

# **DIASPORIC ENCOUNTERS, SACRED JOURNEYS**

*GENDERED MIGRANTS, SOCIALITY AND THE RELIGIOUS IMAGINATION.*

## **PROGRAMME**

5-6 January, 2010  
Bulwagang Claro M. Recto  
University of the Philippines

## CONFERENCE AT A GLANCE

### Wednesday, 5 January 2010

10.00-11.00	Registration, <i>Bulwagang Claro M. Recto</i>
11.00-11.30	Welcome
11.30-13.00	<b><i>Session 1: Saudi Sojourns</i></b> (Chair: Pnina Werbner, University of Keele)
13.00-14.00	Lunch
14.00-15.00	<b><i>Session 2: Muslim Women's Lives and Labours</i></b> (Chair: Carmen Abubakar, University of the Philippines)
15.00-15.30	Tea and Coffee
15.30 -17.00	<b><i>Session 3: Spirituality, Pilgrimage and Mission in Christian Filipino Migrant Experiences</i></b> (Chair: Raul Pertierra, Institute of Philippine Culture-Ateneo de Manila)

### Thursday, 6 January, 2010

9.30-10.30	<b><i>Session 4: Religion and the Ethics of Caring</i></b> (Chair: Eufracio Abaya, University of the Philippines)
10.30-11.00	Tea and Coffee
11.00-12.30	<b><i>Session 5: Religion, Morality and Social Formations among Filipino Diasporas</i></b> (Chair: Mark Johnson, University of Hull)
12.30 - 13.30	Lunch
13.30-15.00	<b><i>Session 6: Diasporic and Mediated Selves</i></b> (Chair: Claudia Liebelt, University of Keele)
15.00- 15.30	Tea and Coffee
15.30- 17.00	<b><i>Session 7: Other Diasporas / Other Spiritualities</i></b> Chair: Dr. Lydia Jose, Center for Asian Studies, Ateneo de Manila)
19.00	Conference Dinner

## CONFERENCE THEME

The aim of this two-day workshop is to explore how the religious imagination and shared participation in rituals engender a felt sense of belonging and attachment to a larger faith community among migrants. What shape do migrants' newly formed social networks take? How do their spiritual engagements enhance their social and symbolic capital both at 'home' and abroad? How do migrants mobilise friendship and congregational support to cope with the predicaments of everyday life, as well as the economic and legal strictures placed upon them? Rather than religion simply reinforcing subordination and acquiescence, may it not afford lone migrants, men as well as women, greater freedom and independence?

The workshop grows out of the 24-month Footsteps Project on sociality and religious imagination in the Filipino diaspora, conducted at the Universities of Keele and Hull in the UK. This project sought to comparatively explore migrants' subjective experiences as travellers, who engage emotionally and intellectually with the sacred geographies in which they work: the Holy Land for Christians, and the Arabian Peninsula, cradle and heartland of Islam, in the case of Muslims. We are inviting colleagues to offer papers and contribute to discussions on this topic drawing on their own research on transnational migration from across the world in order to examine more closely issues of religion, gender, sexuality, femininity and masculinity in diaspora encounters.

The workshop is supported by the Institute of Islamic Studies and the Center for International Studies, UP Diliman in conjunction with the Universities of Hull and Keele with funding provided by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, UK

### **Organization**

The conference is organized in a more intimate workshop style with a limited number of plenary-based papers so as to maximize the opportunity for the sharing and exchange of ideas.

### **Exhibition**

The conference includes a photo exhibition produced by Claudia Liebelt and Alicia Pingol.

### **Publication**

An edited volume of papers from the conference is planned for publication afterwards.

### **Conference Convenors & Organizers**

The conference has been convened and organized by Dr. Alicia Pingol and Dr. Mark Johnson on behalf of the entire Footsteps project team (Prof. Pnina Werbner, Dr. Claudia Liebelt and Dr. Deirdre McKay) in conjunction with and assistance from the Institute of Islamic Studies (IIS) and the Center for International Studies (CIS) at the University of the Philippines, UP Diliman. We would especially like to thank Dr. Mashur Bin-Ghalib Jundam, Prof. Julkipli M. Wadi and Maria N. Cabacungan of the Institute of Islamic Studies and Prof. Cynthia Zayas, Prof. Merce Planta and Maria Fatima Bautista of the Center for International Studies, University of the Philippines.

