

Migration and the Sensuous Geographies of Re-Emplacement in the Philippines

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores migrant returns to homeplaces, examining affective understandings of place and subjectivity in an intercultural context. Drawing on data gathered in migrant sending communities in the Philippines, it examines how local 'structures of feeling' (after Williams, 1973) and migrant habitus (Bourdieu, 1980) interact with place in the experiences of return for Filipina migrant workers. Practices of re-emplacement are explored in an intercultural context with the analysis examining both the author's own intersubjective encounters with migrant respondents and respondents' changing understandings of place and emotions. Through this ethnography of intercultural living, the argument drawing out the feeling of the researcher's habitus as it intersects with that of the respondents, shows how habitus links emotions to embodied experiences of place and culture.

Migrancy...involves a movement in which neither the points of a departure nor those of arrival are immutable or certain. It calls for a dwelling in language, in histories, in identities that are constantly subject to mutation. Always in transit, the promise of a homecoming – completing the story, domesticating the detour – becomes an impossibility. (Chambers, 1994: 5)

This paper explores the attempts of migrants to ‘domesticate the detour’ and return home. Filipinas coming home from contract work overseas must renegotiate their entwined understandings of place and subjectivity. Return, for them, can be a profoundly ambivalent experience, the sense of homeliness and attachment attenuated by departure proving difficult to regain. Drawing on interviews with individual migrants and participant observation in their sending communities, I sketch the local structures of feeling in which their returns are negotiated. In sending communities, many respondents describe the affects of return through the emotions of shame. Returnees negotiate experiences of shaming that originate in their interactions with both families and communities also with their overseas hosts, who they feel look down on them as ‘backward’ and ‘underdeveloped’. Some migrants are able to resist these experiences of shaming by mobilising their experiences abroad to reinterpret home as a landscape of sensual and aesthetic value, rather than a site of ‘underdevelopment’. They do so by working between their own ‘local’ understanding of the ‘rules of place’ or habitus (Bourdieu, 1980) and a transnational habitus acquired overseas.

To make this argument, I explore the practices of re-emplacement in an intercultural context, analysing both my own intersubjective encounters with migrant respondents and interviews detailing their changing understandings of place and emotions. As an ethnography of intercultural living, this paper draws out the feeling of the researcher’s habitus as it intersects with that of the researched in order to explore habitus as it links emotions to embodied experiences of place and culture. Building towards this, the first section sets out a theorization of affect and emotion which is then mobilised in the analysis of migrant sending communities and migrant returns that follows. I then examine some examples of migrants’ emotions of shame in the context of return and suggest how these feelings can be resisted in intercultural practices of sensual re-emplacement.

Emotions, Bodies and Affect

Re-emplacement is emotional work. In order to approach it interculturally, we need to theorize how emotions might be conveyed and analysed between cultures. While human worlds are constructed and lived through the emotions (Anderson and Smith, 2001), the growing literature on the embodied experiences of emotion encounters a recurrent problem: how to integrate the biological basis of emotions with their cultural understandings (see Lutz and White, 1986; Leavitt, 1996). If emotions are emergent from primarily bodily phenomena, we can expect them to be more or less constant cross-culturally (Savage, 2004: 26). However, if we define emotion as mind-only phenomenon, we should expect radical variation between cultures. To understand the emotions of others in an intercultural encounter would then require a detailed understanding of the cultural meaning of particular emotions and the context in which they are expressed. Even though access to others' emotions is mediated by culture, intercultural emotional understandings often rely on practical and embodied mimesis as much as they do on any explicit naming and classifying of emotions (Savage, 2004).

Ethnographies of emotion written across cultures do not necessarily help us to select between biological and cultural models for emotion. Rosaldo (1989) reads Ilongot expressions of emotion to indicate that emotions are partially independent of culture and somehow universal, suggesting they have a physiological basis. Reddy's (1999) review of the anthropology of emotions explains that certain emotional performances, such as crying, can appear to be transparent to both cultural insiders and outsiders. Other emotional performances do not cross cultures, suggesting that there is a transparent and universal physiological basis to only some emotions, but not to all. Referring to this primordial, embodied ground of feeling, Abu-Lughod and Lutz (1990: 2) observe that, while, emotions may vary across cultures, they retain a 'robust essence untouched by the social or the cultural'.

Certainly emotions expressed within the same culture are not necessarily transparent to others. Performances of emotion are managed, not merely expressed, in interpersonal communications (Reddy, 1999: 264). Emotions are strategically concealed and revealed with status and power accruing to those who can manage their emotions in conformity with collective, cultural norms. We are, however, not always aware of our own or others' expressions of emotion. Emotions can be expressed

without labelling or analysis. But these communications are likely to be misread, and reduced to simpler forms, unless people share a common language and culture. This cultural commonality is not just one of a shared language. Emotions are expressed through the body – in facial expressions and bodily comportment – just as much as they are through grammar, intonation and vocabulary (Leavitt, 1996: 522).

