the modes of feeling comprising broader political communities, such as that of the nation.

*Anak*’s lyrics tell a prodigal son story. Aguilar sings, in the second person, of the estrangement of a child from his parents, describing as well as musically rendering the contrast between the joy the child gives his parents as a child and the pain he causes them as a rebellious adolescent desiring to be free of them. The narrative song renders the moment of return, of remorse, and finally, as the child grows up and becomes a father himself, of recognition and understanding, not only of his parents as parents but also of himself as their child. As the first part of the song tells:

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*N’ong isilang ka sa mundong ito*
*Laking tuwa ng magulang mo*
*At ang kamay nila ang iyong ilaw*
*At ang Nanay at Tatay mo’y*
*Di malaman ang gagawin*
*Minamasdan pati pag-tulog mo*
*At sa gabi napupuyat ang iyong Nanay*
*Sa pag-timpla ng gatas mo*
*At sa umaga nama’y kalong ka nang iyong Amang*
*Tuwang-tuwa sa ’yo*

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*Ngayon nga’y malaki ka na*
*At nais mo’y maging malaya*
*Di man sila payag walang magagawa*
*Ikaw nga’y biglang nagbago*
*Naging matigas ang iyong ulo*
*At ang payo nila’y sinuway mo*
*Di mo man lang inisip*
*Na ang kamilang ginagawa’y para sa ’yo*
*Pagkat ang nais mo’y masunod ang layaw mo,*
*Di mo sila pinapansin*
Nagdaan pa ang mga araw
At ang landas mo’y naligaw
Ikaw ay nalulong sa masamang bisyo
At ang una mong nilapitan
Ang iyong Inang lumuluha
At ang tanong anak
Ba’t ka nagkaganyan
At ang iyong mga mata’y
Biglang lumuha nang di mo napapansin
Pagsisisi ang sa isip mo’t nalaman mo ika’y nagkamali
Pagsisisi ang sa isip mo’t nalaman mo ika’y nagkamali
Pagsisisi ang sa isip mo’t nalaman mo ika’y nagkamali . . .

When you were born into this world
How joyful your parents were
And their hands were your light
And your mother and father didn’t know what to do
They watched you even in your sleep
And in the evening your mother would stay up late
To prepare your milk
And in the morning your father would place you on his lap
How happy he was because of you

Now you’re grown up
And you want to be free
Even if they don’t agree with you
They can’t stop you.
You suddenly changed.
You became hardheaded
And went against their advice.
You didn’t even think that
What they were doing was only for you
Because you wanted to follow your own whims
You didn’t give them any mind

Many days passed
And your path went astray
You fell into doing wicked things
And the first person to whom you went
Was your weeping mother
And her question was ‘Child,
why have you become like this?’
And suddenly your eyes begin to tear
Without you noticing it.
Remorse is on your mind when you found out
That you were wrong
Remorse is on your mind when you found out
That you were wrong . . .

The song is musically repetitive, with an unbroken melodic and bass *ostinato* throughout. The entire song consists of two complementary but contrasting refrains, one higher and descending, the other lower and ascending, together musically ‘housing’ or creating a space of dwelling for the once wayward child – a ‘cradling’ effect that at once realizes the single subject *mag-ina* or *mag-ama* (mother–child or father–child) and draws the full circle of a generational life cycle.

Undoubtedly, ‘*Anak*’ fed into Marcoses’ fantasy of themselves as parents of the new nation that was being born out of their ‘revolution from the center’, parents of the prodigal nation and its rebellious youth, now returned to the fold. Ideologically, ‘Martial Law’ served after all to reduce the radical student movements of the late 1960s to no more than the clamor of rebellious children in need of the values of discipline and developmentalist nationalism that the New Society would instill in them. With its musically as well as thematically-realized affective structure of restorative lament, it is not difficult to understand how Aguilar’s song gained such a favorable audience in the Marcoses or for that matter how it could resonate so powerfully among a people subjected to the familial nationalism of the authoritarian state.

Aguilar’s popularity arguably rested on the familial and love themes and reassuring musical dynamics of his songs, which borrowed familiar musical elements of American folk rock and combined them with lyrics in colloquial Tagalog. I would also highlight the importance of his voice, the character and quality of which could be understood to ‘translate’ across national contexts, through its affinity with the internationally-known voices of Cat Stevens and James Taylor, whose songs he did covers of and whom he patterned himself after during his stint in the US military base city of Olongapo, performing for US service men. As part of the broader phenomenon of Pinoy folk, which won growing audiences in the 1970s with its deliberate nationalist appeal to Filipino experiences and idioms, Aguilar’s music expressed problems faced by the common folk [*tao*]. Unlike the songs of Florante, Heber Bartolome, and the group Asin, among those who spearheaded the emergence of Pinoy folk, which typically thematized broad social issues and expressed explicit, socially conscious or ‘cause-oriented’ views, Aguilar’s songs were ‘more personal, almost autobiographical’ (Gotera, A. H. R. 1980). Thus, while he appealed to the emotional sensibilities of the ‘common folk,’ he also contained their concerns within a personal tonality.
Certainly, Anak touches upon the theme of personal rebellion, characteristic of the 1960s ‘American’ youth whose generational alienation from the post-World War II culture of their parents propelled the ‘folk revival’ in the US. This US folk revival (and the development of folk rock) was itself the product of the appropriation of black musical and performance styles, particularly the Blues, and its intermixing or refitting with the electrified sound and beat of white rock and roll in the countercultural context of the 1960s (Eyerman and Jamison 1998). In other words, despite the fact that Aguilar honed his ‘style’ with covers of the music of white folk rock artists, his musical ‘appeal’ must be viewed as bearing elements of those Blues traditions incorporated into folk rock as well as the sound of ‘protest’ that folk songs carried during the radical activist scenes of the ‘world sixties.’ Nevertheless, the impatience and desire for freedom of the ‘youth’ that Anak portrays is detached from any context of radical nationalism and, moreover, reconciled to the wisdom of their elders, whom they are seen to become. Indeed, at the height of his success, Karina Constantino-David (1979) wrote an extensive critique of Freddie Aguilar, faulting him for the individualist, subjectivist, escapist themes and ‘World Bank rhetoric’ of his songs and reading his success as a confirmation of ‘the emergence of a new genre in the Filipino pop world—a trend that rides on social themes of contemporary relevance, but which effectively resolves these within the orthodox framework of the established ideology. Herbert Marcuse had a phrase for this phenomenon; he called it “the absorption of dissent”.