## DETAILED PROGRAMME & CONFERENCE SESSIONS

### Wednesday, 5 January 2010

10.00-11.00	<b>Registration, <i>Bulwagang Claro M. Recto</i></b>
11.00-11.30	<b>Welcome</b>
11.30-13.00	<b><i>Session 1: Saudi Sojourns</i></b> (Chair: Pnina Werbner, University of Keele)
11.30-12.00	<b>Diaspora to the Desert: The Experiences of the First Generation of Overseas Filipino Workers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (1973-1986)</b> Christopher Joseph An (De La Salle University-Manila)
12.00-12.30	<b>Spiritual Sojourners: Muslim Filipinos Traversing Contested Landscapes at Home and Abroad</b> Mark Johnson (University of Hull)
12.30-13.00	<b>Outstamarting Islamophobia – Kufuraphia Syndromes: Moros Survivals in the Metropolis</b> Mashur Bin-Ghalib Jundam (University of the Philippines)
13.00-14.00	<b>Lunch</b>
14.00-15.00	<b><i>Session 2: Muslim Women’s Lives and Labours</i></b> (Chair: Carmen Abubakar, University of the Philippines)
14.00-14.30	<b>Diaspora and Identities: Transformative Stories of Filipino Muslim Women</b> Cheery Dimaiwat Orozco (University of the Philippines)
14.30-15.00	<b>Bodies, Bodies: Offerings for the Here and the Hereafter</b> Alicia Pingol (University of Hull)
15.00-15.30	<b>Tea and Coffee</b>
15.30 -17.00	<b><i>Session 3: Spirituality, Pilgrimage and Mission in Christian Filipino Migrant Experiences</i></b> (Chair: Raul Pertierra, Institute of Philippine Culture-Ateneo de Manila)
15.30-16.00	<b>Becoming Pilgrims in the ‘Holy Land’: On Filipina Care Workers in Israel and Pilgrimage for a Cause</b> Claudia Liebelt (University of Keele)
16.00 –16.30	<b>Changing Locations and Forms of Sacred Spaces Among Filipino Christian Migrants</b> Fr. Jose Mario C. Francisco, S.J. (Ateneo de Manila)
16.30 – 17.00	<b>A Vision of Exile, A Mission to Bear Witness: Labor Migration and Evangelical Perspectives and Support Networks in the Philippines</b> Joseph Nathan Cruz (National University Singapore)

## **Thursday, 6 January, 2010**

9.30-10.30	<b>Session 4:</b> <b>Religion and the Ethics of Caring</b> (Chair: Eufracio Abaya, University of the Philippines)
9.30-10.00	<b>Of Nurses, Domestic Helpers and Caregivers: The Philippines' Discourse to the West</b> Rhod Abellanosa (University of San Carlos)
10.00-10.30	<b>Ugnayan Para Sa Kaginhawan:</b> <b>Filipino Migrant Health Care Workers Composing their Lives</b> Lilith Usog (St. Scholastica's College)
10.30-11.00	<b>Tea and Coffee</b>
11.00-12.30	<b>Session 5:</b> <b>Religion, Morality and Social Formations among Filipino Diasporas</b> (Chair: Mark Johnson, University of Hull)
11.00-11.30	<b>Shifting Socio-Moral Order:</b> <b>Interpersonal Relations of the Filipino Catholic Migrants in Brussels</b> Hector Guazon (University of the Philippines and Katholieke Universiteit-Leuven)
11.30-12.00	<b>Religious Formations Among Filipino Migrants in Australia</b> Shirlita Espinosa (University of Sydney)
12.30 - 13.30	<b>Lunch</b>
13.30-15.00	<b>Session 6: Diasporic and Mediated Selves</b> (Chair: Claudia Liebelt, University of Keele)
13.30-14.00	<b>Issues of Male Overseas Filipino Migrant Workers Who Sought Online Counseling: A Preliminary Analysis of the OFW Online Counseling Project</b> Antover Tuliao (Ateneo de Manila)
14.00-14.30	<b>Rediscovering Alvarado, Visual Histories from a Filipino's Perspective</b> Malaya de Santos del Rosario (University of the Philippines)
14.30-15.00	<b>Spirits, Mediums and the New Media</b> Raul Pertierra (Ateneo de Manila)
15.00- 15.30	<b>Tea and Coffee</b>
15.30- 17.00	<b>Session 7: Other Diasporas / Other Spiritualities</b> Chair: Dr. Lydia Jose, Center for Asian Studies, Ateneo de Manila)
15.30 - 16.00	<b>Filipinos in India: Boundaries and Social Relations in South-South Migration</b> Jozon A. Lorenzana (Ateneo de Manila)
16.00-16.30	<b>Living Sikhism in the Philippines:</b> <b>Locating the Power of Globalization in Religious Imagination</b> Darlene Machell Espena (Ateneo de Manila)
16.30-17.00	<b>Intimacy, Agency and Citizenship: Challenging Perspectives on Marriage and Migration</b> Maureen Pagaduan and Malou Alcid (Action Research for Marriage Migrant Network)
19.00	<b>Conference Dinner</b>

