

ARTICLE

## Erasing/Embracing the marks of aging: Alternative discourses around beauty among Filipina migrants

Michelle G. Ong and Virginia Braun

ABSTRACT

The subjects of migration and aging have both attracted scholarly attention from various disciplines, using a wide range of approaches and strategies. The intricacies of the nexus between migration and aging, however, are only now starting to be explored. This paper seeks to contribute towards an exploration of the intersection of aging and migration in the lives of Filipinas using feminist psychology and *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (indigenous Filipino psychology, or SP) as methodological frameworks. This paper argues that a poststructuralist approach may be used productively in SP to provide empirical critiques of existing power structures that produce the inequalities we wish to address. Using *pakikipagkuwentuhan* (an indigenous semi-structured interview method) together with a poststructuralist approach to language, the study examines New-Zealand-based Filipina migrants' meaning-making on beauty and aging. Focusing primarily on the perceived or felt pressure to be beautiful as migrants, and on some of the ways those pressures are resisted, this paper interrogates these perceptions and meanings in the context of a neoliberal subjectivity that emphasizes individual responsibility and choice, of a sexist and ageist social order that diminishes the value of older women, and of a consumerist ethic that regards the body as an object for displaying success as well as a tool for obtaining it. Beauty was found to be an important signifier of success in migration and its maintenance felt as a social obligation; however, counter-discourses of aging embedded in cultural notions of *matanda* (the elderly), as well as the construction of "choice" as being constrained by the body, allow women space to argue for nonconformity with society's dictates to maintain a particular ideal of beauty.

KEYWORDS

Migration, ageing, beauty, feminist psychology, Sikolohiyang Pilipino, embodiment

## Introduction

Migration studies as a field of study has a long history that includes a wide range of topics and utilizes an even wider range of perspectives and approaches. Aging, as part of this wide field of study, however, has not been given substantial scholarly attention as an important feature of migrant experience and a factor in migration (Percival, 2013). Yet there are many important intersections between aging and migration—migrants are aging in their adoptive country (Bolzman, Poncioni-Derigo, Vial, & Fibbi, 2004; Go, 1989; Zontini, 2014), individuals are migrating as retirees, not laborers, to other countries (Gorringer, 2003; Gustafson, 2008), and individuals from poorer countries are being recruited as migrant workers to care for aging populations in wealthier ones (Hawthorne, 2001), or to help boost the economy of countries with an aging population (Pool, 2002). These phenomena challenge earlier and classic works on migration that tend to ignore the various social spaces individuals inhabit as men and women, as older or younger members of society, and the differences in mobility these spaces produce. They also bring attention to the fact that aging is now occurring in a globalized context, where the experience and quality of an individual's aging process is connected in many different ways to that of others' elsewhere in the world (Calasanti, 2010).

This paper seeks to contribute to the growing interest in the intersection between aging and migration. Using data from research on older Filipina migrants in New Zealand, we will show how current social discourses on migrant Filipinos, on women, and on older people shape individuals' meaning-making, bodies, and lives. We also argue for the utility of a poststructuralist approach to language in a study on aging that is built on feminist psychology and *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* as its methodological framework.

As aging is growing into an increasingly serious concern in many countries, and migration and globalization are becoming common features of life in the twenty-first century, it is becoming more urgent to find ways of analyzing migration from both a global and local lens that takes into account gender, age, class, and ethnicity. An embodied approach appears promising, particularly for outlining how the inequality produced by abstracted, global forces make themselves material in individuals' lives, as well as for identifying strategies for resistance. The use of an embodied approach to migration may provide unique insights about migrants' experiences and meaning-making on aging, as the body is central to aging and ageism. It is mainly through the body that the old are identified (Laws, 1995), and it is because of the aging body's perceived failings that the oppression and discrimination of the elderly are given justification (Phillipson, 2002). Because Filipina migrants can occupy these various spaces of intersection (as aging migrants, as migrant workers who care for aging locals, as migrant or transnational retirees), a study of their experiences and meaning-

making may offer interesting insights about the ways in which constructions of aging, gender, ethnicity, and migration serve to marginalize them. In addition, such a study may also reveal the strategies they employ to oppose their subjugation and actively construct alternatives that are more enabling and empowering.

Feminist scholarship has made significant contributions towards an understanding of how power operates in the everyday lives and realities of women migrants (e.g., Agrawal, 2006; Palriwala & Uberoi, 2008; Willis & Yeoh, 2000) and older women (Freixas, Luque, & Reina, 2012; Joyce & Mamo, 2006). Foremost among these is the empirical investigation of the various challenges and opportunities women face (in migration, and in aging) as women, which are understood to have impacts that intersect and accumulate over time, and which determine the (non-)permeability of certain social and geographical boundaries for individual women. For instance, the popularity of Filipinas around the world as wives, domestic workers, caregivers, and nurses cannot be understood apart from the dominance of a patriarchal system of meanings that produce/re-produce Filipinas as possessing a femininity ideal for these roles (Cunneen, 1997; Parreñas, 2001; Tyner, 2004). At the same time, the distress women may experience over the changes in their physical appearance as they age, the difficulties in providing the carework they continue to perform for their families as daughters, mothers, and grandmothers, and the poverty that an overwhelmingly large proportion of older women find themselves in at the global level cannot be understood outside of a set of discourses that construct women as valuable mainly for their sexual desirability and the paid and unpaid reproductive work they do for their family and larger society (Hochschild, 2002; Sontag, 1972). Feminist analysis of policies, popular media, and individuals' discourses around migration and aging find these avenues pervaded by such constraining constructions of women that largely lead to limited and limiting conditions (in aging, and in migration) for women.

Scholars of Sikolohiyang Pilipino (SP) have yet to make significant headways in these areas of study<sup>1</sup>. And yet, SP, with its commitment to critical and emancipatory psychology (Enriquez, 1994), stands to make important contributions to our understanding of the significance of migration and aging in

---

<sup>1</sup> An exception would be the collection of papers presented in the *27th National Conference of the Pambansang Samahan sa Sikolohiyang Pilipino* in 2002, which focused on the theme of aging in the context of Filipino society (Pambansang Samahan sa Sikolohiyang Pilipino, 2015). Proceedings for this event and the papers presented were not published; at the moment of writing this paper there are no publications on aging or the elderly that employ a Sikolohiyang Pilipino framework. As for migration, except for a few publications by Pe-Pua (e.g. 2000, 2003), and Protacio-Marcelino's (1996) and Mendoza's (2006) work on Filipino-American identities, there is very little work about migration in psychology even among less clearly Sikolohiyang Pilipino-aligned researchers in the Philippines.

contemporary Filipino society and culture. More importantly, SP is particularly well-poised to produce an analysis that is conscious of the impact of social structures and inequalities on an individual's psyche, considerate of culturally-relevant meanings, and conscious of nuances due to an individual's multiple social positions (e.g., as belonging to a particular class, gender, or age group). Of special relevance to this paper is the application of *pakikipagkuwentuhan*, an indigenous method for data gathering developed by proponents of Sikolohiyang Pilipino, along with a poststructuralist approach to language in order to come up with an analysis that establishes connections between larger social discourses and individual subjectivity.