Yet five years later, Aguilar was joining protests against the Marcos regime, writing and performing songs that made thinly veiled political commentaries on and criticisms of the ‘excesses’ of the government. And two years further down, he was campaigning for the brazen and unprecedented presidential candidacy of Corazon Aquino in the snap national election that would lead to the 1986 revolt. How then do we get from the reconciliatory familial motif in Anak to the counter-hegemonic popular nationalism that brought down the Marcos government? Beyond Aguilar’s own politicization, which one could view as simply part of the growing disillusionment among ‘the Filipino people’ with the Marcos regime, the apparent change of political sentiments might instead be viewed as the re-inflection of similar sentiments within a different political mise-en-scène. In other words, the seemingly conservative feelings evoked by Anak, which could easily resonate with the official nationalism of the state, and the subsequent oppositional stance that Aguilar took (as a public figure and in his music) in relation to that state only a few years later, should be understood as less a contradiction or radical difference than a transposition of the very popular sentiments expressed in his hit song.

Indeed, with its musical figuration of the remorseful child, the weeping mother, the mix of love, longing and regret that depends on and invokes a primordial bond of identity (of child as parent, parent as child), as well as the
romantic narrative of a fall from an idyllic time and the promise of its restoration, ‘Anak’ tapped into, stirred and rekindled a whole repertoire of affects and meanings that has historically coursed through lower class Christianized Philippine culture as a submerged lexicon of political understanding and aspiration. It was the rearticulation of this submerged lexicon with the material contradictions and social crisis wrought by the authoritarian nationalism of the Marcoses that enabled a counter-hegemonic interpretation of the troped familial relations comprising the nation, at the core of which lie the affective affiliations invoked by the subjective relation of the mother—child (mag—ina). There are numerous examples in Philippine literature, film, art and popular culture of political interpretations of the mother—child relation paradigmatically figured by the Holy Mother and Child, which continue the historical-cultural practice of casting the Filipino people as the nation’s children (anak) responding to the calls of Inang Bayan, the Mother Nation, since the anti-colonial Philippine revolution against Spain in the late nineteenth century.

Aguilar’s own active role in shaping the counter-hegemonic popular nationalism of the contemporary moment can be seen in his popularization of what would effectively become its unofficial anthem, ‘Bayan Ko’ [My Nation/People], a song composed in 1928 at the time of popular and millenarian struggles against US occupation of the Philippines, with lyrics from a poem by Jose Corazon de Jesus, the foremost nationalist lyrical poet of the early twentieth century. Aguilar first recorded ‘Bayan Ko’ in 1979 as part of his ‘Anak’ album in a patriotic effort to, as he put it, ‘jolt back those who were starting to forget who we really are’, a forgetting manifested by the inundation of the local pop music scene by ‘foreign culture’ (Lockhard 1998, p. 150). One can see the convergence of Aguilar’s national consciousness with the official state nationalism of the Marcoses. But one can also hear the thematic of a different ‘return’ in this idea of ‘remembering’ that is also present in Anak, a memory that is in the music itself and that can be linked to the song’s resonances with the lament form exemplified by Bayan Ko.

While the song, ‘Bayan Ko’, had led a vital underground life for over four decades, accompanying major and minor social struggles from anti-US colonial struggles in the 1920s and 1930s and the resistance against Japanese occupation during the World War II to the post-war peasant revolts and the radical nationalist student movement in the 1960s and early 1970s, it could be argued that it was only when Aguilar sang ‘Bayan Ko’ beside the coffin of Benigno Aquino, Jr that the song surfaced to reach such a widespread (i.e. cross-class) audience, the very same spectrum of ‘A to D’ classes that Pinoy music had begun to reach across. Benigno (Ninoy) Aquino Jr was the senatorial opposition leader against Marcos who, as he was returning from exile in the US in 1983, was escorted out of the plane upon arrival and assassinated by the Philippine military on the airport tarmac. Aquino’s murder triggered an
enormous outpouring of grief and anger (with an estimated one million participating in the city wide funeral procession) and sparked what is widely regarded as a national awakening to the grave and unbearable ills wrought by the Marcos dictatorship. And, so the oft-told story goes, that was the beginning of ‘People Power’ and the eventual downfall of the Marcos regime.

In contrast to many historical and public accounts of the 1986 revolt, which portray it as the culminating expression of a popular nationalism that had suddenly developed among the urban middle classes as a direct consequence of Aquino’s assassination, I trace both a significant impetus and defining semiotic-affective features of this popular imagination of community to the structures of feeling organized through and for the revolutionary people’s war that has been taking place in the countryside since the re-founding of the Communist Party of the Philippines and the resumption of armed struggle in 1968. The important role of the musical form of lament in popular nationalism can, I believe, be better understood by locating the historical genealogy of this structure of feeling in anti-colonial and anti-state armed struggles throughout the twentieth century.