# **ABSTRACTS**

**Diaspora to the Desert: The Experiences of the First Generation of Overseas Filipino Workers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (1973-1986)**

Christopher Joseph An, De La Salle University-Manila

This historical inquiry aims to look into the shared memories and experiences of the first generation of Filipinos who lived and worked in Saudi Arabia during the period of 1973 to 1986 with the purpose of constructing a social or collective identity of these Filipinos. The study focuses on the experiences of these Filipinos against the context of Saudi Arabia's socio-cultural setting during that period, using primary documentary sources and in-depth oral interviews. It also aims to look into how these Filipinos were able to establish and develop Filipino groups in the kingdom. While many of these Filipinos encountered a great deal of problems and struggles in Saudi Arabia, many more were resilient and managed to thrive in what could be a most inhospitable environment for them. In fact, the isolation and alienation that they often felt bolstered their sense of identification, belongingness, and affinity with their fellow Filipinos or kababayans. This shared sense of kabayan identification essentially encapsulates the Filipino collective identity in Saudi Arabia. It is the fundamental phenomenon behind the Filipinos' shared memories, emotions, actions, thoughts, perceptions, aspirations, social activities, and all other nuances embodied by the totality of their experience in the kingdom. This kabayan identification also provided the impetus for the Filipinos to form a strong sense of solidarity with their fellow kababayans, which in turn spurred the establishment of the first formal Filipino organizations in the kingdom: the Kapatiran sa Gitnang Silangan (KGS) and the Filipino Expatriates, Inc. (FILEX).

**Spiritual Sojourners: Muslim Filipinos Traversing Contested Landscapes at Home and Abroad**

Dr. Mark Johnson and Dr. Alicia Pingol, University of Hull

This paper is concerned with migrant Muslim Filipino sojourns in and to Saudi Arabia. In particular, we focus on the way that Islamic belief and practice figures and is refigured in the experiences and imaginings of their travels and travails and in their practices of place-making across landscapes that are sacred and profane - and sometimes both simultaneously. We emphasize the contested nature of landscapes not only because of the varying gendered relations of power that enable and constrain their sojourns and inhabitations, but also because religious belief and practice is often the idiom and object of social struggles for recognition at home and abroad.

**Outsmarting Islamophobia-Kufuraphia Syndromes: Moros Survivals in the Metropolis.**

Mashur Bin-Ghalib Jundam, Institute of Islamic Studies, University of the Philippines

Despite the negative portrayal of Islam and Muslim (Muslimeen, plural) world-wide (Islamophobia) by western media and in internet networks (including hatred towards and discriminatory labeling of Muslims, attacks on mosques, etc.), the adherents of Islam – including the Moros of Mindanao and, in particular, the diaspora of the Mindanaons (particularly, the Moro Muslims) move towards the Metropolis is unstoppable. Noah Feldman, a fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations and a noted columnist who teaches law at Harvard, in an article in The New York Times stated, “But in many Western European countries today, something new and insidious seems to be happening. The familiar old arguments – that they are criminals, that their culture makes them a bad fit, that they take jobs from natives – are mutating into an anti-Islamic bias that is becoming institutionalized in the Continent's ...politics.”