This paper will discuss the discourses on aging among Filipina migrants in New Zealand, particularly on their understandings of beauty, and demonstrate how notions of Filipino migrant success shape these understandings. The paper will also discuss individuals' efforts to resist pressures to maintain beauty using alternative discourses derived from Filipino cultural resources and argue that such resources are important for generating spaces for negotiation and resistance.

### **Brief background of Filipinos in New Zealand**

4

Filipinos first arrived in New Zealand in the 1960s as scholars under the Colombo plan (Norman, Udanga, & Udanga, 2011) and had continuously increased towards the 1970s, when Filipinas came to be regarded as “loving, kind and excellent homemakers” and “Kiwis sought them for their lifetime partner” (Norman et al., 2011, 9). Women comprised the majority of Filipino migrants in New Zealand from this period onwards. The difference in the proportion of women and men decreased with the entry of more families after a shift in immigration policies in 2003, which encouraged skilled migrants' migration (Population Statistics Unit, 2007). Despite such changes, the overall disparity in gender among the population of Filipinos remains the highest among all overseas-born people resident in New Zealand, with women comprising 56.9%, according to the 2013 national census (Statistics New Zealand, 2014a). The most recent data from the 2013 census indicates that the Filipino population in New Zealand has more than tripled since 2001, with Filipinos now totaling over 40,000, becoming the third largest group of Asians in the country (Statistics New Zealand, 2014b).

## The double standard in aging

Aging has been viewed popularly as a negative experience for women as it is also defined as a loss of beauty or attractiveness. Women are thought to have a particular fear of looking old, and studies report old bodies being spoken of as ugly by aging individuals themselves (Furman, 1997; Slevin, 2010). Although women may be satisfied with other aspects of aging (such as retirement) and their bodies (in terms of health and function), they are found to express dissatisfaction with their appearance (Krekula, 2007; Slevin, 2006, 2010). A double standard in aging (Sontag, 1972), whereby women are more harshly judged than men based on their looks, is said to be at work and makes the bodily changes in aging a more negative experience for women (Clarke & Griffin, 2008; Hurd, 2000). As a result, older women report enduring pain, as they expend considerable time, money, and energy in order to be beautiful (Furman, 1997). Some scholars warn that the pressure to remain youthful and attractive may be contributing to the development of eating disorders (Midlarsky & Nitzburg, 2008; Peat, Peyerl, & Muehlenkamp, 2008) as well as the increase in popularity of cosmetic surgery among older women (Davis, 2003).

The existence of such extremes should not be taken as indicative of pathological fear of old age in women, but instead should be understood as occurring within a social context that is sexist, ageist, and consumerist. Within this social context, a narrow standard of beauty is held up as an ideal for women. In consumer culture, the body is regarded instrumentally—as something to be invested in to produce a yield; a plastic medium one can manage and manipulate as one of many signifiers of social status (Baudrillard, 1998; Featherstone, 2010)—all are invited to subject the body to scrutiny with the goal of producing an ideal body and self. For aging individuals, consumerism offers an opportunity for agelessness, for the realization of different “possible selves” (Gilleard, 1996).

For women, however, the idealized, beautiful body is defined by youthfulness (Peat et al., 2008; Slevin, 2010). Women’s bodies move farther from this ideal as they age. They are consistently given the message that it is undesirable to show visible signs of aging and that it is one’s responsibility to appear young-looking (Coupland, 2003). The appearance-related changes associated with aging, instead of being regarded as indicative of a woman’s character and distinction, mark “the end of her worth as defined by her sexuality and her ability to reproduce” (Browne, 1998, 41).

Beauty is an important vehicle for women’s power in an ageist and sexist society, and consumer culture suggests that body/beauty work will transform the self, open new avenues for being, and allow one to better enjoy the full range of lifestyle choices and pleasures on offer (Featherstone, 1991). Critical literature on aging women’s pursuit of youth and beauty suggests that engagement in beauty

work should not be taken as indicative of an interest in beauty per se, but as a means for retaining social capital and combating a gendered ageism which values women for their sexual desirability, renders them invisible, and sees age as a disadvantage in the workplace (Clarke & Griffin, 2008; Hurd, 2000). Indeed, many women who engage in the pursuit of beauty are fully aware that it is connected to their potential for social and economic power (Furman, 1997; Hurd, 2000). This engagement with beauty is an outcome of the paradox that, in aging, the woman's body is "invisible—in that it is no longer seen—and hypervisible—in that it is all that is seen" (Woodward, 1999 cited in Twigg, 2004, 62).

More recent (re)development of these feminist reconceptualizations of Foucauldian ideas around power, discourse, subjectivity, and the body (see Foucault, 1972, 1980, 1988) focus on their links to a neoliberal political rationality. These ideas have been especially useful for understanding contemporary femininity where individual choice, agency, responsibility, and self-realization figure prominently as found in women's magazines, advertising, and women's talk around their own beauty practices (Chen, 2013; Gill, 2007; Lazar, 2011; Stuart & Donaghue, 2011). As Johanna Oksala (2011) argues, this is a triumph, not of feminism, but of neoliberalism, whose "masculinist conception of the subject as an independent, self-interested, economic being has come to characterize also the feminine subject in the last decades" (105).

What complicates matters further is that beauty has a moral aspect; it is regarded as good (Clarke, 2002). And as older women are not seen to be attractive or beautiful, they are "rendered morally unacceptable and subjected to negative stereotyping" (Furman, 1997, 104). Within consumer culture, where consumption is seen as enabling the embodiment of a new and better self, those who fail to work on their bodies are judged to be morally lax, irresponsible, and have poor self-control (Featherstone, 2010). In the Filipino language, beauty and good are also conflated as the Filipino word for beautiful can also mean good.<sup>2</sup> Thus, shame, guilt, and moral failure become part of a woman's experience of aging (Furman, 1997; Holstein, 2006).

Some studies, however, have also shown that older women have more relaxed beauty standards (Clarke, 2002; Dumas, Laberge, & Straka, 2005; Hurd, 2000), feel less guilt and personal responsibility for bodily changes (Gimlin, 2007;

---

<sup>2</sup> *Maganda* means beautiful, good, and is used in the same way good is used in the phrases: good morning, good outcome, good place, good opportunity, and in the Filipino expression for a good or kind heart (*magandang kalooban*). Another word, *mabuti*, exists for good as in the opposite of evil; in some expressions *maganda* and *mabuti* are interchangeable (e.g. *mabuting kalooban* means the same as *magandang kalooban*), but not in all cases (e.g. a good person is a *mabuting tao*, but not *magandang tao*).

Halliwell & Dittmar, 2003), and that older women who tried to conform to youthful ideals were stigmatized by other older women (Dumas et al., 2005). There are varied reasons for women's diminishing concern for maintaining a particular kind of body as they grow older—it might be because they have developed a more inclusive conception of beauty that is more concerned about the person as a whole, rather than the façade (Dumas et al., 2005); or they perceive relaxed expectations from significant others and other social environments (Dumas et al., 2005), or have become more concerned with health than beauty (MacNevin, 2003).

