

Title: The Imperiled Filipina Migrant Body: Dangerous Pleasures and Liminal Possibilities in Jose Dalisay's *Soledad's Sister*

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Abstract:

This paper explores the complexities of negotiating private pleasure in Jose Dalisay's *Soledad's Sister* (2008) by problematizing the authoritative patriarchal discourses on migrant identity, subjection and subjectivity through the imperiled body of the Filipina helper in the global service economy. I argue that the dangers and injustices encountered by Filipina helpers are complicated by their complicit participation in and reproduction of the state, social and religious ideologies of motherhood and martyrdom, seen in the patriotic discourse of the migrant as the new national hero. Drawing on Catholic self-sacrifice, this discourse revises the narratives of migrant servitude and subservience into narratives that hold religious value and redemptive power. Furthermore, the notion of heroic self-sacrifice is inherently gendered for it is influenced by motherhood ideologies among helpers who replicate the structures of maternal caregiving through their inscribed domestic role and function. Using related postcolonial and gender theories, this paper examines how the novel undermines essentialist assumptions associated with the stereotyped helper through the character of Soledad, as she explores her inarticulate yearnings in the heavily circumscribed and dangerous spaces of the global economy.



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Dr. Grace V. S. Chin is interested in exploring the intersections between postcolonial and Southeast Asian literatures, with focus on gender identities and subjectivities in

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