This paper intends to present the following: (a) cases of a world-wide Islam phobia as background; (b) the response of Pan Islamic bodies to Islam phobia; (c) Moro experiences of Islam phobia – Kufurophobia syndromes; (d) Moros' response; (e) the presentors' suggested response based on the Qur'an and Hadith for the future neomoros so as to outsmart Islamophobia – Kufurophobia syndromes as a prelude to Akhlul-kitab (People of the Book) unity-in-diversity within the planet earth.

**Diaspora and Identities: Transformative Stories of Filipino Muslim Women**

Cheery Dimaiwat Orozco

This study is concerned with the transformative narratives and processes of Filipino Muslim migrant women to the Middle East, which reveal identity transformations across the socio-cultural-spiritual factors and interventions of the diaspora spaces. A new social network of Filipino Muslim women - with distinct identity and needs - is drawn out. Basic to the key motivations of the migrant women's decision to leave the family for overseas employment was the desire for the family's economic advancement, supporting the socio-cultural ideology which claims that women subordinate personal interests to the family's collective welfare and solidarity despite its inconsistency (in essence) with the Islamic assertions on the women's roles, rights, and identities.

Furthermore, the study shows that basic to any Muslim's decision to migrate is the presence of the mosque and what it represents and means as a political and religious bond. Thus, the attraction to Muslim host communities with tremendous female job opportunities asserts that where the Filipino Muslim women's basic identity which encompasses all other identities takes significant spiritual rooting, direction, and celebrations, these women can survive and thrive even amidst unfavorable conditions of human rights violations as apparently and unfortunately, violence against women disregards religious and political beliefs.

The personal identity transformations of the migrant women include the ability to survive and be resilient, the intellectual and emotional empowerment, self-confidence and independence, and the valuing and appreciation of relationships. There were also negative effects on their self-esteem brought about by experiences of shame arising from poverty, social exclusions in the host community, and troubles with fellow workers. The spiritual transformations include the perceptual shift towards family sacrifice as spiritually empowering, the deepening commitment to personal and family goals and dreams as witness to the struggle to live with dignity and to transform certain power structures (such as poverty) along the way become transformed people, identifying Islam as the framework by which everything in life is anchored, and some positive belief and understanding of oneself being Muslim in diaspora spaces (e.g. enduring and sacrificing among others). The negative consequences of migration on the women's spirituality are brought about by unfavourable experiences, from hostile employers or the community and the destabilizing environment of the diaspora spaces, which create certain longings of the soul. In the socio-cultural and economic realities that affect the Bangsamoro families, a growing gap is emerging with that which is Islamic, particularly in the changing landscape of the family when the women become 'masculine' homemakers, performing the masculine function of being family earners, yet perceiving this to help them become better Muslim women.

**Bodies and Bodies! Offerings for the Here and Now and the Hereafter**

Alicia Pingol, University of Hull

This paper gives a glimpse of the 1.3 million Filipino workers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It is about the regulation of bodies, where women although veiled still cry for protection; where men could be hunters even while hunted. They come in various phases and faces: skins born with or retouched, laughing and agonizing, feasting and boozing, praying and scheming, waiting for rewards; circumventing rules, captured and released; yet still staying and returning. Thus, although bodies are their own to rule, they have to inevitably bear the brunt of institutional restrictions or eventually reap its blessing. Deployed as docile bodies, they are agents of their own emancipation; they rise and fight their external and internal wars in do-it-yourself ways.

15:30 –17:00

**Session 3: Spirituality, Pilgrimage and Mission**  
(Chair: Raul Pertierra, Institute of Philippine Culture-Ateneo de Manila)

**Becoming Pilgrims in the 'Holy Land': On Filipina Care Workers in Israel and Pilgrimages for a Cause**

Claudia Liebelt, University of Keele

Filipinos, who have been recruited to work as carers in Israel in large numbers since the early 1990s, narrate their moves as blessings, pilgrimages or spiritual journeys. In spite of their legal, social and political exclusion from citizenship and belonging in Israel, the predominantly female carers have succeeded in organising collectively and appropriating their own spaces, most especially within the religious realm. Based on ethnographic research on Filipina carers in Israel, my paper focuses on one such group, the Filipino Catholic lay organisation 'Pilgrimage for a Cause,' which undertakes pilgrimages to the Christian Holy Sites in Israel. During these pilgrimages, Filipina carers actively create sacred geographies, realising their own mission in the 'Holy Land.' Rather than understanding religious engagement within the process of migration as mere empowerment, my paper argues that religion gives Filipina migrant domestic workers an idiom of making sense of reality, of organising comfort, solidarity and compassion, something that transforms them spiritually and sets them apart from those who do work constructed as 'dirty', to become morally superior beings: pilgrims of the 'Holy Land.' Finally, Filipina migrants' practices and narratives raise the question of whether contemporary migration might be understood as a form of pilgrimage in itself.