Women's engagement with beauty work is a complex issue for feminists, who recognize that it is a means for exercising agency in the individual's fight against ageist discrimination, but also that it reproduces ageist definitions of beauty and attractiveness (Clarke & Griffin, 2008). And although it has been noted that women gain pleasure and pride from beautifying practices and from devoting time to their bodies (Furman, 1997) and that this has therapeutic effects (Gilleard & Higgs, 2013), it is also important to acknowledge that some women undertake beauty work for the pleasure of others, specifically romantic partners (actual or potential), who may amplify the pressure to remain youthful (Clarke & Griffin, 2008).

The pursuit of beauty holds many meanings for aging women. It can signify femininity (Bartky, 1990), continuity with the past (Furman, 1997), and social inclusion and participation (Clarke & Griffin, 2008). It may also be used to acquire and retain social and economic power, to stimulate romantic interest, or simply to provide oneself pleasure. This paper aims to add to this existing set of views on beauty meanings that are significant to aging Filipinas because of their migrant status, and explores the strategic potential of culturally-derived discourses around aging and the body for combating the pressure for beauty-maintenance across the lifespan.

### **Methodology: The use of critical psychologies**

The methodological framework for this study utilizes two areas or forms of critical psychology—SP and feminist psychology. SP and feminist psychology are both critical psychologies (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Fox, Prilleltensky, & Austin, 2009; Paredes-Canilao & Babaran-Diaz, 2011) that share the following principles: research is political, language is a bearer and producer of culture and ideologies, context and culture are crucial to understanding individuals, and the power gap between researchers and participants must be addressed. Critical psychology is interested in power—how it operates, how it is used by, for, and/or against individuals, including psychologists themselves (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 2002). Both have produced extensive critiques of how the human sciences in

general, and psychology in particular, have been used to oppress groups of people (e.g. women, the Filipino masses).

The use of SP and feminist psychology for this research project is necessary in order to address gender and cultural issues that underlie the topic. It addresses a weakness in SP—a typical lack of critiquing patriarchy in Philippine society (Estrada-Claudio, 2002). It also responds to the critiques leveled against mainstream feminism (at least in the western, industrialized countries), which claim that it has not adequately addressed matters of ethnicity, culture, and colonialism (Burman, 1998).

Another important difference between the two critical psychologies is seen in their methodological toolbox. Although critical psychologies across the spectrum employ a wide range of approaches to research, data-gathering, and analysis, feminist psychology has productively used poststructuralist-informed approaches to examine and unpack women's lives. A poststructuralist orientation, with its strength in providing a critique of existing social structures and inequalities and investigating how power relations are negotiated and perpetuated at the level of the individual, has long been known to feminists. Nevertheless, it has yet to be explored fully in SP, despite Sylvia Estrada-Claudio's (2002) cogent argument for a poststructuralist method and skillful application of this approach.<sup>3</sup> Although clear about its interest in confronting oppression and marginalization and vocal in its critique of scholars' involvement in the entrenchment of colonialism (Enriquez, 1994; Jimenez, 1977), SP still has much to do in terms of producing empirical work that offers a critique of social inequalities and the social structures that perpetuate them. In this regard, this paper concurs with Estrada-Claudio (2014) who contends that SP's commitment to decolonization and empowerment may be better served by abandoning essentialism in order to encourage the methodological freedom that will push SP's anti-colonial and democratic agenda further.

Estrada-Claudio (2014) posits that essentialism in SP consists of the following assumptions: (1) the Philippines' sovereignty as a nation state with clear geographical boundaries delineates what is Filipino; (2) Filipinos in the Philippines are a homogenous group that can be distinguished from what is Western/colonialist; and (3) the indigenous is liberating. These essentialisms may be seen in the effort to develop tools for measuring Filipino personality, *pagkatao*

---

<sup>3</sup> See also Susanah Lily L. Mendoza's (2006) caution against the dismissive, anti-essentialist critique of indigenization by poststructuralist theorists, and her argument for the possibility of fruitful translation or dialogue between the indigenization movement and poststructuralism which informs deconstructive critical cultural theory.



[personality], and *ugali* [character] (Carlota, 1985; Enriquez & Guanzon-Lapeña, 1985; Guanzon-Lapeña, Church, Carlota, & Katigbak, 1998), the pursuit of (what are presumed to be) true or indigenous definitions of Filipino values through socio-linguistic and philosophical analysis of local languages, metaphors, and aphorisms (Enriquez, 1985, 1987; Salazar, 1985). While essentialism may be strategically deployed by a marginalized group in order to forward emancipatory goals (Spivak, 1988), it is also true that being bound to it with little awareness of its methodological limitations implies that one is less able to provide a critique of the socio-historical, systemic conditions that produce the heterogeneity that is characteristic of Filipino reality and experience. The rich and the poor, men and women, young and old, gay and straight, Muslim and Christian, migrant and non-migrant have different ways of being Filipino and experiencing life as a Filipino. To say that they all, as Filipinos, value *kapwa* [shared identity, or the self that is in the other], can preclude a serious investigation of why some of them will discriminate against Muslim Filipinos, or will not take offense when someone tells a sexist joke, or concur that the problem with the poor is that they are lazy and dependent on dole-outs.

### **Generating conversation: A Filipino method of data-gathering**

Pakikipagkuwentuhan, an indigenous Filipino method for gathering qualitative data through verbal interaction with participants (Orteza, 1997), was employed for this study. Pakikipagkuwentuhan is akin to a face-to-face semi-structured interview and other narrative methods that are well-utilized in qualitative studies on subjective accounts and meaning rather than verifiable facts (Hugh-Jones, 2010; Riessman, 2008). It involves individuals in conversation with each other, with participants free and able to tell the stories they want, when, where, and how they want to do it. This method was developed by indigenous Filipino psychology to provide Filipino psychologists with a method that is participatory, sensitive to Filipino culture, and conscious of reducing the power difference between researcher and participant (Orteza, 1997).

The pakikipagkuwentuhan for this study, conducted over a total of 53 sessions, elicited stories on the participants' coming to New Zealand, adjustments to life in New Zealand, and stories about family, work, and leisure in New Zealand. There were discussions around bodily changes over time, how these changes have affected one's activities and bodily practices, and other people's comments on those changes. Thoughts about the migrants' future, long-term plans, fears and hopes around their bodies, and aging were also included in the discussions. Consistent with pakikipagkuwentuhan as a method, both content and process were open and flexible to accommodate the participants' additions (e.g., stories

not originally included in the list of topics, introduction of photos and other materials into the conversation), questions (e.g., about the researcher's family and migration status), and constraints (i.e., time and location).

Data for this study is taken from transcriptions of the *kuwentuhan* sessions with 20 Filipina migrants in Auckland between 49–69 years of age who had been residing in New Zealand for at least five years. Data-gathering was typically conducted over two to three sessions, and yielded an average of three hours and forty minutes of tape-recorded material for each participant.