In order to learn about typologies of emotions, one of the key techniques of ethnographers working across cultures has been to first adopt the bodily practices of their respondents (Savage, 2004: 28). Emotions are, then, simultaneously signs for bodily states and cultural categories. While it is cultural categories that enable individuals to put embodied sensations into words and make them into emotions (Lupton, 1998: 2), the embodied experiences that precede these cultural categories cannot be neglected.

To theorize the embodied aspect of emotions, I turn to recent work by neo-Darwinian scholars who identify anger, fear, sadness, disgust, enjoyment, and interest as common to all cultures (Thrift, 2004: 64). Importantly, this literature separates emotion from something it calls affect. Affect is defined as a deep-seated physiological change written involuntarily on the face as emotion (Thrift, 2004: 64). The senses are generators of affect, whether it arises through interactions with the environment or other people, as a necessary precursor to emotion. Reyna (2002: 72) suggests that affects are rather like colours in that they are difficult to describe in words, but suffuse bodily awareness. Affect, then, is something first experienced in the body and then named and re-experienced through social relations and culture (Leavitt, 1996: 515). In this theorisation, it is because the basic affects of anger, fear, sadness, disgust, enjoyment and interest are universal that there are some universally recognizable performances of emotion (see Adolphs, 2002; Leavitt, 1996; Reyna, 2002). However, in the various combinations of affective experiences and local interpretations of physiological sensation into emotions, much variation is possible.

Thrift (2004: 60, echoing Rosaldo, 1984) understands affect as a form of embodied thinking, ‘often indirect and non-reflective, but thinking all the same’. Katz (1999: 323, cited in Thrift 2004: 60) observes, emotions are ‘formal evidence of what, in one’s relations with others, speech cannot conceal’. Affect is communicable, even if the emotion it generates in the individual in question is not completely evident to the observer. Observers can tell much more easily if someone is experiencing positive or negative affect than they can determine which particular emotion someone

is attempting to conceal or display. Adopting this approach here, I use affect to denote a universal bodily feeling that occurs through proprioception of a deep-seated physiological change – the knot in the stomach, the weight on the shoulders, the heaviness of the heart – and argue that affect can be mapped, through variable cultural frames, onto emotions.

To explore how we might link emotions to affect in particular places, I turn to Bourdieu's work on the habitus. Habitus (Bourdieu, 1980 as revisited by Butler, 1997: 152) works as a practical sense of moving through place, producing the embodied, sensual rituals of everyday life. The visibly embodied aspect of habitus is called hexis. Together, habitus and hexis make up our habitual patterns of understanding and inhabiting the world, creating the places we inhabit and acting as the ground for subjectivity. Habitus – as this practical sense of place and subjectivity – maps emotion on to experiences of affect (see Probyn, 2004a, and Bourdieu, 1980). In this argument, I follow Probyn (2004a: 342) who, building from Bourdieu, theorizes emotion as the biographical understanding we attach, through the habitus, to the physiological experience of affect.

Probyn sees affect emerging from the space where bodies, psyche and memory interact, producing a bodily knowledge and separating the internal from the external world (Probyn, 2004b). Thus our emotions have a social ontology. It takes a social or cultural frame to produce a nameable emotion from the sensations of affect in the body. Emotions represent a layering of interpretation onto affect; affect being the universal experience, but named and interpreted differently across cultures and between selves. The nuances of rage, shame, melancholy and elation – emotions – are simultaneously indices of both the universal experience of bodily affects and particular social and cultural interpretations of these affects. Thus, in the analysis which follows, I am working from a model where a stimulus produces bodily responses (affect) that are then filtered through habitus into emotions (as self-perceived) and emotional performances (as displayed by enculturated social actors). In this model, we can redirect our emotions and emotional performances by readjusting our habitus, something that is often required by intercultural living and migrant returns.