**Changing locations and forms of sacred spaces among Filipino Christian Migrants**

Fr. Jose Mario C. Francisco, S.J., Ateneo de Manila University

Locations have been significant in the development and practice of traditional Filipino Christianity. Official church life has been premised on belonging to parishes or communities based on geographical proximity. Popular shrines like those of the Black Nazarene in Quiapo Church or of Our Lady of Manaoag in Pangasinan have been centres of common or individual pilgrimages. Even common devotional practices like the Holy Week chanting of Christ's life in the pasyon and the patronal feasts of saints are linked with neighborhood and town life.

However, with the growth of migration, both foreign and internal, as a result of globalization and urbanization, many people no longer have close geographical access to these traditional places associated with Filipino Christianity. This essay investigates the impact of migration on religious practice. In particular, it focuses on how the movement of migrants may have brought about the marking of new locations for sacred space as well as creating alternative links with traditional sites. It will also discuss the role that non-geographically-based religious groups such as El Shaddai and Couples for Christ play in the construction of the changing locations and forms of sacred spaces among these migrants.

**A Vision of Exile, A Mission to Bear Witness: Labor Migration and Evangelical Perspectives and Support Networks in the Philippines**

Joseph Nathan Cruz, National University of Singapore

International labour migration is a global phenomenon in which Filipinos are especially involved. However, how individual Filipino migrant workers view the phenomenon, especially prior to their departure from the Philippines, is not necessarily nor exclusively shaped by economic or political perspectives that dominate the discussion on the subject. Niklas Luhmann's theoretical framework on structural differentiation highlights the tendency of various social spheres to communicatively reduce phenomena according to their innate logic, whether economic, political, or religious. What is not part of Luhmann's work is the dynamics of how individual human beings, as compound individuals, participate in this process. This process is characterized by internal conflicts and resolutions as individuals aim to provide a structural balance to competing ideologies and logics involved in a single phenomenon and as entire communities scramble to provide a set of practices and support networks in the effort to ideologically construct a social phenomenon as a function of their socio-cultural sphere. By looking at the communicative acts and practices of Filipino evangelicals and highlighting the religious dimensions of labour migration, we provide a more concrete sense of the dynamics of this process. What at first seems to be a global phenomenon dominated by

economic and political considerations can in fact be revealed in the minds of believers, as reflected in their practices, to be an important part of what they believe to be the world's ongoing spiritual history.

9:30-10:30

**Session 4: Religion and the Ethics of Caring**

(Chair: Eufrazio Abaya, University of the Philippines)

**Of Nurses, Domestic Helpers and Caregivers: The Philippines' Discourse to the West**

Rhod Abellanos, University of San Carlos

The migration phenomenon, which has been viewed by some if not most social scientists as a significant cause of many real and potential problems of the country (e.g. brain drain), may be understood using other socio-analytic lenses, i.e. an existential/experiential point of view, a non-statist or post-structuralist perspective. This paper contends that the dominance of a state-centred, albeit structure-oriented reading of migration has sidelined if not disregarded the equally important micro-narratives of Filipino OFWs. The impact of Filipinos care for patients and clients, the formation of small communities, and the outward re-direction from the Philippines of the West's erstwhile religious tradition, could and should be read as the Philippines' unique languaging of itself to and in the West: what it is and who its people are. On the basis of this different reading of Filipino migration, the state could perhaps come up with policies that are more people-oriented: sensitized and sensitive to the migrants' needs, in their continual struggles far away from their beloved home. Methodologically, this paper will use experiences of individuals, in order to highlight the value of OFW micro-narratives vis-à-vis the Statist macro-narrative. Hopefully, this study will provide a socio-religious-politico-philosophic framework in a further understanding, reflection, and re-reading of the exploration of the religious imagination and shared participation among Filipino migrants: their inherent value and confrontational imperatives.