Composed as a *kundiman*, a late nineteenth and early twentieth century song form, which ‘expresses the lofty sentiment of love, and even heroism, in a melancholy mood,’ a musical form descended both from Spanish love songs and art music as well as from the *kumintang*, a pre-Christian war song, ‘Bayan Ko’ suggests this alternative genealogical line for the popular nationalism of ‘People Power.’ ‘Bayan Ko’ became, after all, the unofficial anthem of the emergent ‘people’ of ‘People Power’, the new democratic nation opposed to authoritarianism that is widely credited with the deposing of Marcos. Within the genealogy of the *kundiman*, we can see the overdetermined political meanings that child and mother have held in the past and continue to bear in the contemporary moment. Here the work of Reynaldo Ileto has been very important in showing the way in which the carefree, indulgent and idyllic moment of childhood known as *layaw* informed anti-colonial notions of freedom (*laya*) in the late nineteenth century. Ileto argues that the effectiveness of the lament form of the *kundiman* and *awit* (or narrative song) poetry lay in the transposition of individual memories of *layaw* to a ‘national’ key. Although different in musical form, the *Pasyon* or Passion of Christ that comprised a popular oral tradition sung during Holy Week also provided an affective structure of lament in which the suffering Christ comes to figure a people seeking freedom (*laya*) as well as a lost past and curtailed future of possibility (*layaw*). Both ‘Anak’ and ‘Bayan Ko’ feature the weeping mother/female beloved, the twin figures of Mary (Virgin Mary/Mary Magdalene) mourning Christ, whose tears plead for a redemptive ‘return’. In ‘Anak’, though the moment of *layaw* is finally restored (re-experienced as parental joy), the memory of its loss – the fall from grace – is sustained by the
repeated descending melodic line, which imbues the song with the strains of sorrowful regret characteristic of the *kundiman*.

Such motifs connect the commercial, US-inflected Pinoy folk music exemplified by Aguilar’s ‘style’ to Philippine popular traditions of lament and the undercurrents of political feeling that these traditions have served to expressively realize. As Teresita Gimenez-Maceda shows, it is ‘the sad, pleading melody of the folk *kundiman*’ and its customary theme of unrequited love that enabled it to become an effective means of stirring revolutionary fervor and nationalist sentiment during the anti-colonial struggle against Spain in the late nineteenth-century. Maceda argues that ‘the revolutionary rendering of the *kundiman* is an inversion of the traditional love *kundiman* ... Where in the song of unrequited love, the lover could only be rescued from imminent death if the beloved reciprocates his love, in the revolutionary rendering of the *kundiman*, the children of *Inang Bayan* [Mother Nation] are the ones who must struggle to liberate her ... if the love of the *kundiman* ends with the possible death of the lover should his love be rejected, the revolutionary willingly risks death aware that the shedding of blood is necessary to restore wholeness and freedom to *Inang Bayan* and her family’ (Gimenez-Maceda 1998, p. 354). With the ‘introduction of accidental or non-harmonic notes’ into the basic melodic pattern, the tension created by dissonance in the melodic line and its steep melodic contours, ‘the music of the *kundiman* connotes pain, sadness, loss, hardship and begs for involvement’ (Gimenez-Maceda 1998, p. 358).

We can hear some of these imaginary dynamics in the song ‘Bayan Ko’.

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Ang bayan kong hirang, Pilipinas ang pangalan
Perlas ng silangan, sa taglay niyang kariktan
Ngunit sawimpalad, sa minimithing paglaya
Laging lulumuha sa pagdaralita

Ang bayan kong Pilipinas
Lupa ng ginto at bulaklak
Pagibig ang sa kanyang palad
Nag-alay ng ganda at dilag
At sa kanyang yumi at ganda
dayuhan ay nahalina
Bayan ko
binihag ka
nasadlak sa dusa

Ibong mang may layang lumipad
kulungin mo ay umiyyak
Bayan pa kayang sakdal dilag
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My dear country, given the name of the Philippines,  
Pearl of the Orient – sparkling in its beauty,  
Yet unfortunate in its yearning for freedom,  
Always swelling with tears of suffering.

My country, the Philippines:  
Land of gold, garden of flowers  
Endowed with love,  
Gifted with beauty and radiance,  
Intoxicated because of her beauty,  
Foreign lands were drawn to her.  
My dear country,  
They came and conquered you  
And you suffered in misery.

A bird that is free to fly –  
Put it in a cage and it cries.  
More, what country, so full of radiance  
Would not want to be free?  
Philippines, my beloved,  
Nest of my tears and suffering,  
My wish for you  
Is to set you  
Totally free!

The song’s lyrics convey the image of the nation as the beloved, ‘always weeping’ in torment at the hands of foreign conquerors, a ‘nest of my tears and suffering.’ It is not only the beloved bayan, who, likened to a caged bird, weeps but also the patriot, both identified in the shared yearning for her freedom. Like ‘Anak,’ ‘Bayan Ko’ consists of two main melodic parts (significantly, in reverse order of Anak), the first in an incrementally ascending step pattern, the second in a steeply descending one, together comprising a structure of belabored rise and precipitous fall, of promise and disappointment. Unlike ‘Anak’, however, no musical ‘rocking’ repetition ensues, no lost happiness or freedom is found. As is the case with others of its genre, the plaintive quality of this nationalist kundiman comes from the minor mode, the
dissonances, the pauses on unstable notes (creating tension in the melodic line) and the leaps, especially the dramatic two-notes-above-the-octave leap with the change in key that happens with the onset of the refrain, which begins with the image of ‘A bird that is free to fly’. A wailing effect is created precisely through this dramatic, difficult leap from the lowest and last note in the main body of the song, which falls on and moans the word 

`dusa` [misery], to the highest and first note in the refrain, which cries the word `ibon` [bird] (as if the bird note itself took liberating flight from the note of misery) and, further, through the steep descent of the melodic line that starts at the high point of `ibon` [bird] until the low, rocking phrase that starts with `bayan` [nation/people], thereby musically encapsulating the tremendous gap between the nation and freedom while at the same time creating great expectation and yearning for the bridging of this gap.