Structures of Feeling

The context for habitus is a social, historical and economic one. This section illustrates how Filipina migrants' experiences of homecoming generate both positive and negative affects and thus, ambivalence (Constable, 1999). Here, I consider the reasons why women depart the Philippines and the places they leave behind. These places are not only located in economic and spatial terms, but in the personal dimensions of kinship and emotion. And all of these locations are experienced as seamless wholes of 'place', rather than as separate conceptual realms. As Lupton (1998) demonstrates, emotions shape culture, but economy also shapes the experience of emotion. Thus I approach place here through what Williams (1973, see also Anderson and Smith, 2001)¹ calls 'structures of feeling' – frames of interpretation that emerge from economic relations, the cultures that justify these relations, and forms of resistance to culture and economy that draw on the values underpinning both. Williams intended the phrase to mark the economic structuring of frames of social interpretation and cultural norms applied to the literary texts of an époque. I apply the same concept of structuring feeling to the culturally-infused socio-economic understandings people deploy to interpret places and landscapes. In these terms, local 'structures of feeling' are both generated by and the context for the generation of a local habitus. However, there is no single model for a migrant's return. Instead, the migrants' experiences I outline below reflect local values and expectations as well as migrants' needs and preferences and this, in sum, shape the local structure of feeling and the habitus of returning migrants.

Economic relations

Since the Philippine government began to pursue a policy of labour export in the mid 1970s, women's circular migration has become deeply embedded within local economies and national culture in the Philippines (Gibson, Law and McKay, 2001). The women I interviewed for this project live in the northern part of Luzon and worked in places as diverse as Hong Kong, Singapore, Canada, Israel and Italy, sending money and goods home to their households.² At home, these remittances are invested in local agriculture, transforming forest to fields, and in electrifying villages, inserting local communities into the global economy, transnational media and translocal social networks. In this region, most rural communities engage in petty

commodity production, combining elements of a market economy – sales of coffee, vegetables and lumber – within a rice-growing subsistence base. With integration into the market economy spurred by national and international development projects, rural livelihoods are becoming more dependent on cash income (McKay, 2001).

Increasingly, it is women who are able to generate cash by marketing themselves as ‘skilled’ domestic workers overseas.

Since the late 1960s, younger women in rural areas have gained access to post-secondary training, graduating in large numbers from an English-language educational system that raises expectations for a middle-class, urbanised lifestyle. Such aspirations are most easily met by migration from their home communities, as the curriculum produces workers prepared to participate in modern production systems, while local job opportunities in the modern sector are few (Pertierra, 1994). For those who feel obligated to ‘use’ the education for which their families sacrifice scarce cash income, outmigration is often the only viable option. Young women, the dutiful daughters no longer needed as farm labour, feel this obligation intensely. If unmarried, they are both less necessary to household reproduction and more likely to be ‘responsible’ and remit money when working away from home (Lauby and Stark, 1988). Now that jobs outside rural communities are an essential part of a reconfigured domestic economy (Rigg, 2001) women’s work overseas can be justified on the basis of its greater returns to labour. Holding such a job both satisfies the expectation that daughters contribute to their natal households and provides new forms of feminine freedom and influence (Wolf, 1992: 249). Thus, for migrants and their communities, the ‘economic’ aspects of working overseas are saturated with other meanings.

Cultures justifying work abroad

Domestic work is considered low status in the Philippines, but doing domestic work abroad is refigured because of the income it brings. Most female migrants take contracts as domestic workers, rather than practicing the nursing, teaching or midwifery they studied in college. However, returned migrants indulge in patterns of local consumption and redistribution that increase their status, re-validating their manual labour overseas (McKay, 2001). Movies, radio and TV show, popular music and the press glamorise and sometimes distort the reality of migrants working overseas. Returned migrants can themselves be one of the best advertisements for the values of migration – where sun-browned skin marks a farmer, returnees are often just

as proud of their lighter-coloured complexions as they are of their new clothes, accessories and appliances.

The data which follows show how economic and intersubjective experiences are deeply imbricated in each other in experiences of return. The same entwining of economy and emotion lies beneath women's descriptions of their decisions to migrate. While the search for money is the most prevalent explanation for Filipina migration, Constable (1999) shows how Filipinas in Hong Kong use the rhetoric of economic need to obscure more painful but equally important explanations for their departures and sojourns abroad. Narratives of pre-departure emotional discomfort are visible beneath the surface of Constable's ethnographic quotes and observations, and these stories suggest that migrants carry with them unfulfilled hopes and desires, deep resentments of culture, familial ties and expectations, and frustrations over the limitations of Filipina femininity (Constable, 1999: 212). Filipinas abroad yearn for the comfort of home, family and friends – the local familiar local structure of feeling and habitus of the sending village (Constable, 1999). At the same time, migrants delay their returns because of concerns over economic success, emotional entanglements and the potential loss of the freedom they have enjoyed overseas. Home begins to feel like it is both in the Philippines and abroad and in neither place. On their return, home becomes tangled up with abroad, not only in migrants' own transformed understandings of self and place, but in the minds of their sending communities.