**Ugnayan Para Sa Kaginhawan: Filipino Migrant Health Care Workers Composing their Lives**

Lilith Usog, St. Scholastica's College, Manila

This paper celebrates and honours Filipina migrant health care workers as they (re)compose their lives in a foreign land. Born and socialised into a socio-centric family and community, it is important to note, the paper argues, how this is being translated as Pinay health care workers (HCW) have ventured across borders and boundaries in search for a better life. It explores how bonding (*ugnayan*) can contribute to the well-being of Pinay HCW. It further looks into salient elements of *ugnayan* from carers' experience, cultural heritage, and Judeo-Christian tradition as they continue to develop and nurture relationships not only with Filipinos but with those from other ethnic origin. While the lure of financial reward is so inviting for people who decided to work outside the Philippines, the other aspect is risk-taking and sacrifice for the well-being of the family (even extended family). In a culture where one is socialized to be part of a group and to be community-minded Filipinos who have left home continue their ties with their homeland whenever possible in many different forms and ways. The other side is to create a support group in their "imaginary homeland." In our Christian tradition, we also see this motif of bonding and sacrifice for the common good. Collective and communal activities are being fostered, hoping to contribute in the well-being of the individual and the community. Connectedness and interconnectedness are themes reclaimed in our Christian traditions to remind us of our common heritage and an invitation to engage ourselves in a wider network of relationship.

This paper is thus a window on the importance of bonding (how *ugnayan* is used as a tool for negotiation) as one wades through a new territory. In the conscious effort to widen the circle of connection, one becomes a midwife to the birthing of an inclusive community where solidarity, mutuality, and inclusivity can be embodied. The small community is a new way of living, a new way of seeing, a new way of being, a new way of life as a community of believers in Jesus Christ. The community that is born out of *ugnayan* may not only be a "semblance of family," a "home" in an imaginary homeland, but also a connection of support and nurturance where everyone matters and each one feels important. When mutual trust has been established and cultivated, then each one can proclaim it is here "that I move, live and have my being." Thus the circle for hope and healing continues and becomes ever wider, holding all within it in a loving, secure, and comforting embrace.

11:00 –12:00

**Session 5: Religion, Morality and Social Formations among  
Filipino Diasporas**

(Chair: Mark Johnson, University of Hull)

**The Shifting Socio-Moral Order: Interpersonal Relations of Filipino Catholic Migrants in Brussels**

Hector Guazon, University of the Philippines & Katholiek Universiteit-Leuven,

Recent studies in anthropology advocate a more ethnographically and historically textual explanation of Catholicism. These works find great affinity to the call for an ethnography of the interpersonal in which the notion of “experience as moral” serves as an important theoretical move; to wit: “Experience is moral...because it is the medium of engagement in everyday life in which things are at stake and in which ordinary people are deeply engaged stake-holders who have important things to lose, to gain, and to preserve” (Kleinman 1998: 385). Hence, in this research I probe the various contexts of the interpersonal relations of Filipino migrants who belong to the

The Filipino Catholic Chaplaincy of the Archdiocese of Brussels-Mechelen, focusing on the “local moral world” and its entanglement with the State-regulated Roman Catholic Church, mediates the nature, dynamics, and consequences of these interpersonal relations. It involves, first, exploring the constitution of the local moral world of Filipino Catholics in Brussels and the ways in which it operates and is inflected, the mode and places where it is displayed or concealed, and the manner by which they fine-tune, extend or limit, hasten or hinder collective interactions; second, mapping out the concordance or dissonance of the local moral world of Filipino Catholics who have Catholic piety and its attached doctrines, ritual duties, and moral responsibility; third, examining the socio-historical conditions and the underlying interests that trigger off the entanglement between the local moral world, Catholic piety and its underlying principles and moral duty.