In this study, the value of pakikipagkuwentuhan is not only in its cultural relevance and attention to power differences between the interviewer and the participants; it is also found in its ability to generate large amounts of material (in the form of verbal exchange between the people involved), and the view that the interaction between participant and interviewer is an important feature of the data-gathering, rather than something to be controlled or minimized (Orteza, 1997). This last feature of pakikipagkuwentuhan has not been articulated at length in the existing literature, and its potential for the adoption of a less essentialist epistemological position in the study of Filipino psychology has yet to be fully explored. This paper will demonstrate that pakikipagkuwentuhan is well-suited to a more constructionist stance to research in SP.

### **Studying stories: Analyzing the data**

Pakikipagkuwentuhan is a productive method for eliciting people's understandings of their life experiences. In this study, it allowed the participants and the interviewer to explore particular themes, to consider different perspectives or angles over the issue being discussed, and to make explicit what was implicit in the course of the pakikipagkuwentuhan. In order to make full use of the advantages offered by this method, and to be consistent with the study's objectives and methodological commitments, a poststructuralist feminist approach to language in the analysis of data was employed. This strategy provided the tools for exposing the links between social institutions, language, and individual subjectivity.

A poststructuralist approach to language implies that language is not taken to provide access to an individual's internal state or disposition, nor a reflection of an external, objective reality; instead, one's subjectivity and reality are constituted in language (Gavey, 1997; Potter & Wetherell, 1998; Weedon, 1997; Wetherell, 1997). According to poststructuralism, language is the realm within which "actual and possible forms of social organization and their likely social and political consequences are defined and contested" (Weedon, 1997, 21). What this implies is that individuals (in our case, aging Filipina migrants) do not exist objectively outside of history and culture, but instead are constituted in discourse

(e.g., media, political debates, and popular, everyday discourse) at a specific moment and place. An interest in language means an interest not in accessing *the* truth that talk is presumed to provide, but in *a* truth that is crafted within a particular context for a particular purpose.

Within this view of language and power, subjectivity or our sense of ourselves is constructed in and through language (Burman & Parker, 1993; Foucault, 1972; McLaren, 2002; Weedon, 1997). Individuals, rather than having a fixed identity or essential self, occupy different subject positions that are made available to them by the cultural repertoire of discourses in order to manage their moral location within the realm of social interaction (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2010). Most significantly, the construction of subjectivity in language tends to be unacknowledged by individuals who experience themselves as the author of the discourse that constructs their subjectivity, as if they were indeed a rational, unified subject as humanism proposes—“the source rather than the effect of language” (Weedon, 1997, 31). Therefore, to conceive of subjectivity as a fluid, unstable product of competing discourses opens up the possibility of new forms of subjectivity arising from shifts in the wide range of discourses that constitute it (Weedon, 1997).

The analysis, therefore, takes participants’ responses to be a product of cultural resources and the powers that shape subjectivity rather than an expression of ideas, memories, or dispositions extracted from individuals. They are also conceived of as a product of individuals’ capacity for making sense of their experiences within the relations of power and for negotiating their own agency and constraints. The analysis was built on the participants’ descriptions of bodily change, attributions for change, descriptions of effects/practices in relation to these changes, and justifications regarding those practices taken up, refused, or abandoned in relation to these changes. These descriptions, attributions, and justifications, however, were not regarded in terms of their accuracy or truthfulness. Their utility was in their having a reality—that they were meaningful to the participants and shaped their conduct in some way. What was more meaningful for the analysis, in this sense, was the participants’ efforts at presenting a coherent story and subjectivity, the cultural resources that resonated with the discourses they oriented to in the construction of their accounts, and the variations across the participants’ material and discursive realities. In this regard, an analysis that examines broad patterns as well as variations within and across individual accounts can capture the resonances of discourse at the individual level with those at the larger social or institutional level and identify the spaces opened up for rejection and resistance of these more dominant discourses.

## Reflections on beauty

Although no questions were specifically about beauty, all participants shared some narratives around the possession, maintenance, diminishment, and loss of beauty over time. One common pattern among accounts of change (or non-change) in participants' physical appearance is the relevance of the conditions of their lives as migrants in New Zealand. As will be shown in this paper, aging migrant Filipinas' embodiment of success is circumscribed by gendered expectations and consumerist ideas around body presentation, such that beauty practices may be constructed as both a privilege and obligation in migration.<sup>4</sup>

"May" had relocated to New Zealand in her mid-twenties.<sup>5</sup> She was employed full-time during the time of the interviews, went to the gym regularly, and maintained a healthy lifestyle. She did not drink or smoke, and tried to get enough sleep. May talked about life in the Philippines and its impact on people's bodies:

You know the lifestyle in the Philippines—they have a hard life. You know when I went home I saw all my classmates, I didn't recognize them. Because of their hard life, they look very old! Whoa! (...) And they said to me "May! You never changed!" And I said, [that's] because they've got lots of children and they don't have time to relax. I think [it's] because all they do is keep working to survive.

May compared herself favorably to her contemporaries in the Philippines. She identified the "lifestyle" of "working to survive" in the Philippines as the reason for her classmates' changed appearance—an observation shared by the other participants. These participants contended that the obvious difference in lifestyle and living standards (i.e., relaxed versus unceasing work to survive; good quality versus poor quality food; good versus bad environment/weather) accounts for the difference between being youthful-looking despite age and looking "haggard" (according to Fey, another participant) or "look[ing] very old" (May). In accounts such as May's, the body is taken to be the material evidence of a good life lived in New Zealand; youthful looks are framed as directly resulting from lifestyle changes afforded by migration. In proposing that success in migration is written

---

<sup>4</sup> Although racial and orientalist fantasies, religious-spiritual morals, social class, and heterosexual desirability were also found to shape participants' meanings of and engagements with beauty, space limitations do not allow their inclusion in the paper. There is a conscious focus on beauty as a signifier of success for migrant Filipinas and on the culturally-derived counter-discourses that they use in order to resist pressures to conform to social dictates regarding beauty.

<sup>5</sup> All names have been changed to protect the participants' identities.

on the body, the migrant body is imbued with symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1984) that accords aging migrant women some prestige or status. These accounts, while allowing women to highlight their better status compared to their non-migrant peers, simultaneously reinforce ageist views of the body in its celebration of youth, and the idea of migration as leading to personal success. Paradoxically, it is the absence of visible marks on the body that is taken as the mark of success. Implied in the formulation of youthfulness as demonstrating success in migration is a resistance to being old or being *matanda*, which in the Filipino language literally means, “the presence of many marks”.<sup>6</sup> The absence of facial lines, shadows under the eyes, and of deep furrows between the brows indicate that one is not *matanda* or aged; rather, one has lived a good, relaxed life of comfort and abundance in New Zealand.

