CHAPTER TWO

FRONTIERS OF STRUGGLE: NEGOTIATING FILIPINA HONG KONG DHS’ WAYS OF DEALING WITH DOMESTICATION

Our heart is not the same, nor is our thinking. My grandmother and my mother went about in silence and only knew the colours of the cloak on the Virgin of the Rosary. Today, my daughters are still sleeping in the earth, hungry and sick, but the peace we are seeking is another one, although we still have a long way to go to find it. I may leave this earth, but my heart and my thinking are different, and this is no longer silence.

—Pascuala—1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is the constitutive half of the preceding chapter. It walks through the ways in which the DHs negotiate the geographies of their domestication. It describes the strategies they use to navigate domestication’s spheres and spaces and, consequently, define or re-define the boundaries of its oppressive landscape, especially in ordinary ways, in their daily lives.

In the first section, subtitled submission, I outline the ways in which the DHs acquiesce to their domestication. Key to this discussion is the ways and means in which gender, class, culture and religion inform the DHs’ submission.

The next section probes the forms in which the DHs resist their domestication. Categorized according to political, economic, and religio-cultural dimensions, these forms of resistance constitute the “public transcript” as these are often staged within the public gaze locally, internationally, and/or globally.

1 Taken from the pamphlet Mujeres indígenas de Chiapas, Kinal Antsetik, Mexico City, as quoted in Maria Arcelia Gonzales-Butron, “The Effects of Free—Market Globalization on Women’s Lives,” Concilium 2001 (5): 49.
The last section examines the strategies that exist in the permeable space that exists between submission and resistance. These strategies which occur in this thin porous line that divides submission and resistance is, what in the last section is, described as accommodation. Central to this discussion are the cultural, religious, and political-economic ways in which the DHs defiantly submit and passively resist.

**DHs’ Ways of Dealing with Domestication**

In the past few decades there has been a consistent scholarly attention to everyday forms of resistance, especially in anthropological and sociological researches. In these studies resistors are portrayed not as help-less victims of domination but as conscious, intentional subjects who have learned how to skillfully manage and negotiate power relations in their daily lives whether between colonized and colonizer, between workers and managers, (or) between women and men [and between women]. They are the heroes and heroines who have found ways to empower themselves in spite of the crippling constraints of the worlds they inhabit. This theme of everyday resistance is particularly dominant in feminist scholarship challenging the stereotypical view of women as victims and pointing to the many small, yet significant, ways in which women defy control.

Such scholarship has evolved critical concepts for apprehending power dynamics in human relationships. James Scott, for example, talks of “cautious resistance” and “calculated conformity” and/or the