The disorientation of Filipino migrant workers: an audiovisual representation

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Accounts of Filipino migrant workers facing hardships abroad has been a perennial but nonetheless pressing issue that has proven time and again how difficult it is for Filipinos to survive let alone live in adequate conditions outside the margins of their home country. In assessing the living conditions of Filipino migrants working abroad, several factors can be considered. In a 2019 qualitative study for example, Hall, Garabiles, and Latkin categorized indicators for the compromised health and well-being of female Filipino domestic workers in Macao, China under three broad social determinants namely social and community networks, work and living conditions, and cultural and policy environment. The second category, work and living conditions, included themes of work environment and healthcare services, under which the recurring sub-themes of cultural and language barriers arises from (Hall, Garabiles, and Latkin 2019). It is this cultural and linguistic misunderstanding between the migrant and resident, employee and employer, Filipino and foreigner, inducing a diminished quality of living and labor for the former respectively, that the filmmakers wish to focus on in their proposed film.

A three- to five-minute experimental film artistically representing the disorientation of Filipino migrant workers in their plight abroad will be the means of analysis and subject of inquiry of the filmmakers on the issue of prostrated overseas Filipino labor. The basis of the film’s theme, disorientation, will be applied according to Mireille Rosello’s (2015) concept of disorientation as has been expounded in her analysis of Algerian novelist Rachid Boudjedra’s 1975 novel, Topographie idéale pour une agression caractérisée (Ideal Topography for an Aggravated Assault). Rosello idealizes culture as a map, wherein an illiterate migrant’s navigation through and within it would mean to come to terms with disorientation. Orientation simultaneously occurs with the process of navigation that relies on having a “destination (where are we going and how do we know when we are there) and a definition of coordinates (how we get there, how we understand a map)” (Rosello 2015: 78). On the contrary, disorientation is the existence of neither the former or the latter. What becomes of the destination is an undulating maze that “we are forced to go on and on even when we feel exhausted and lost” (Rosello 2015: 82). The filmmakers will adopt this framework in representing the experiential issues faced by Filipino migrant workers, with an alternative focus on language as the source for disorientation.
REFERENCES