While migrants see their sending places as in some ways lacking, the non-migrants I interviewed see others finding the good life through female outmigration and imagine their own versions of life abroad. Many non-migrants would like to have the option of leaving for paid work elsewhere. They envy women working overseas who send home gifts to earn the gratitude and respect of family and friends, returning only briefly as glamorous visitors. In such structures of feeling, return and the very materiality and neediness of returned women disrupt non-migrants' fantasy constructions of migrant lifestyles. While the figure of the OCW (Overseas Contract Worker) is celebrated, actual returnees are themselves treated with ambivalence. Sometimes their households and communities welcome returning women home as heroines. At other times, non-migrants judge OCWs as shirking their local responsibilities, particularly those women who can be portrayed as mothers who abandoned their caring duties in the home.

Non-migrants express resentment over migrant's purported economic security, publicly criticising 'stinginess' when returnees cannot or will not loan them money or make donations to support community events. Non-migrant constructions of returnees as economically successful leave very little space for the emotional needs of migrants to be reaccepted into their homeplaces. Instead, returnees often feel 'pushed away' by a community that seems to want them only if they use their overseas earnings to 'buy' their way back in. Slippage between the experiences of real returnees and their communities' imagined and represented migrant women can generate negative affects.

Resisting the local – new socialities abroad

Migrants compare home and abroad in sensual and social terms. Elsa (quoted in Constable, 1999: 221) says: 'Hong Kong is an exciting, clean, and beautiful place. I have many friends here, and I do good work. Most of the time I am very satisfied'. If home is read as the antinomy of abroad, home is then boring, dirty, ugly, and there the migrant has few friends, work that lacks meaning and experiences low satisfaction. Elsa's comment suggests migration represents the opportunity to participate in a 'de-traditionalised, individualised, and self-reflexive society' – that of the global city – where 'friendship has become a key element of self-identification and development' (Conradson and Latham, 2004, in press). 'Abroad' is then a space where Filipinas escape from the pressures of daily life and community expectations into a realm of self-actualisation. They can meet their social obligations at home from a distance, mitigating the kinds of emotional entanglements experienced by returnees in face-to-face encounters.

An idea of 'abroad' as representing a new form of sociality fits with the life histories of many rural women. Most rural communities would expect women to leave behind their *barkadas* (teenage friendship networks) at marriage and enter into the life of the community as an adult, usually as a self-employed agricultural producer or service worker of low status and uncertain income. This is the context in which I interviewed Sally. She had just returned from her first contract and was recruiting 'girls' for her 'auntie's' maid agency in Singapore. Sally explained the lure of overseas work to local women in these terms:

What's left for them here, anyway? They get married in high school, have their babies... There's no money, there's nothing here. What can they do? They are already wives, mothers but it is still *kurang* [lacking]. Always looking somewhere for food, for money. No nice things, no respect. So they like to go abroad. It is something new for them. There is money... but there is also new friends, new places to learn.

Returned women express a sense of alienation that permeates intersubjective experience as well. Luz, for example, who had come home every year on her vacation and remitted money regularly to her household in the Philippines, was now home 'for good'. But she was lonely, as she explained to me with sadness, 'Here it is not the same, nobody understands me, my life in Hong Kong...'. Constable (1999) examines how women's images of the Philippines as home and their senses of self are transformed by migration and return. For her respondents, home is identified primarily with emotional ties and social relations – with Luz's need to be understood – and only secondarily with the physical landscape (Constable, 1999: 207). As Luz suggests, for her abroad is a site of personal transformation that can create a sense of alienation on return.

Resistance and returns – shame

Communities focus on migrants' trappings of enhanced status – the foreign clothes and new appliances – generating gossip and social jealousy. Migrants are pressured to redistribute wealth to friends and relatives, either by honouring their requests for loans, providing educational support or by making 'grand gestures' in donations to community events. Sometimes, the pressure is much less subtle, as in the case of one returned migrant, Belinda, who invested some of her savings to become a local distributor of Tupperware. Her investment failed because many people took the plastic containers on credit but never paid in full. When I asked her neighbours about this, they argued that, since she was 'already rich from abroad', she did not need their money. Tupperware, her neighbours claimed, was 'just a sideline'. Belinda, however, told me that she had staked her savings on the venture and was now considering taking another overseas contract, much as she disliked the idea of leaving her children. Her other option, to run a small *sari-sari* (corner) store from her house, would also be doomed, she thought: 'If you don't give credit, they won't buy

anything, but if I give credit, they say “never mind, she’s *balikbayan* [returned to the nation] already”, and then it’s only credits and never money. People are jealous here; they don’t want to know how hard it is, abroad’.