That success in migration is constructed to be evident on the body is apparent even in the accounts of participants whose bodies can be seen to have changed, but not in a manner that brings them closer to the typical youthful, slender ideal for women (Bordo, 1993). Several participants stated that they gained some weight over the years of living in New Zealand, or that others (e.g. friends from the Philippines) had said so. While the reasons given for weight gain are varied (including natural or inevitable changes in aging, one’s genetics, and reduced exercise due to work commitments), they often included remarks about how food in New Zealand was “better”. Participants described the food in New Zealand as “fresh”, “pure” (May), “more healthy” (Pam), “tast(ing) better”, and as “more nourishing and nutritious” (Tia); more significantly, food was described as more affordable and accessible to all in New Zealand. As Fey and Tia explained:

Fey: Anything that the rich can eat, you can eat, too. But you’ll have to sacrifice a bit. If you wanted lobster, right? You can eat it. Unlike in the Philippines, you’ll never—even in your dreams you wouldn’t be able to eat it, right? Here, it’s like, equality has a better chance.

Tia: I think the food here is more nourishing. More nutritious. And availability—it’s very available. I mean the rich man’s food is affordable for the poor people, unlike in the Philippines where fancy food can only be afforded by the rich. Here it’s very expensive but the poor can afford to buy good food.

---

<sup>6</sup> In the Filipino language, the word for both “old” and “elderly people” is *matanda*, for which the root word is *tanda*, or marks/signs. It is also the root word for remember (*tandaan*), and learn (—especially from experience; in Filipino, *magtanda*). In the word *matanda*, “ma-” is a prefix that functions in the same way as the suffix “-ful” in forming adjectives. Thus, someone who is old, who is *matanda*, is literally one who has many marks.

From these narratives, weight gain is taken as evidence not just of better food, but also of the grander idea of greater social equality or mobility in New Zealand. In articulating the link between weight gain and better socio-economic and political conditions in New Zealand, these participants avoided negative associations with being fat—for example, the view of its being unhealthy or fatal (Kwan & Graves, 2013) or as indicating a flawed self or moral failure (Featherstone, 2010; Gimlin, 2007)—being applied to them. The fat body, like the youthful body, is taken as material proof of the promise of migration fulfilled. These accounts extend popular Filipino cultural notions<sup>7</sup> of fatness as connoting comfort and abundance to the context of migrant life. It echoes to some extent Nicole Constable’s (2002) findings about Filipina domestic workers in Hong Kong who were unhappy to have lost weight, viewing it as evidence of stress and poor treatment by their employers. In the participants’ accounts, fatness, like youthfulness, is a natural result of living in New Zealand—an eventuality for all Filipino migrants to New Zealand (as Bea said, “You’ll see. Filipinos who have been here ten years, fifteen years, they really grow big/fat.”). Thus, fatness is not (just) a product of individual lack of control or concern for the body, which is a more typically modern, western, and gendered meaning (Bordo, 1993).

In contrast to these positive accounts on bodily change, Jen, who owned and ran a small farm in the Philippines and who worked as a chambermaid for over two decades in New Zealand, said:

Jen: I’m more tired here [in New Zealand] than back home [in the Philippines]. Back there, it’s easy. It’s comfortable back there. The stress here, oh my God. Imagine this, (...) someone said I’m older than this one sibling. But that sibling is older than me. It’s stressful here.

Int: Why do you think it’s more stressful here?

Jen: Well of course, you’re stressed with your husband, you think about him, and then like say, he goes to work at two in the afternoon and comes back home at two in the morning. Of course you worry about that, right? Then you go and have dinner all by yourself.

Generalizations made by others about those “from abroad” displaying a youthful disposition does not apply to individuals like Jen, who, at 49, says she feels old and looks old (according to others). In Jen’s account, therefore, the equality of access to “rich” food and the stress-free lifestyle are functions not just of the country one is residing in, but of a variety of factors such as the specific conditions

---

<sup>7</sup> This notion of fat as good or beautiful because it connotes abundance is not unique to Filipino culture. See for instance, Renzaho’s (2004) discussion of sub-Saharan Africans’ highly positive regard for fat on women’s and men’s bodies.

of one's employment, qualifications possessed, social support, and personal financial resources. Instead of speaking of a life of relative ease and prosperity as a migrant in New Zealand, Jen used her body to speak of an alternative reality—one of hardship and loneliness.

### **“Fixing your face”— the privilege of success**

The expectation that success in migration may be demonstrated on the body regulated women's desires and practices surrounding their bodies such that Nel declared: “You don't want to show the um [people], that you're making money, but you still can't get your face fixed!” There are three important points in this brief quote from Nel. First, the idea that there are others/people whom one wants to give a particular view of one's face/body. It is their gaze which is privileged and catered to. Second, Nel links “making money” with the opportunity to fulfill the expectations of others about what one should look like, but at the same time, it is the state of being able to make money that invites that gaze by others. Third, the idea that looking younger than one's age is not natural. Unlike the previously presented construction of a youthful look as naturally occurring for those Filipinos “from abroad”, Nel identified that it takes work and money. Nel's remark about the imperative to beauty speaks of an internalized surveillance—a significant form of disciplinary power (Foucault, 1977; McLaren, 2002)—that is especially relevant for aging migrant Filipinas. It also belies claims of the inevitability or naturalness of an improved or well-maintained body for Filipina migrants; it exposes how the gym memberships, health supplements, hair dyes, creams, and cosmetics the participants used are important elements of the work and effort women expend to “fix” their face.

Although Mike Featherstone (1995) notes that older people are disempowered because of the reduction of the symbolic capital of the body with aging, Glenda Laws (1997) cautions that this reduction should not be seen to occur unvaryingly across all individuals and across all aspects of aged identities. At a time when older people are seen as a fresh target market (say, for real estate ventures, as in Laws' [1997] paper) and as responsible and informed consumers motivated to stay youthful, healthy, busy, and attractive (Featherstone, 1991; Gilleard & Higgs, 2013), the aging body can appropriate positive meanings through consumption in the same way that youthful bodies can. In addition, consumption, especially conspicuous consumption, carries important meanings relating to status for migrants (Danzer, Dietz, Gatskova, & Schmillen, 2014; Leonini & Rebughini, 2012)—the purchase of goods is taken to signify change in the power to purchase such goods. In using the body to exhibit one's success, it is treated as an object to be acquired and displayed as a commodity; a signifier of social status (Baudrillard, 1998), such as an expensive car or home. Des spoke of the branded

cosmetic products she uses to take care of her skin as a “luxury”, a “whim” she could not afford if she had stayed in the Philippines. For aging migrant women like Des, consumption impressed upon the body becomes a signifier to others, of both success in migration (i.e., financial capacity is increased) and success over aging (i.e., beauty and youthfulness are maintained or enhanced). This exhibition and celebration of the migrant body to signal success is especially salient upon migrants’ return to their country of origin (Parrini, Castañeda, Magis, Ruiz, & Lemp, 2007), which perhaps explains why in several women’s accounts, their (better) looks were reported as remarked upon by others during their visits to the Philippines, or why one participant reported she aimed to lose weight before her high school reunion in the Philippines.

### **Alternative discourses around the aging body**

Despite the many positive meanings attached to beauty, the participants also spoke of efforts at resisting or ignoring pressures to maintain a conventionally beautiful body. A number of participants endorsed a “natural” look in old age (at least, after some point), implying an acceptance for wrinkles, grey hair, and changes in body shape and size. Among the many expressions of positive regard for a natural look, Fey’s assertion about what wrinkles signify was most clearly defined:

Fey: I don’t have any problem with that [getting wrinkles]. I’m not scared to get wrinkles because for me that’s proof.