**Religious Formations Among Filipino Migrants in Australia**

Shirlita Espinosa, University of Sydney

This paper will explore the groups and collectives that revolve around spiritual practices and performances of Filipino migrant communities in Australia. Looking into old-country exported formations such as Gawad Kalinga in New South Wales, the cursillos Adelaide since the 1970s, Brisbane-based Catholic Filipino-Australian Chaplaincy today and Pag-asa Fellowship in the 1980s, the paper will examine how effective these religious cum cultural collectives are in preserving what migrants often perceive as a way to keep good family values and their ethnicity intact. On the other hand, it is also critical to question how these oft-regarded conservative movements serve as a “buffer zone” that defers and deters political engagement in the new country. A good example of the ambiguity of the religion-based approach to social and political challenges was the response of the Pag-asa Fellowship in Brisbane to the racist mail-order bride “problem” of Australia. Addressing the murder and domestic violence directed by husbands at their Filipina brides, the spiritual collective sponsored a survey and publication that sought to expose the “real” character and virtue of the Catholic Filipina in order to put a stop to the violence. However, the metaphysical ruminations on Christian virtues in representing the Filipina as a specimen of chastity and femininity only perpetuated the fetish that surrounds her. The study did not problematize as to why the Filipina wife is six times more likely to be killed than any other wife in Australia.

13:30 –15:00

**Session 6: Diasporic and Mediated Selves**

(Chair: Claudia Liebelt, University of Keele)

**Issues of Male Overseas Filipino Migrant Workers Who Sought Online Counseling: A Preliminary Analysis of the OFW Online Counseling Project**

Ma. Regina M. Hechanova, Antover P. Tuliao, Melissa Garabilles, Paola Maria Noelle I. Loot & Pocholo Andrew Velasquez, Ateneo de Manila University

This paper presents the preliminary results of the OFW Online Counseling Project that offers free online counseling to overseas Filipino workers. Contrary to an existing literature that has argued that women tend

to manifest help- and counseling-seeking behaviour more than men, the site has received greater numbers of male than female counselees. Counselling transcripts and emails between online counsellors and clients were content analyzed, and several thematic issues were derived. Typical issues include family and marital conflict, occupational concerns, adjustment strategies, apprehensions regarding reintegration in the Philippines, and worry about the future. This initial study on this nascent form of counselling seeks to validate the viability of utilizing online counseling for migrant workers as a viable mode of delivering mental health services to OFWs. The researchers speculate that the counselling medium may be more accessible to male OFWs and may be liberating because of its anonymity.

### **Rediscovering Alvarado, Visual Histories from a Filipino's Perspective**

Malaya de Santos del Rosario, U.P. Diliman

Ricardo Alvarado was a Filipino immigrant to the United States during the early half of the 20th century. While living there, he became known as a photographer in his community. His works contain scenes of everyday immigrant life in California, from birthday parties to a day in the farm or a shop. He was also frequently invited by his friends --- Filipinos, Mexicans, Italians, and African-Americans --- to take pictures of special get togethers - weddings, baptisms and birthday celebrations. In 1959, Ricardo returned home to the Philippines to start a family. Alas, his brief artistic life in the US was forgotten. Ten years later, he died, his pictures never to be seen again until 1976, when his daughter, Janet, discovered his more than 3,000 photographs. In 2002, she partnered with the Smithsonian Institute to present an exhibition entitled "Through My Father's Eyes."

Despite their fast-growing population in the US (108,260 in the 1930s as compared to 26,324 in the 1920s), the Filipinos' stories on diaspora are rarely heard of or written about. In fact, Rick Bonus, a Filipino-American professor calls the Filipinos there a 'silent minority'. Then as now, their communities have been either misrepresented or underrepresented. Their history, especially in the early half of the 1900s, is limited and alien to many, even among Filipinos in the US. This was certainly true of Ricardo, who, himself, was just recently recognized as a noteworthy photographer of his time. By studying the context of selected photographic works of his, I hope to get a better understanding of, and offer an added perspective on, the Filipino immigrant experience in the US.

### **Spirits, Mediums and the New Media**

Raul Pertierra, Ateneo de Manila University

This paper will discuss the relationship between contemporary forms of religiosity and the new media. The virtual world made possible by the new media promises new forms of religious mediation. Besides overcoming the barriers of space, the new media also makes possible access to new modes of authenticity. Special interests are now easily accessible and encounters with alternative spiritualities become possible. The paper focuses on Philippine religious experience, including the local, diasporal and global.

15:30 –17:00

### ***Session 7: Other Diasporas/Other Spiritualities***

(Chair: Dr. Lydia Jose, Center for Asian Studies, Ateneo de Manila)

### **Filipinos in India: Boundaries and Social Relations in South-South Migration**

Jozon A. Lorenzana, Ateneo de Manila.