Migrants and non-migrants alike shame returnees (like Belinda) who are only ‘one day millionaires’ – those who cannot make a sustained success of their investments nor sustain their support of relatives, friends and community to maintain their enhanced *balikbayan* status (Constable, 1999). (Belinda herself felt shamed into going overseas again.) Since the ‘economic’ is suffused with other meanings, it is possible that the shaming of ‘one-day millionaires’ may be a sublimated shame over the social, cultural and economic factors – the structure of feeling – behind individual decisions to migrate.

Shame – affect and emotion

In my interviews and observations, I found returned migrants frequently expressed negative affect that I interpreted as emotions of shame, anger, alienation, rejection and depression. They spoke about their feelings in terms of shame, using *mabain*, an Ilocano word, and its variants.³ *Mabain* comes from the verb *abain* – to mistreat or treat somebody in a humiliating manner, as if they are of lower social status. *Mabain* corresponds roughly to a sense of humility or shyness, often expressed in Filipino English as ‘ashamed,’ in the sense of being humiliated, rather than being guilty. Respondents often used both the Ilocano and English terms in our interviews, drawing on their knowledge of both local meanings and life in English-speaking ‘abroad’⁴.

Affects that are understood as shame are generated both by interactions with sending communities and households and experiences overseas. While it can be an opening to self-actualisation and economic success, migration can also be a humiliating and exploitative experience. Inability to control their conditions of employment and relationships overseas can generate intense affects in migrants. In the following interview excerpt, Ruth, who had worked in Italy, speaks of her shame and the expectations she imagined surrounding her sojourn abroad:

I never told any problems – it was so shameful. They’re so proud of their little girl, she’s out there, abroad, you know? She’s gonna send a lot of money. We’re going to be rich. Because that’s what anybody who goes out of the country does – they’re supposed to be

sending money home. You think that you can manage it, you're from the centre of town, not the far barrios, you speak English, you're educated... you know? But for me, that's not the case, the choices that I made – I was not able to send the money that they were expecting. And that's shameful, you know, not to come home then, and so I didn't have the money to come home and they died.

Ruth goes on to explain how she understands the contrapuntal experience of cross-cultural communication:

A lot of the employers do not do what they should for the helpers. It's the same all over the world... But it's hard, especially for Filipinos to speak out. We have been so suppressed through our culture. *Mabain* – who's going to speak out? You know? We cannot speak up for our own rights because of the way we grew up... It's the colonial thing for us Filipinos – if they're white, they must be right. That's how we were taught. That's how we grew up here, you know!

Ruth uses 'shameful' in the first excerpt, then, in the second, chooses the Ilocano word, *mabain*, to describe her emotions.⁵ The English 'shame' describes her feeling of disappointing her parents, but the Ilocano *abain* maps the affect of relating to her employer. When my English-speaking respondents like Ruth reverted to conjugations of *abain* to explain their emotions to me, I understood this as a strong indication that they found the translation inadequate. I suspected that they knew I had quite clearly heard the word, but they saw that it did not really help me move from affective empathy (yes, I could feel they were distressed) to sympathetic emotional understanding (being able to situate the causes of their distress accurately within their habitus and local structures of feeling.) Ruth's questioning, 'you know', seems to support this interpretation. With returned migrants like Ruth, sometimes when they said 'shame' it seemed to me they wanted to indicate what they understood to be my accustomed definition. When they said *abain*, we were working between two versions of habitus.

‘Shame’ here, in both uses, seems to correspond a comparative self-consciousness – the blush that arises when we think about what others are thinking about us (Probyn, 2004b). Ruth’s use of *mabain* marks her interpretation of her affect through a habitus situated in a structure of feeling that produces a specific variety of postcolonial shame. This highlights her understanding of the apparently natural inequalities between subjects – the ideas that she imagines an overseas (white) employer would most likely have about the ‘place’ of the Filipina migrant domestic worker and the place of the Philippines. Probyn (2004a: 329) writes, ‘shame is felt in the rupture when bodies can or will not fit the place – when, seemingly, there is no place to hide’. Probyn goes on to explore how the physiological experience of shame interacts with the physicality of place (Probyn 2004a: 330). Ruth is out of place in terms of both her social status – a former teacher, working as a housemaid – and her geographical origins as a Filipina in Europe. Ruth’s comments suggests that her understanding of shame operates through structures of feeling that allow her to imagine the supposed deficiencies of her home place in the eyes of her employer and her own deficiencies in the imagined expectations of her parents and, by extension, sending community.

Sedgwick and Frank’s (1995: 4, cited in Probyn, 2004b: 1) reading of shame is that ‘the pulsations of cathexis⁶ around shame enables or disenables the ability to be interested in the world’. Probyn (2004a) posits shame in being out-of-place in postcolonial Australia as a productive beginning for a different kind of engagement with people and place. In Ruth’s case, however, the shaming of emplacement is productive in different terms – it interrupts the pleasure people can take in local interests in a local world and sends them, as it did Ruth, overseas again. Here, the cathexis produced by shame is a line of flight from the local structures of feeling, moving women from the Philippine context of underdevelopment to the world that local people view as ‘modern’ – the metropolitan areas of Hong Kong, Singapore or points abroad.