In a recording of this song from a concert he gives not long after the 1986 revolt, Aguilar expressively sings the refrain for the last time without any instrumental accompaniment. Just as he is about to end, he dramatically and lengthily suspends the last syllable of the word ‘sakdal’ [totally/completely] on the note a half tone below the real note on which the word falls, which also happens to be the highest note in the piece, before climactically resolving that suspended note into the real note and concluding the song with the belting of the word ‘laya’ [freedom]. Aguilar’s seemingly endless vocal suspension of the climactic note can be heard as a paradigmatic performance of the painful, longing-filled suspension of ‘complete freedom’ that encapsulates the work of the popular lament. It is this affective-semiotic form that has allowed ‘Bayan Ko’ to serve as a powerful, mobilizing medium of nationalist struggles for well over half a century. We could in fact say that this widespread popular affective form was the very undercurrent of feeling that Imelda tried to co-opt with her countless public performances of her favorite song, Dahil Sa Iyo (Because of You). In contrast to ‘Bayan Ko,’ Imelda’s signature kundiman portrayed requited, fulfilled love. Sung to select groups of ‘the masses’ at political rallies and events showcasing government charity projects, Dahil Sa Iyo cast Imelda (and by extension, the Marcos regime) as the figure of the sacrificing, enslaved lover of the Filipino people, with its title and last line echoing the last line of the patriotic national anthem, ‘Lupang Hinirang’ [Chosen Land] – i.e. ‘Ang mamatay ng dahil sa iyo’ [To die because of you].

Sung at Ninoy Aquino’s funeral as well as the increasingly numerous protest rallies that followed, ‘Bayan Ko’, however, significantly helped to shape the structure of national feeling in terms of grieving as liberative desire. Its performances in such open urban demonstrations gave public expression to national suffering and longing as it cast the Marcos regime as the source of the country’s oppression. These performances mark the extent to which the cultural resources of the underground struggle had surfaced and shaped these structures of feeling of an emergent public, particularly the urban middle
classes. And they attest to the fact that the latter’s increasing politicization was deeply shaped by their acculturation to the languages of political imagination of Left activism.

Within the contemporary revolutionary movement, which had kept this song alive throughout the decades, the musical form of the lament organized notions of ‘the people’ (bayan) and functioned as a fundamental (though politically subordinated) affective technology for the practical conduct of people’s war (digmang bayan). In Ruth Firmeza’s 1991 underground novel Gera [War], a guerilla fighter, Ernie, recollects the moment when Marcos declares Martial Law. He is in the mountain of Villa Bello Kampalan in the Northern province of Isabela, waiting together with other guerillas for the President’s announcement on the radio. As they wait, they listen to the song being played:

For I could have told you, Vincent
This world was never meant for one
As beautiful as you

As suggested by the US folk rock song (‘Starry, Starry Night’ by Don Mclean, part of the generational US American folk influence on contemporary political music that can also be heard in Aguilar), lament creates a space-time of impossibility, of blocked becoming, which is symbolically confirmed by Marcos’ declaration. This impossibility is the very ground of revolution. Lament, however, is not simply melancholic but rather closely linked to rage.

Within the revolution and the older cultural history from which it took many of its other musical forms in order to infuse them with ‘revolutionary content’, grief and rage are intertwined passions. As represented in much underground literature, the revolutionary passion that issues out of lament is an overflowing force, exceeding persons, surpassing boundaries of individual selves, kinship relations, territorial land and traditional communities. In the short story by Kris Montañez, ‘Marami Bang Nakipaglibing?’ [Were There Many Who Joined in the Burial?], the wife and three children of an activist, Ka Julian, whose brother is an New People’s Army (NPA) guerilla, are killed by Philippine Constabulary soldiers and members of the Civilian Home Defense Front, a paramilitary vigilante group. A long line of mourners comes to bury Ka Julian’s murdered family, on whose red-painted coffins is written: ‘Killed by the PC!’ ‘Everyone was grief-stricken, but impressed on their faces was a more intense emotion: rage, rage like a long whip of fire that strikes a parched field on both sides of a crooked road. In the final warmth of dusk, the bright sky was glowing red with heat.’ This line of rage extending from people’s faces to their fields and to the sky is the path of revolutionary passion that is traced by the melodic wail in ‘Bayan Ko’ that I described earlier. It is the path through which the profound grief, fear and despair that people experience in a situation of daily state terrorism become
channeled to a revolutionary end (the old man who reports the murders to the NPA wails, “they are killing us already!” His cry was like a long list of the destitute farmers who were tortured, robbed, abducted, imprisoned or killed’). In the course of a radicalized collective bereavement, such emotional accompaniments of the experience of everyday terrorism become at once transformed and transformative. Otherwise containing terrorized people in separate, immobilizing personal crypts, these emotions are turned inside out, converted into a rage that exceeds the individuals out of which it flows, manifesting itself on planes of a socialized nature (the inflamed parched field, the burning red sky) and forging a social force that results in the expressive realization of Ka Julian as a revolutionary agent. Narratively, this parable operates similarly to the burial of Ka Julian’s family, serving as a form of lament generative of revolutionary struggle and desire or what Bertolt Brecht might have imagined as a ‘social gestus of a communistic mourning.’

The liberative force of collective passion overflowing and breaking walls and enclosures, which is instantiated and represented in many underground stories, songs and poems, acts precisely as the radical figuration of the people (bayan). The revolutionary people is figured as storm, sound, song, permeating but also permeable, a spreading movement also imaged as rain and tears. Songs of lament work within the revolutionary community to create an agos [wave] of feeling and action, consisting of multiple tributaries of life as songs. Dead comrades are songs that continue to live on, songs that are however not signs of persons but rather space-times that are infinitely permeable, each one an opening into another, a channel between past and present, contributing to an expanding experience of collective passion that is revolution. Above all, lament served as a community-making performance of collective grief that opened up an indeterminate future — it served, in other words, as a form of revolutionary hope and radical potentiality. 7