Studies on Philippine migration have usually problematized the marginal position of Filipino migrant workers in the international labour market, particularly in the Global North. These studies (Constable 1997; Parreñas 2001; Choy 2003; Lan 2003) have accounted for the historical and structural conditions, and discursive formations that produce this position of marginality and have revealed Filipinos' complex agency and subjectivities. This paper builds on this knowledge but takes a different direction by examining skilled or professional Filipino migrant workers in the Global South, particularly India. In keeping with alternative ways to think about Filipino migratory experiences (Manalansan 2006; Fresnoza-Flot & Pecoud 2007; Liebelt 2008; McKay 2008), I propose to examine Filipino professionals in a country in the Global South through the concept of boundary work. I look at the symbolic boundaries – the 'conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorize objects, people, practices, and even space and time' (Lamont and

Molnar 2002)—that these Filipino migrants become subject to or willingly deploy in their work and everyday life in India. This analytical tool as Lamont and Molnar (2002) suggest ‘allows to capture the dynamic dimensions of social relations...’. Through ethnography I identify and explain the strategies and conditions of Filipino migrant workers’ boundary work. This work hopes to make a contribution to how we might think of Filipino migrants in terms of their social relations in the context of South-South migration. As this paper is at its initial stage, I will only provide a review of literature and the study’s framework and research design.

### **Living Sikhism in the Philippines: Locating the Power of Globalization in Religious Imagination**

Darlene Machell Espena, Ateneo de Manila

The phenomenon of migration is neither a novel nor a hypothetical concept for most Filipinos. Almost automatically, they associate migration with the outflow of Filipinos to other countries. This is so because the country’s perennial economic problems impel most Filipinos to look for better opportunities abroad. What is often overlooked, however, is the fact that the country also serves as a destination to foreign migrants who managed to carve their own cultural sphere within the dominant local culture. This paper carefully examines the case of the Sikh community in the Philippines. It explores the narratives Sikh migrants – their experiences of living with Filipinos and how they perpetuate their religion in a Catholic-dominated country. The paper further probe into the impacts of Sikhism on migrant life and how Sikhs utilize the benefits of globalization to reinforce their religious imagining. The author argues that key to the survival of Sikhism and the Sikh community in the Philippines is the cogency of globalization. Operating within the echelon of global forces, migrants successfully modified the limited space they occupy to transplant Sikhism (as well as their Indian lifestyle). From the langars they serve, religious rituals they attend to, food they eat, clothes they wear, up to gurudwaras they built, the Sikhs reinforce their distinct culture and religion. Throughout their history of residing in the country, the Sikhs managed to uphold the most vital aspects of their life as Sikhs, and for this reason, they opted to remain in a country far beyond own home.

### **“Intimacy, Agency and Citizenship: Challenging Perspectives on Marriage and Migration”**

Maureen C. Pagaduan & Mary Lou Alcid, Action Research for Marriage Migrants Network

The movement of people across national boundaries is a visible and increasingly important aspect of global integration. Three per cent of the world’s population – more than 190 million people – are now living in countries which are not their own countries of birth. The forces driving the flow of migrants from one country into another are strongly linked to economic poverty but also increasingly highlight other socio-cultural variables wrapped up in the complex conditions of powerlessness. International migration, the term often used to refer to this movement of people, dramatically shapes communities in a globalizing world. Many migrants, though still not the majority in number, leave never to return to their own countries. Some do it legally but a significant number take the risks of migrating illegally. The many ways and means by which migrants, private agencies or brokers, including states, facilitate and process these migrations have produced fortunes and misfortunes, victims and survivors. Though searching for work is still the major strategy for migrants, an increasing number of individuals, women in particular, have used marriage as their strategy, by no means a new strategy but it remain largely uninterrogated. This research report focuses on the phenomenon of marriage migration, exposing its complexities from the perspective of feminist frames. The condition of women as marriage migrants ranges from portrayals of victimization on one hand, to empowerment – a strategy of autonomy and self-determination – on the other. The paper will wade into conceptual areas of identity and nationality, citizenship and diaspora, human security and democracy, marriage and migration. These themes consistently describe relations of power not only in the more overt realms of public life but also, though less frequently, in the more intimate spaces of private relationships and personal lives.

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