Shame and embodiment

As Ruth suggests, women can experience shame inscribed on their migrant bodies from both employers and fellow countrymen. The habitus that connects emotions of shame, practices of shaming and the affects of work is revealed through comments on the working body.

Constable (1999) shows how Filipinas in Hong Kong develop contrapuntal schema⁷ for navigating at least two cultural contexts in ways that make it possible for them to ‘feel at home’ (Constable, 1999: 224, following Said, 1984). These schemas are identical with Bourdieu’s (1980) fields of habitus. Hong Kong is experienced as ‘a source of independence, new pleasures and new senses of personhood’ by Filipina migrants (Constable, 1999: 213). This is expressed by one of Constable’s (1999: 216) respondents who comments that, in Hong Kong, she has more ‘fun and freedom’ and, if she went home, she would have to ‘learn to plant rice’. Constable puzzles as to why a middle-class woman, wife of a college teacher, would imagine returning to the manual labour of rice farming. I suggest her comment is a shorthand way of describing readjusting to the habitus and hexis of her sending locality where planting rice, is the ‘traditional’ way of life. This comment also represents her sending locality as ‘non-modern’ or ‘backward’ and suggests that she attaches negative emotions of the affects of the labouring (rice-planting) body produced in the local habitus.

Constable’s migrant respondents abroad also shame the ways in which women, like Luz, are marked, in their hexis, by the time they have spent overseas. Some claim that migrant women, especially those from ‘the provinces’ (which would include the women I quote here) lose their authentic Filipina identities. One of Constable’s (1999: 211) respondents describes how migration changes ‘provincial women’:

If you’ve been here for a long time and you go back to the Philippines, you see how poor it is – the traffic in Manila is so bad, the transportation is so bad. I think Hong Kong is so much more organised; the technology is newer. I think there are some people who come from the provinces – it changes the way they dress, how they eat. They become like their employers.

Here, the dressing, eating body is the site of shame attached to changes in habitus or hexis that could be read as attempts to transform migrant selves in terms of class or status. There is a tacit anxiety at play, beneath this concern about taking up a foreign hexis, that Filipina migrants somehow mark the national, Philippine social body and thus shaming them expresses shame over the national condition (Tadiar, 1993). Here, again, shame emerges from both the anticipation of local and familial expectations and much older colonial encounters.

Embodied practices of re-emplacement

Not all returnees, of course, accept the description of home as lacking. Some find strategies to resist migrant shame through embodied experiences. In this next section, having set out a generalized ‘structure of feeling’ as the context for the shame, above, I provide an illustration of how one respondent readjusts her habitus to circumvent shame.⁸

Reflecting on her own return from work in Singapore and then Canada, Marilyn told me: ‘We’re lucky here, I can see that now...’ When I asked her how she saw this, she explained that it was the landscape – that she now knew how much foreigners valued green space, clean air and beautiful vistas. Though she began her answer with the visual, spending time with Marilyn took me through an entire sensual register as she shared her embodied sense of place.

I quote Marilyn here as a woman living between cultures, enacting the habitus of her home place, and fresh from several months experience in mine, Canada. She explained to me that she had decided to leave Singapore when she found herself caught between exploitative employers and increasingly outlandish demands from her family at home. The money she had saved for herself from work abroad was just enough to rent a storefront and buy stock for a small *sari-sari* store where she (like Belinda imagines) struggles with credits and debtors. Marilyn focussed as much of her re-emplacement on place as she did on restoring smooth interpersonal relations with her family and community. For her I was a witness, friend and foil – someone who could confirm that yes, foreigners who came from large cities could and did value, enjoy or could learn to take delight in, the sensual pleasures of Marilyn’s local life. Sara Ahmed (2000, cited in Thomas, 2004) notes how the sense of home is worked out through encounters with the stranger within. Here, in Marilyn’s experience, I become a similar stranger in her own, novel practices of a translocal re-emplacement but also someone else with a shared habitus of Canada.