Despite the gendered subordination of the kundiman and the dynamics of sorrow within the movement itself, the leadership of which saw in these songs the tendency towards fatalism, passivity, melancholia and messianism, the work of lament and the longer, politicized ‘tradition of weeping’ fostered by and sustaining the ‘people’s war’ slowly surfaced, through urban protest art, underground music and commercial film (in particular, the works of Lino Brocka, including a film entitled Bayan Ko), to inspire and shape the affective milieu and imagination of the popular nationalism of 1986. To be sure, the ‘people power’ event was notable for its largely festive atmosphere and its musical accompaniment by a wide variety of songs, played on the temporary, clandestine radio station, Radyo Bandido, as well as sung by people occupying the streets, ranging from the official slow march of the Philippine national anthem and the danceable rhythms of the 1953 presidential election jingle of Ramon Magsaysay, ‘Mambo Magsaysay,’ to the moving, sorrowful unofficial national anthem, ‘Bayan Ko’. However, it is, I believe, the form of the popular
lament that served as the condition of possibility and defining subjective structure of the 1986 revolt as well as the enabling affective counterpoint to the joyous, almost ecstatic, experience of ‘people power’. Although the most visible performance of the lament form and its expression of collective grief was at the funeral of Benigno Aquino, I would argue that this was the unleashing of an amassment of grief from the numerous assassinations, forced disappearances, incarcerations and tortures undertaken by the Marcos regime, which had consistently responded to the radical hopes and militant actions of the revolutionary movement with unprecedented violence and repression. Without the armed struggle against the dictatorship, it is possible that the political and economic crises, to which much scholarship attributes the mobilization of the elite and middle classes, would not have been as severe or as radicalizing as they were after nearly two decades of civil war. Moreover, it was the cultural technologies developed out of this protracted struggle and the latter’s revitalization of the radical political meanings and affects aroused through the lament form that helped to organize the constitutive experiences of the new imagined community of the Filipino nation that emerged from the ‘people power’ movement.

Since 1986, a number of popular uprisings against governments around the world, from the student protests in Tiananmen Square in China to the popular movements that lead to the toppling of the Berlin Wall, have been referred to, in the international press, as ‘people power’ movements (most recently, in Lebanon). The term ‘people power’ entered into a transnational political lexicon that coded social movements in relation to the new buzzword and global project: democratization. After the restoration of constitutional law, the imagined community that had surged forth under ‘people power’ found itself recast in the generalizing context of this transnational realm of political literacy, eventually evolving into and acquiring the name ‘civil society.’ ‘People power’ became associated with non-violence and the struggle for civil rights, democratic participation and state reform. It became a universal phenomenon that was often explained as a consequence of certain ‘global’ structures, such as the emergence of a global middle class and the urbanization of the globe. Simensen, for example, argues for the role of the systemic integration of the world leading to social integration and the creation of ‘a global civil society in embryo’ as a condition of pro-democracy movements, such as the Philippine ‘people power’ movement. Others would attribute global popular culture. As one account has it: ‘When Chileans organized against the dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet in the 1980s, and Filipinos organized against Ferdinand Marcos, they were influenced by Richard Attenborough’s motion picture Gandhi’ (Ackerman and Du Vall 2000, p. 148). The same account concludes: ‘Nonviolent power, and the democratic potential are therefore naturally linked’ (Ackerman and Du Vall 2000, p. 148). In the majority of these accounts, the assumption prevails that democratization in the
region as well as in the world at large during this period is the outcome of ‘globalization’, whether conceived as economic growth or crisis, international pressure from metropolitan states or financial institutions, or the spread of the cultural values and ideals of existing democracies.  

What are the implications of the new codes of transnational political literacy? What falls away from the forms of understanding that this literacy enables? Democracy is now separated from national liberation movements and their arduous, courageous and creative attempts to define the meaning and direction of this ideal of ‘the rule of the people.’ People’s struggles are coded in terms of rights and participation, which shifts the desires for self- and social-transformation into desires for guarantees for the realization and exercise of those inherent qualities and for the protection of the rule of law and electoral politics. Democracy becomes a matter simply of political space, as in the much-touted phrase ‘democratic space’, rather than a project of revolutionary liberation, which is at once the laborious transformation of the land for the life and social thriving of ‘the people’ (bayan), and the radical transformation of the very structure of Philippine class relations and the prevailing system of production of wealth and power that undergirds it. Democracy becomes a matter of ‘procedures’ and ‘institutions’ such as elections and civil and political liberties, which in turn become the very means by which democratization takes place. As Samuel Huntington argues about the ‘third wave’ of global democratization in which the 1986 change in Philippine government features significantly, ‘How were democracies made? They were made by the methods of democracy; there was no other way’ (Huntington 1991, p. 164). What are lost are not only alternative genealogies of ‘people power’ and its links to ‘people’s war’ and the radical imaginations of social and economic justice and freedom that inspired the latter, but also the political antinomies of mobilizing popular grief as a driving force and resource of ‘democratization.’

In the revolutionary people’s war, death produced a kind of grief that was inextricable from struggle and radical social transformation. In the 1986 revolt, this grief became translated into a successful political mourning with the extirpation of Marcos from the nation as the objectified crisis of the Philippines, a mourning that subsequently became commensurate with a transformation of political representation (a change of regime) and the idea of national reconciliation encapsulated by the CD title of Aguilar’s post-1986 concert, Child of the Revolution. I have written elsewhere about the reconciliatory dynamics of such national mourning and its role in the patriarchal militarist state usurpation of radical feminine power during the 1986 revolt (Tadiar 2004). This usurpation can also be viewed in terms of a coerced evacuation of the project of liberation and revolution, which subsequently came to be fixed, under the new national dispensation, as an outmoded or anachronistic and misguided endeavor. As the feminized ideal of
a re-masculinized civilian-military state, which would represent it, ‘the people’ of ‘people power’ would now be opposed to ‘the people’ of ‘people’s war’. If the former now stood for the national community of a restored democracy, with its role defined by non-violent, electoral politics, the latter now stood for a minor faction of that community, on the very outskirts of democratic participation (by virtue of its engagement in violent, armed struggle against the newly legitimated state) and begging to be drawn back into the fold, much like the prodigal son of Anak.12

I do not want to overdraw the differences between the processes of management of grief and the sets/senses of people they produce that these two designations, ‘people’s war’ and ‘people power’, encapsulate.13 It is, after all, their intertwining that enabled the 1986 revolt. I have rather tried to show some of the cultural means for this intertwining and the importance of listening to the affective dynamics that they make possible. But it is perhaps the very illegibility of the languages of affect and cultural idioms, which are communicated through the generic artifacts of global popular culture – or to put it another way, analysts’ own cultural illiteracy with regard to the historical itineraries of social feeling comprising political imaginations – that has allowed more radical possibilities to be subsumed, even disappeared, within a transnational language of ‘politics.’ Using this transnational language, scholars, policy-makers, political leaders and private citizens overcode the acts and affiliations of people’s struggles in favor of more liberal, capitalist ideologies of national and global civil society, rights discourse, democratic reform and a strong republic.