Int: That?

Fey: That, you know, I’ve mellowed, I’ve, yeah, that I’ve gained all sorts of, like, wisdom. Experience. Talents. I’ve spread love. I’ve shared whatever I’ve got. To others. So that’s the, say—

Int: That’s the sign.

Fey: Um-hm, that I was able to accomplish those.

The meanings that Fey attached to wrinkles reflect Filipino constructions of the older person, which highlights the body’s significance in bearing the marks of a lifetime’s worth of experiences, memories, and lessons gained. This conception of the older person’s body, particularly the aging woman’s body, is in opposition to that peddled and created by new anti-aging technologies such as Botox, which idealizes an unmarked, uncluttered face (Featherstone, 2010). This positive valuation of wrinkles, which Frida Kerner Furman (1997) articulated by some of her participants, is consistent with a “natural beauty”—free from human intervention, and provides an alternative rhetoric to the oppressive beauty norms associated with traditional femininity (MacNevin, 2003). Rather than denying



the changes that the years one has lived bring, this view of the aging body embraces an individual's history, suggests a continuity between youth and old age, and views body and self as an integrated whole; in this sense, Filipino constructions of the body embedded in the word *matanda* resist the “seduction of agelessness” found in the concept of successful aging (Andrews, 1999).

### **“It’s just not me.”— Personal preferences as arguments against conformity**

Some participants justified their minimal interest in elaborate beauty routines by invoking personal (dis)comfort, pleasure, and suitability. They use their bodies’ individuality, its unique tastes, preferences, and particularities, to resist homogenizing and one-size-fits-all treatments or solutions to the (supposed) problem of the visibly changing, aging body. The examples below illustrate the range of reasons that are subsumed under this theme and show their significance as spaces for negotiating both resistance and conformity, to beauty imperatives.

The first set of examples relate to participants’ construction of a conflict between restriction (as in diets for weight management) and the bodily pleasure of eating:

Ann: For me, diet is stressful. So...

Int: In the sense that?

Ann: In the sense that I like to eat.

Int: O-kay.

Ann: And, just the idea that I have to—curb my eating, or, I won’t be able to eat what I want, is stressful to me already. So, I don’t really care. (laughs) Anyways. So, it’s all right.

Bea: That really needs to be portioned—say rice. Imagine, rice, half a cup. I can’t do that. (laughs)

Int: (laughs)

Bea: Half a cup. Especially (not) when I make adobo. (...) And, we always have ice cream. For our dessert. Fruit and ice cream.

Int: Mm-hm. Is that not allowed (in the weight loss programme)? Or—

Bea: Not really.

Int: Small portions.

Bea: Yeah. Not that it’s not allowed. But ice cream is very fattening, right? That’s why sometimes I say, “Not today. We’ll just have yoghurt.” But then it isn’t as yummy—the salad, when you use yoghurt. It should be ice cream.

Ann and Bea spoke of the pleasures of eating as being too personally significant to dismiss. While both practiced some version of tempering their appetite, their pursuit of pleasure in eating had set a limit to the degree to which they tempered themselves. Bea's assertion that she "can't do that [reduce rice intake]" had set the boundary clearly—while she is interested in losing weight (for various reasons including health, satisfying her husband, and a desire to be of a particular size for her upcoming high school reunion), she cannot eat "just" one serving of rice (determined by the diet program as half a cup) during meals. Ann, who said she "loves to eat" and spoke of food as having "always been enjoyment", articulated struggling with her desire to eat and the need to curb this desire. This expressed struggle led to her declaration that diets are "stressful". By labeling diets as "stressful", Ann transformed them into something that was detrimental rather than beneficial to her health. The position from which Bea and Ann argue from can be quite powerful, and may offer some protection against potentially harmful eating behaviors found to be experienced by some middle-aged and older women (Grenier, 2007; Midlarsky & Nitzburg, 2008; Peat et al., 2008).

Another common explanation participants used is that beauty routines are just not part of their habit, or not part of who they are:

Int: Are there any other products you use for your body?

Fey: Soap. Lotion, I don't do lotion.

Int: Even in winter?

Fey: I have lotion. I have truckloads of lotion.

Int: (laughs)

Fey: I don't know, I just never go the hab—it's just not part of my routine.

My routine starts on the face and ends on the face. (laughs)

Nel: Some people put lipstick on [all the time]. (...) My sister. My sister's like that sometimes. My sister enjoys dressing up. That's our difference. She likes being dressed up. Me, I'm, like a simple... a simpleton. (Both laugh) I'm like the simple one among us.

By dismissing some beauty practices as not part of one's habit, routine, or even personality, these participants suggest that such practices are incompatible with their life and sense of self. Fey said she would "forget" to use the product even if she intended to as it is a departure from routine. Nel uses makeup only occasionally. To explain the lack of interest in regular makeup use, which she observes in others, she differentiates herself from them (as represented by her sister) by pointing out how personality differences lead to different embodiments.

Another set of limits that participants used to block pressures to conform to dictates around how their bodies should look or be presented is built around Filipino concepts of *bagay*,<sup>8</sup> *dala*,<sup>9</sup> and *hiyang*<sup>10</sup>:

Int: So are you able to wear them [the clothes your daughters recommend for you]?

Gab: There are some that I'm able to wear, then there are others I can't carry very well, (chuckles) I don't wear them.

Ela: I've never had my hair lightened because, I say, it doesn't suit me.

These concepts convey the idea of the varying suitability of conditions, products or treatments to individuals. A product that suits one person might not have the same beneficial effects on another. A situation that allows one person to thrive might be harmful to another. Participants used these concepts to explain why they avoid certain clothes, certain medications, certain brands of health/skincare products. Cyn, for example, found herself allergic to most brands of make-up and so avoided make-up almost entirely.

Hiyang, bagay, habit, and pleasure were ideas used in these narratives to define an alternative position to popular social discourse on the body and subjectivity, where a moral self must control the body's pleasures and impulses to produce a particular materiality (Bartky, 1990; Featherstone, 1991; Gilleard & Higgs, 2005). In these accounts, the body's pleasures, habits, and comforts were framed as boundaries that are not to be broken down, but rather as arbitrating what is acceptable/suitable or not for the individual.

The examples provided demonstrate how women use personal or individualized reasons for refusing certain practices and products, even as there are studies that are rife with examples of how similar reasons are used to justify

---

<sup>8</sup> *Bagay* is used here as an adjective that means "suits well" or "good match". It can be used to mean that something (items of clothing) looks good on one or complements the person, but also to mean a good fit between one and say, another person (i.e. potential partner), a set of circumstances (e.g. a new job/company), or roles (e.g. parenthood).

<sup>9</sup> *Dala* is a verb that literally means, "to carry or bring". In this context, it refers to comportment or the ability to carry oneself (specifically, in terms of an item of clothing) well or with confidence. For example: Something that looks good on the runway is not always something that people on the street can *dala*/carry well.