Describing the experiences of accompanying Marilyn on her journeys of sensual re-emplacement seems to demand a breathless rush of words.⁹ Thomas (2004) observes that the sensory is always experienced as simultaneity – a multi-sensorial whole. My memories of traversing the Cordilleran landscape with Marilyn bring up sensory stimuli not singly, but in a full sensorium with overlaps, echoes and residues of other sense memories. She insisted that I not practice distanced looking with a

camera, but a wholehearted sensory engagement. She shared with me the sounds she revalued as being ‘homely’ – the familiar tones of the Kankaney language, the elders chanting rituals of place, the gongs at weddings, the wind rushing through the tropical pine trees, and the still silence of a town without cars. We smelled the unique perfume of home, a combination of woodsmoke from cooking fires, manure on the sweet potato plots surrounding the houses in the village and the scent of the pine plantations of the slopes above her town. The wind from the hills touched us, blowing us askew on the paths along the rice terraces. The village was all around us as people packed convivially into public transport trucks that raced up and down the hills, remodelled airplane engines droning. We tasted the place in the spring water carried into the house in buckets on our heads, in the organic vegetables and free-range chicken from the neighbours. Our legs would ache after hiking. ‘When you are walking this much’, Marilyn said, ‘like you are on the hills around the town, you are hungry and our fresh food tastes even better again’. On rainy afternoons when the typhoon flag was raised, she would cook *pinikpikan* – chicken beaten to raise the blood to the skin, then butchered and boiled with white beans, pickled pork fat (*eteg*) and vegetables. Marilyn would call for her nephews, the tourist guides and her returned migrant friends and we would sit in her storefront and eat *pinikpikan* and play cards. And I found myself carried along by an urgent and visceral enthusiasm that I felt came to me directly from Marilyn as I ate the savoury meat.

The counterpoint to this was her own visit to my place, Canada. After spending several months together on our first meeting in the Philippines in 1991, Marilyn visited friends in Ottawa. Then, in the summer of 1993, I was living in the same city as her hosts. I met Marilyn at her friends’ home and travelled with her on the bus back to my rented flat. Finally, we were exchanging our usual places of cultural insider and guest. She sat at the kitchen table as I cooked us dinner, did the washing up and opened us a large bottle of beer. Marilyn watched all this with some amusement, observing, ‘You’re actually quite competent here, in your place. Not like when you first came to mine. With you, I’m not *mabain*. I’ve seen you in my place... the first day we walked through [the village], you cut your foot’. Then she glanced down, meaningfully, at the small scar above my left ankle and we both began to laugh. Marilyn’s version of the emotion of shame (*abain*) is based in the affects of being out of place. The scar on my ankle, a result of tripping over barbed wire in a cow pasture near Marilyn’s house in the Philippines – my own out of place moment – relieves

Marilyn of the possibility of feeling ashamed (*mabain*) with me, a foreigner, in my own place. In fact, we were so relieved, we laughed until our sides ached.

Habitus and Intercultural Affect

From this story of sensual re-emplacement and a researcher's tuition in the practices of place, I want to draw out the embodied participation in the practices of locality – that of a cross-cultural education in habitus, as Marilyn practiced it. If migration has taught Marilyn to be 'like' her employer, her journey has also allowed her to value affective experiences of place in ways that she had previously not noticed or associated with negative emotions. As Thomas (2004) suggests, we are habituated into sensory regimes through cultural experience, and it is Marilyn's acquisition of a contrapuntal habitus while overseas that allows her to consciously engage with and bring additional meaning to her local schema of habituation. Sensual experiences like hiking until her legs ached, or feeling the wind and rain on her face, generated affects to which Marilyn might have attached negative emotions associated with affects of 'underdevelopment' (c.f. the comments on the habitus of 'planting rice', above) before going abroad. In my company, she revalued these affects as the positive experiences of a body exposed to fresh air and exercise – feelings valued by Canadian urbanites.

Back home in the Philippines, Marilyn worked to tap into her reservoirs of emotional meaning from her fields of habitus to re-narrate affect into a different set of emotional interpretations and took me along with her. On this basis, I suggest that bodily meaning, in an intersubjective field, is much more difficult to imagine as a shared feeling. To feel each others' affective states through our bodies and learn the interpretive framework that attaches emotions and values to affect is to learn how to share habitus. Probyn argues (2004a: 331) that the body 'generates and carries much more meaning than we have tended to see'. Thus it is not necessary to fully understand the emotion first, in its cultural context; rather the understanding occurs in the affect that precedes it. Put differently, empathy lies in first taking up the affective responses of another, then learning the appropriate emotion names. Marilyn and I were creating, as I experienced it, an understanding where we felt each other's affective responses and negotiated the emotions we would attach to them in our intersubjective space that was simultaneously intercultural.

It is in the emotive register that Ruth and Marilyn attempt to share with me the insights of habitus. Both Ruth and Marilyn, each very fluent in English, choose to use the term *mabain* to talk about a particular feeling of shame with me, I think, in the hopes that I will eventually come to understand their experience of the emotion. Or perhaps it's an emotion that I continually get 'wrong' in the intercultural/intersubjective encounter as a shameless researcher – because it is a local emotion that is not mapped by the habitus I carry from Canada. This fits with the intercultural counterpoint described in the interactions above and shows how, while these lessons of habitus are important for an ethnographer to learn, they are also the stuff of intercultural relationships.