In a departure from prevailing trends in the scholarship on globalization and culture, which largely focus on the way ‘global’ forms are adapted to or articulated by ‘local’ cultures, I want to suggest the importance of minor translocal circuits or subchannels of affective movement, which course between national and subnational cultures and issue out of diverse sources, in the making of both ‘local’ and ‘global’ political events.14 While moving beneath the radar of analysis of global trends, such as the recent ‘wave’ of popular democracy movements sweeping the region, these subchannels or micro passages of affective movement bear some liminal or subliminal, but no less significant, part in the constitution of political imaginations than the visibly powerful transnational structures to which such trends are often attributed.15 At the same time, such formations of feeling have long had a transnational dimension, inextricably bound up with the long history of colonialism and imperialism and the more recent history of capitalist globalization. These are, after all, the conditions that have inspired and shaped the expressions of popular lament.

My attention to the historical genealogies and musical affiliations of songs such as ‘Anak’ and ‘Bayan Ko’ is also an attempt to complicate the rather simplified accounts of the class composition and politics of ‘People Power’.
Within the hegemonic imagination of ‘the people’ who emerged out of that event and subsequently transmogrified into ‘civil society’ – that is, the Filipino middle class – ‘Bayan Ko’ becomes no more than the expression of aspirations for electoral freedom. As one Philippine columnist invokes the song in the current context of allegations of electoral fraud, ‘If you sang “Bayan Ko” and rallied in the streets to bring back democracy, that is, if you helped fight to make elections free, then you have to listen, read, and decide for yourself what it all may mean.’\(^{16}\) That is to say, singing ‘Bayan Ko’ becomes the sign of one’s calling to civic responsibility. In contrast, my attention to the historical genealogies of this song shows ‘people power’ to be an event produced out of mixed and contradictory sources of political imagination. Moreover, instead of associating particular musical forms and songs with given sets of people and their aspirations for ‘democracy’, my focus on the micro passages of affect conveyed through music raises questions about what ‘democracy’ might mean for those social struggles that are coded in its terms. What other itineraries of cultural imagination contribute to the so-called ‘democratic aspirations’ fueling popular democracy movements and the making of the transnational culture of civil society that would seem to be at once their provenance and their achievement? In so far as ‘the people’, the subject of democracy (demos), might be viewed not simply as a given social group seeking representation and empowerment but rather as itself an event produced out of multiple struggles, multiple aspirations, the question and practice of democratization cannot be removed from the kinds of affective literacies and social movements on which the event of popular imagination of ‘the people’ so importantly depends. This is not just about one kind of literacy in one medium – i.e. music – and its specific logic and level of operation and circulation (as if social practices operated within a disciplinary conception of global culture). Neither is it about a general cultural logic that manifests itself in a particular kind of cultural production. Rather, it is about the way musical literacy emerges out of, is shaped by, and interacts with other kinds of literacy at particular historical conjunctures, creating an ensemble of affective and politically imagined social relations with different social effects and political outcomes. This occurs as a matter of convergence of cultural codes of action and feeling and historical circumstances made possible by organized social movements as well as by socio-cultural contingencies and their material conditions. Very importantly, it occurs also as a matter of divergence of codes and circumstance – here the migration of affective supports of people’s war to the urban centers and the sojourning of Pinoy music abroad.

When I listened to ‘Anak’ again, after hearing my Indonesian friend sing it, it was impossible not to experience the song, and also imagine the Philippines, differently. It limned some as yet unarticulated shared sentiment across national cultures in the midst of national political isolation. And it seemed to evidence that something understood as distinctly Filipino sentiment could
somehow move others in the world, and thereby offer a different kind of international recognition of Filipino originality than that coveted and courted by the Marcoses. That different international recognition would itself become an important part of the self-recognition of ‘the Filipino’, as the people of ‘people power’ would come to see themselves in 1986. As one of those who participated in this event, I cannot say that listening to ‘Anak’ had any discernible or direct influence on my political actions or feelings. But it did play a bit part in creating a soundscape of feeling for the political imagination that moved me as well as many others in the years that followed. Like many songs that shaped the structures of feeling of the brief community that emerged in 1986, its political meanings were mixed, its prevailing tendencies only fixed by the social groups that later came to define themselves in the codes of the political culture which they claimed as their own.

As for my friend Adi, while I cannot say what the song meant for him, or for young Indonesians like himself, who were themselves in a social turmoil of their own, it must have played a bit part in the soundscape of feeling for their own political imagination as well. Indeed, I think it is important to glimpse, in the world travel of a song like this, the undercurrents of alternative transnational affective literacies coursing through the globalization of popular music. Scholars of Indonesia have commented upon how foreign music during this time served as sources of global musical codes and icons that became ‘new dimensions of radical opposition to, or at least anarchic disregard of, the New Order regime’s political Order’ (Sen and Hill 2004, p. 76). They comment in particular on the political remaking of a long depoliticized Indonesian youth (remaja, also known as Anak Baru Gede or Child Just Grown) through such foreign popular music (which, however, they invariably assume to be US-European music, ignoring the minor intra-regional travels of south-east Asian songs like Anak). I would not want to make any direct links between the subsequent deposing of Suharto (in 1998) or to make any pronouncements about a ‘soundtrack for an emerging movement,’ as some have implied in their close linking of entire musical genres with political movements (e.g. Gospel, folk song and the Civil Rights Movement, rock and roll and the Anti-Vietnam war movement, and more recently rock and roll and the democracy movements in Eastern Europe).