<sup>10</sup> *Hiyang* is an adjective meaning "suited" or "agreeing with" one. There is emphasis on an observable positive change on the body (e.g. weight gain, improvements in health and skin, a happier countenance) as a result of something or some change in circumstances. For example, observing a recent migrant's weight gain, her family might say she is "*hiyang*" to life in New Zealand.

these products' usage. Critics expose how notions of individual choice or preference make women complicit in their own oppression, and obscure how media, and the fashion, beauty, and cosmetic surgery industries altogether shape women's desires and practices around their aging bodies (Bartky, 1990; Gilleard, 2002; Stuart & Donaghue, 2011). Certainly, among the participants' accounts, examples also exist of personal choice or preference being used to explain adherence to certain beauty-related practices (e.g. wearing heels, getting nails done, putting lipstick on all day, every day)<sup>11</sup> and loyalty to particular beauty brands. In these accounts, personal choice and preference appear to promote the idea of women's agency—that, if they really wanted to, they could stop working on their body's appearance. Adherence to feminine beauty practices was spoken of not as conformity to social dictates, but out of their own desire, comfort, and pleasure.

In this regard, there is a departure from the analyses of women's choices and preferences as the participants' use of their bodies' pleasures, habits, etc. appear to support not the idea of personal choice, but of non-choice. The boundaries established by the body, while flexible in their application (as similar reasons may be used to support either conformity and non-conformity to beauty dictates), are defended as inflexible in their nature—that is, the boundaries are portrayed to be non-negotiable, as being part of or as defining an essential, enduring self. There is no “choice” in the matter of makeup use for someone like Nel who describes herself as not “one who likes to dress up.” Similarly, there is no “choice” for Bea who *can't* consume half a cup of rice as her diet indicates. Ela's “choice” of hair color is limited by what works for her face and skin color. In these instances, the refusal to participate (or limited participation) in beauty practices are portrayed as an outcome of bodily habits, inclinations, preferences, and pleasures that one has little or no control over. In these accounts, agency is not invoked but rather, is relinquished. With the cultural resources provided by concepts such as *hiyang*, *bagay*, and *dala*, participants are able to conceive their bodies as unique and diverse that cannot and should not be treated in the same manner as other peoples' bodies. These concepts offer the opportunity to resist the impetus to invest in their looks and follow the dictates of fashion without negative subjectivities necessarily being assigned to them. This space for negotiating a positive subjectivity despite (some) non-conformity is possible because (poor) choices are viewed not as matters of (poor) will but as results of their body's unique, inflexible, and essential qualities. Deviance from an idealized norm may then be explained as a matter of body-self integrity rather than as a matter of (poor) will and control.

---

<sup>11</sup> For example, Cyn said that if she did not have her nails regularly manicured she would “not feel comfortable”, and that it was just part of her “standard of cleanliness”. “To go” without lipstick would make her “feel naked”.

The availability of opposing or alternative views regarding aging women's bodies to the dominant one which values youth and beauty above all (Bartky, 1990; Furman, 1997; Sontag, 1972; Wolf, 1990) offers an important position from which women can resist the pressure to maintain their youth and beauty. This alternative construction, however, while providing women valuable space from which they can argue for some measure of freedom against pressures to maintain a particular look, leaves these pressures unexamined, and therefore, unchallenged. As such, this alternative space, because it resides in the personal, is marginal and provisional. Theoretically, it is unable to serve as a platform from which to launch a critique of the social pressure on women to work on their bodies, becoming in turn, conscripted by popular sexist,<sup>12</sup> ageist,<sup>13</sup> and consumerist<sup>14</sup> discourse.

## Conclusion

A poststructuralist approach to language allows for an analysis that interrogates the various meanings aging Filipina migrants attach to beauty and beauty work, and locate these meanings within larger socio-cultural resources. Among migrant Filipinas, beauty is understood as a means for indicating success in migration, and beauty work as both a privilege and an obligation in migration. Such meanings are different from those that are already well-established in the literature on the subject matter, and yet are derived from the same sexist, ageist, and consumerist discourses that produce the aging woman's body as having little social value.

Despite the many positive meanings attached to a beautiful body, alternative ones were also shown to be significant to some participants. Alternative meanings regarding the body (such as those embedded in the Filipino word *matanda*) allow some women to reject pressures to submit to a particular ideal of beauty. While this pressure exists and continues to shape women's discourses and material bodies, women can enjoy some latitude by relinquishing their agency, constructing "choice" as constrained by their bodies, and so absolve themselves of any

---

<sup>12</sup> For example, Des explained that she kept wearing high heels even if they do not appear to be sensible shoes because she "can carry them well".

<sup>13</sup> Nel, for example, dyed her hair because she thought she was too young for white hair—that it did not "suit" her age and stage in life ("Maybe when I'm 60, I'll let it [the grey] out. But at the moment I still don't want to yet. I don't want people to say I'm an old grandma already. (...) See, I still have a little one. (...) I don't feel it [the grey hair] suits me.").

<sup>14</sup> In the 1990s, a popular shampoo brand used the concept of *hiyang* for a TV commercial starring Filipina singer and actress Lea Salonga. *Hiyang* was used to imply that the shampoo produced excellent results in order to encourage loyalty to the brand.

responsibility for non-conformity. These alternative meanings offer diverse avenues for arguing against investing heavily in beauty work, allowing individual women to reject conventional views regarding beauty and the responsibility for the maintenance of beauty. And while they are not able to directly confront the question of why women's looks take such prime importance, they are potentially the beginnings of a counter-culture where women, and perhaps also men, can be "comfortable with and in our changing faces and bodies"(Coupland, 2003, 147). In these discursive spaces where bodily acceptability is being negotiated, there is the possibility of negotiating the margins of society and, therefore, also the possibility of unsettling the centers of power (Douglas, 1996).

## References

- Agrawal, A. (2006). Introduction: Women, work and migration. In A. Agrawal (Ed.), *Migrant women and work* (pp. 21–45). New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Andrews, M. (1999). The seduction of agelessness. *Ageing and Society*, 19, 301–318.
- Arribas-Ayllon, M., & Walkerdine, V. (2010). Foucauldian discourse analysis. In C. Willig & W. Stainton-Rogers (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research in psychology* (pp. 91–109). London: Sage Publications.
- Bartky, S. L. (1990). Foucault, femininity, and the modernization of patriarchal power. In *Femininity and domination: Studies in the phenomenology of oppression* (pp. 63–82). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Baudrillard, J. (1998). The finest consumer object: The body. In *The consumer society: Myths and structures* (pp. 129–150). London: Sage Publications.
- Bolzman, C., Poncioni-Derigo, R., Vial, M., & Fibbi, R. (2004). Older labour migrants' well-being in Europe: The case of Switzerland. *Ageing and Society*, 24(3), 411–429. <http://doi.org/10.1017/S0144686X03001557>
- Bordo, S. (1993). Anorexia nervosa: Psychopathology as the crystallization of culture. In *Unbearable weight: Feminism, western culture, and the body* (pp. 139–164). Berkeley, CA: University of California.
- Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Browne, C. V. (1998). *Women, feminism and aging*. New York, NY: Springer Publishing Company, Inc.
- Burman, E. (1998). Deconstructing feminist psychology. In E. Burman (Ed.), *Gender and psychology: Deconstructing feminist psychology* (pp. 1–29). London: Sage Publications.
- Burman, E., & Parker, I. (1993). Introduction - Discourse analysis: The turn to the text. In E. Burman & I. Parker (Eds.), *Discourse analytic research: Repertoires and readings of text in action* (pp. 1–16). London: Routledge.