There were moments when Marilyn would insist that only the local framing of affect would do. For instance, when I commented that I always slept so well in the quiet of her village, Marilyn replied 'English doesn't even have a word for it. When you feel satisfied inside yourself because you've slept just enough, not too little, not too much, we call it ___ – and that's how you feel here, not like Canada or Singapore'. Of course, I've forgotten the Kankaney¹⁰ term she used, but not the Ilocano – *naimas ti tuturogan* – (your sleep is delicious) she gave me as a first translation. What I haven't forgotten is that, by giving me a name to use, Marilyn taught me to recognize a bodily sensation – that of well-being and balance due to sleep satiety – as an affect, and then to name it as emotion.

For me, ours was an intense and exhilarating relationship, but perhaps not as individualised as I anticipated. When I came back to visit, five years later, Marilyn called me 'Bianca'. After I returned to Canada, she had befriended an Italian woman with whom she shared her passion for place. 'Remember when you were here before and we went to the fields in.... and ate the fruit bat?', she said to me. And of course, I had to reply, 'it wasn't me, I think it was Bianca', and I resisted engaging with her in the rememory of taste and embodiment she was trying to conjure up for us. I felt a flicker of resentment that I was interchangeable with another foreign guest who had also stayed at her home, travelled with her and shared her daily life. On reflection, this sentiment gives way to an affectionate understanding. I think Marilyn's continued her intercultural counterpoint as a way of domesticating her detour and arriving back at a new feeling of 'home'.

Conclusion – Reworking Habitus

Return, here, can be marked by both negative affect and emotions - the interpersonal suffering described by Belinda and Ruth - and the positive affects and emotions generated by place in its intersubjective exploration as sought by Marilyn. Following Marilyn's teaching, I want to conclude by arguing that the detour of migration can be domesticated through the sensorium, in a reworking of the habitus and its mapping of emotion on to affect. I have shown how relationships between affect and emotions are not universal, but structured by a habitus situated within structures of feeling. Likewise, the taste of *eteg* – pickled pork fat – that gives *pinikpikan* its distinctive taste could evoke revulsion, rather than enjoyment, for me. Yet eating this dish with Marilyn was transformed by her nostalgia for it and by the challenge implicit in it that I not react with objectification – rather by participation in the moment of commensality. Here, the value of the tactile, olfactory, auditory and haptic experiences of the local sensorium becomes the key to recreating from a local place a newly cosmopolitan and sensuous version of a transnational habitus for each of us.

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¹ Anderson and Smith (2001: 8) call structures of feeling ‘emotional topographies’.

² Luzon is the largest island in the Philippine archipelago. This paper draws on data from ongoing fieldwork; particularly interviews conducted in 1991–1992, 1995, 1996–1997, 2002 and 2003. My host communities were located along Northern Luzon’s Cordillera Central, an area inhabited by indigenous groups. In this region, people speak local languages, a regional language, Ilocano (as a market language), and English.

³ These words included the Ilocano *pannakababain* (embarrassment, humiliation or insult), used to talk of their interactions with fellow community members; *nakababain* (humiliating, shameful), to describe their feelings and the actions of community members and family; *ibabain* (to put in an embarrassing or shaming situation), used to describe migration and return, and *kasi managpabain siak* (as if I am someone who always disappoints), talking about feelings of not having succeeded overseas. In this essay, I provide examples of quotes I collected that were, in the main, in English. See Geladé (1993) for definitions of Ilocano terms.

⁴ Abroad is used as a generalized term for overseas. A question such as ‘where is she working?’ might be answered with ‘abroad, just... abroad’. This conceptual category often obscures the differences between migrants’ very diverse places of work.

⁵ Abain also appears in Filipino (the national language which is based almost entirely on Tagalog, the language of the Manila region) and several other Filipino languages.

⁶ Cathexis is the investment of mental or emotional energy into a person, object or idea.

⁷ Contrapuntal means using counterpoint. Counterpoint is a musical term describing the result of combining two or more independent melodies into a single harmonic texture where each melody retains its linear character.

⁸ Methodologically, this follows Burawoy’s extended case method (2000), the point being that Marilyn’s story is a possible response, not that she is a perfect representative of some idealized ‘returned migrant’.

⁹ Doubtless because Marilyn, reciprocally, acts as a foil for my own delight in the local life of her village.

¹⁰ The name of the ethnic group and local language are spelled variously Kankaney, Kankanai, and Kankanaey.