My purpose has been rather to call attention to the translocal affective subspaces created by social grief and its cultural performance in popular laments and, more, to attune our ears to the unregulated itineraries of this minor mode of feeling and its various media of expression, traveling through the interstices of global popular culture. I hear the strains of this popular Philippine cultural lament in the ‘Apl.song’ (2003) of the US hip hop group, Black Eyed Peas. Composed by the Filipino-American member in the group, Apl.de.Ap (Allan Pineda), whose biographical origins (born and raised in the former US military base town of Angeles, African American father, Filipina
mother, adopted in LA) limn the messy, mixed history and racial and gendered sexual economies of power and wealth that shaped the ‘home’ about which he sings, the song blends the strains of popular Filipino lament in with other musical styles and musical traditions expressive of the experiences of dispossession – the combination of African American blues and jazz and Afro-Caribbean dub and reggae audible in hip hop. If we were to listen to this song simply as a product of globalizing ‘American’ culture, we are likely not to hear the strains of popular Filipino cultural lament and the convoluted intra-national and transnational histories of both dispossession and social struggle out of which they issue. Those strains are audible in the ‘sampled’ or covered Tagalog refrain from the song ‘Balita’ [News] by the 1970s Filipino folk rock band, Asin [Salt], in which the singer/storyteller brings news from his hometown (bayan ko), plaintively singing of the loss and bloody destruction of the land and world where he grew up and was promised. And they can be heard in Apl’s rap tale of his country (bayan ko), the Philippines, as a fallen promised land, associated with the mother and here racially recoded as the singer’s own ghetto. Modulated from the original high-pitched and wistful tenor voice of Asin singer Saro Bañares to fit the strong bass beat and lower-sounding vocals of Apl’s hip hop rendition, the sad strains of ‘Balita’s’ lament, with its ‘falling’ melody, set the melancholic tone of the ‘news’ that Apl brings back when he returns to the Philippines after a decade of being away: ‘back at home/life was a mess/I guess life’s stresses gets you down/Oh brother I wish I could have helped you out’.

Both ‘Balita’ and ‘Anak’ came out of the same affective milieu, socio-historical moment and material conditions, bearing the musical strains of traditional laments. Indeed, their introductory guitar harmonies, unchanging melodic patterns and bass accompaniments closely resemble each other. What musically comes across, however, as a restorative repetition in ‘Anak’, what I described as its ‘cradling effect,’ can be heard in ‘Balita’ as wailful repetition, as a keening effect created by the tale of mounting losses and devastation as well as by the ‘falling’ melodic pattern of the song (and the absence of an ascendant part, as in ‘Anak’). Interestingly, Asin was the folk rock group that Karina Constantino-David upheld in the late 1970s as an example of political dissent that Aguilar would have done well to follow. Unlike Aguilar, they had no international success. And yet the refrains of their own lament find new life in ‘The Apl song’ of the Black Eyed Peas, itself mobilized as part of the cultural nationalism of a new generation of the Filipino diaspora in the US as well as in the world at large. In the music video of this song, sepia-colored images of the Philippines and a young Apl and his family are intermittently juxtaposed with the visual narrative of a Filipino-American World War II veteran, abandoned in a nursing home in the US, reminiscing about the homeland and longing for his own absent family, as well as footage of demonstrations to demand long-denied benefits for Filipino veterans.
who fought in behalf of the US during World War II. Resonating with Filipino-American struggles for recognition within the US, and diasporic Filipinos’ own continuing affective relations to the Philippines, the song reworks Balita’s protest song into a poignant anthem of belonging and non-belonging, of longing and regret, that imagines a new transnational Filipino nationalism and an emergent bayan (people), which anti-Martial Law solidarity struggles and the singing of ‘Bayan Ko’ among Filipino-Americans in the course of such struggles had to some extent anticipated and prepared the cultural groundwork for.

Today, in a moment when a global war against ‘terrorism’ appears to be the principal means of installing and guaranteeing ‘democracy,’ which the US superstate has usurped the power to define, I think it is important to hear in this musical tribute the persistence of alternative affective literacies of political imagination making their way through the major channels of global culture. Apart from serving as the expression of a cultural voice that has long been inaudible on the main stages of global US power, as it has been widely received, the ‘Apl. song’ bears discrepant, contradictory, even antagonistic legacies of ‘democratizing’ aspirations in its own rendition of the strains of Philippine popular lament. The cultural nationalism of diasporic Filipinos, the struggles of immigrants in the US, Filipino transnationalism, US multiculturalism, anti-racist and anti-war movements, environmentalism, anti-globalization, Filipino communism, peasant struggles, Philippine nationalism, civil society, and other social movements and desires may all find expression in these strains, which can also be heard in the ‘world music’ of globalizing popular Filipino musicians such as Joey Ayala. But such discrepant aspirations will harmonize neither in one longing nor in one community, for us to be able to read these songs as expressions of a given people’s known political aspirations or identity. Perhaps the difficulty is that it is all too easy to understand such living cultural practices in the transnational language of politics through which the world has been taught to communicate and view itself. In that transnational language, ‘democracy’ is the main content and meaning of ‘freedom’ to which all the remaining third and second worlds aspire. What comes to my attention, however, in listening to minor musical strains and the affective undercurrents in which they stream, is the contradictions and contestations among meanings and histories that take place in and through songs and passages that travel, and how that very travel can be the means of making new histories, new struggles, and new imaginations of what ‘community,’ and freedom and happiness might be. By ignoring the contradictory and often barely detectible genealogies and affective literacies of struggle, which nevertheless continue to move people through living cultural practices, such as music, the transnational political language of ‘democracy’ can serve as the very means of democracy’s defeat (that is, if we in fact remain
committed to an open vision of the meaning of democracy as ‘people’s self-rule’).

But there is no such closure or definite end to the travels of Philippine popular lament. The affective resources realized and drawn upon in the course of social struggles are not exhausted by the dominant meanings of the political events that they have helped to bring about. As these unexpected itineraries suggest, what lies ahead are future political possibilities and unforeseen imagined communities forged out of the contemporary expression of the grief and longing that has moved Filipino struggles for more than a century.

Notes

1. The question of ‘literacy’ emerged out of discussions among members of the University of California, Multi-Campus Research Group on Transnational and Transcolonial Studies led by Shu-Mei Shih and Françoise Lionnet. I thank them and the other members for the stimulating conversations on this issue.

2. To listen to ‘Anak’ online go to: http://www.tristancafe.com/music/flash/anak.html


4. Lockhard (1998, p. 148) sees Aguilar’s politicization as both impetus and instance of the general ‘politicization of Pinoy.’


7. The work of lament is crucial not only in the process of subjectification of the revolutionary people of *digmang bayan* (people’s war), but also on the practical conduct of this war. Lament was an important part of the semiotics of the movement, by means of which ‘truths’ (as against the lies of state and bourgeois ideology) were determined, as well as an important part of revolutionary intelligence by means of which the revolutionary New People’s Army (NPA) could be differentiated from the state’s Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Here tears and *damay* or empathetic grief served to delineate and renew the identification of the guerillas with the people. I elaborate on the work of lament and affective labor in the revolutionary armed struggle in Chapter 9, ‘People’s War/Sorrows of the People’ (Tadiar, forthcoming).

8. For a fuller analysis of the subjective structure of the 1986 revolt, see Chapter 5, ‘“People Power”: Miraculous Revolt’, (Tadiar, 2004).

9. For a review of some of the literature on democratization in south-east Asia, see Acharya (1999). Acharya also argues for the important role of ‘international pressure’, from western financial institutions and governments as well as ‘general international awareness about and criticism of authoritarianism in the region’, in fostering democratization in south-east Asia.
By defining democracy in this way, Huntington (1991) necessarily narrows the characteristics of democratization to the hegemonic values, means and agents of capitalist reform. As he continues: ‘They were made through negotiations, compromises, and agreements. They were made through demonstrations, campaigns and elections, and through the nonviolent resolution of differences. They were made by political leaders in governments and oppositions who had the courage both to challenge the status quo and to subordinate the immediate interests of their followers to the longer-term needs of democracy. They were made by leaders in both government and opposition who withstood the provocations to violence of opposition radicals and government standpatters. They were made by leaders in government and opposition who had the wisdom to recognize that in politics no one has a monopoly on truth or virtue. Compromise, elections, and nonviolence were the third wave democratization syndrome’ (pp. 164–165).

See also debates on mourning and activism, such as Douglas Crimp, Ann Cvetkovich and the collection, Loss, edited by David Eng and David Kaznijan (2003).

The communist movement was thus to be treated like the military rebel officers who were invited to join the government. Thereafter the National Amnesty Commission was established as the institution that would oversee the formal procedures for reintegrating members of rebellious movements into mainstream democratic society, thus effectively undercutting the differences in these movements’ criticisms of Philippine ‘democracy’.

For other relations between grief and imagined community, see Caroline S. Hau, ‘“Mismanagement of Grief”: Kidnapping the Chinese in the Philippines’ and Vicente L. Rafael (2000).

‘Transnational social movements played a vital role in the challenge to authoritarianism in the Philippines’ Schock (1999, p. 369). In the wake of ideological justifications for the current US war against Iraq, ‘democracy’ appears to be both the cultural content and political language of an emergent transnational people called global civil society, with its imputed civilizing mission against the global, evil forces of terrorism. Within the imagination of this transnational community, democracy is a project of cultural literacy, a pedagogical imperative that does not preclude recourse to military occupation in order to install democracy’s defining institutions and procedures, such as ‘free’ elections.


For analyses of the changing categories and struggles of the Indonesian youth, and their engagement with global culture, see Siegel (1986) and Emma Baulch (2002). Anak was also translated into Indonesian and, as evidenced by blogs and an informal survey conducted in Jakarta (Florence...
Tadiar, personal communication), remains familiar to many young and middle-aged Indonesians.

18 Siegel writes about the emergence of a new type of youth, remaja, as the ‘result of the depoliticization of youth in the New Order’ (1986, p. 224).

19 For example, one scholar argues, ‘In a very real sense, the triumph of rock and roll in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union has been the realization of a democratic process’ (Ryback 1990). See also Ramat (1994).

20 The music video was directed by a Filipino-American independent filmmaker, Patricio Ginsela (director) and made with a Filipino-American cast and crew, many of whom volunteered their labor to be part of what they considered an important act of political representation (Apl Song Music Video, 2004). Both the video and the song were also embraced by Asian-American communities as part of the broader struggle. To see the video, go to http://music.aol.com/video/the-apl-song/black-eyed-peas/1145890.

21 For a notion of ‘diasporic nationalism,’ see Velasco (2004). Filipino-American graduate students have described the way ‘Bayan Ko’, among other nationalist songs, has been incorporated into Tagalog classes and Filipino heritage programs (Gladys Nubla, personal communication; Gina Velasco and Sherwin Mendoza, email communication). There is room for more ethnographic work on the relations between cultural literacy and politicization, which I cannot do here. My own initial inquiries into this topic suggest that the affective dimensions of cultural work have played an important role in shaping Filipino-American re-imaginings of their relations to the homeland. Such cultural work takes place in ‘exposure trips’ that many Filipino-American students take as part of either Tagalog immersion or study abroad programs, particularly in the inclusion of students in local cultural activities (Mendoza). It also takes place in cultural productions by Filipino-American artists, such as the activist band Diskarte Namin, which blends instruments and elements of traditional forms of music with more contemporary forms, such as folk ballads and rap (Jennifer Soriano, email communication). That is to say, the minor translocal circuits and subchannels of affective movement, which with the example of lament I argue play a deep and not easily tracked role in shaping political imaginations and their effected communities, pass through many kinds of cultural media and take many kinds of routes.

References