- Calasanti, T. (2010). Gender and ageing in the context of globalization. In D. Dannefer & C. Phillipson (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of social gerontology* (pp. 137–150). London: Sage Publications. <http://doi.org/10.4135/9781446200933>
- Carlota, A. J. (1985). The development of the Panukat ng Pagkataon Pilipino (PPP). [The measure of Filipino personhood]. *Philippine Journal of Educational Management*, 4(1), 55–68.
- Chen, E. (2013). Neoliberalism and popular women's culture: Rethinking choice, freedom and agency. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 16(4), 440–452. <http://doi.org/10.1177/1367549413484297>
- Clarke, L. (2002). Older women's perceptions of ideal body weights: The tensions between health and appearance motivations for weight loss. *Ageing and Society*, 22, 751–773.
- Clarke, L., & Griffin, M. (2008). Visible and invisible ageing: Beauty work as a response to ageism. *Ageing & Society*, 28(05), 653–674. <http://doi.org/10.1017/S0144686X07007003>
- Constable, N. (2002). Filipina workers in Hong Kong homes: Household rules and relations. In B. Ehrenreich & A. R. Hochschild (Eds.), *Global woman: Nannies, maids and sex workers in the new economy* (pp. 115–141). New York, NY: Metropolitan Books.
- Coupland, J. (2003). Ageist ideology and discourses of control in skincare product marketing. In J. Coupland & R. Gwyn (Eds.), *Discourse, the body, and identity* (pp. 127–150). Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Cunneen, C. (1997). *Gender, race and international relations: Violence against Filipino women in Australia*. Sydney: University of Sydney Institute of Criminology.
- Danzer, A. M., Dietz, B., Gatskova, K., & Schmillen, A. (2014). Showing off to the new neighbors? Income, socioeconomic status and consumption patterns of internal migrants. *Journal of Comparative Economics*, 42, 230–245. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.jce.2013.05.002>
- Davis, K. (2003). *Dubious equalities and embodied differences: Cultural studies on cosmetic surgery*. New York, NY: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2008). Introduction: Critical methodologies and indigenous inquiry. In N. K. Denzin, Y. S. Lincoln, & L. T. Smith (Eds.), *Handbook of critical and indigenous methodologies* (pp. 1–20). Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.
- Douglas, M. (1996). *Purity and danger*. Baltimore: Penguin.
- Dumas, A., Laberge, S., & Straka, S. M. (2005). Older women's relations to bodily appearance: The embodiment of social and biological conditions of existence. *Ageing and Society*, 25(06), 883. <http://doi.org/10.1017/S0144686X05004010>
- Enriquez, V. G. (1985). Kapwa: A core concept in Filipino social psychology. [Kapwa: A core concept in Filipino social psychology] In A. Aganon & M. David (Eds.), *Ang Sikolohiyang Pilipino: Isyu, pananaw at kaalaman* [New directions in indigenous psychology] (pp. 259–270). Manila: National Bookstore.

- Enriquez, V. G. (1987). Filipino values: Towards a new interpretation (Using local language as a resource). *Tagsibol*, 1(1), 8–13.
- Enriquez, V. G. (1994). *From colonial to liberation psychology: The Philippine experience* (2nd ed.). Manila: DLSU Press.
- Enriquez, V. G., & Guanzon-Lapeña, M. A. (1985). Towards the assessment of personality and culture: The Panukat ng Ugali at Pagkatao [The measure of character and personality]. *Philippine Journal of Educational Measurement*, 4(1), 15–54.
- Estrada-Claudio, S. (2002). *Rape, love and sexuality: The construction of women in discourse*. Quezon City, Philippines: University of the Philippines Press.
- Estrada-Claudio, S. (2014). *Has SP become sikolohiya ng mga Pilipino sa Pilipinas?* [Has SP (Sikolohiyang Pilipino) become mainstream Filipino psychology in the Philippines?] (Unpublished paper). Quezon City, Philippines.
- Featherstone, M. (1991). The body in consumer culture. In M. Featherstone, M. Hepworth, & B. Turner (Eds.), *The body: Social processes and cultural theory* (pp. 170–196). London: Sage Publications.
- Featherstone, M. (1995). Post-bodies, aging and virtual reality. In *Images of aging: Cultural representations of later life* (pp. 227–243). London: Routledge.
- Featherstone, M. (2010). Body, image and affect in consumer culture. *Body & Society*, 16(1), 193–221. <http://doi.org/10.1177/1357034X09354357>
- Foucault, M. (1972). *The archaeology of knowledge*. (A. Sheridan, Ed.). New York, NY: Pantheon Books.
- Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and punish*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- Foucault, M. (1980). Body/Power. In C. Gordon (Ed.), *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972–1977* (pp. 55–62). Brighton: The Harvester Press.
- Foucault, M. (1988). *Technologies of the self: A seminar with Michel Foucault*. (L. H. Martin, H. Gutman, & P. H. Hutton, Eds.). Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Fox, D., Prilleltensky, I., & Austin, S. (Eds.). (2009). *Critical psychology: An introduction* (2nd ed.). London: Sage Publications.
- Freixas, A., Luque, B., & Reina, A. (2012). Critical feminist gerontology: In the back room of research. *Journal of Women & Aging*, 24(1), 44–58. <http://doi.org/10.1080/08952841.2012.638891>
- Furman, F. K. (1997). *Facing the mirror: Older women and beauty shop culture*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Gavey, N. (1997). Feminist poststructuralism and discourse analysis. In *Toward a new psychology of gender: A reader* (pp. 49–64). New York: Routledge.
- Gill, R. (2007). Postfeminist media culture: Elements of a sensibility. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 10(2), 147–166. <http://doi.org/10.1177/1367549407075898>
- Gilleard, C. (1996). Consumption and identity in later life: Toward a cultural gerontology. *Ageing and Society*, 16(04), 489–498. <http://doi.org/10.1017/S0144686X00003640>



- Gilleard, C. (2002). Women ageing and body talk. In L. Andersson (Ed.), *Cultural gerontology* (pp. 139–160). Westport, CT: Auburn House.
- Gilleard, C., & Higgs, P. (2005). Ageing and its embodiment. In M. Fraser & M. Greco (Eds.), *The body: A reader* (pp. 117–121). London: Routledge.
- Gilleard, C., & Higgs, P. (2013). *Key issues in modern sociology: Ageing, corporeality and embodiment*. London: Anthem Press.
- Gimlin, D. (2007). Constructions of ageing and narrative resistance in a commercial slimming group. *Ageing & Society*, 27(03), 407. <http://doi.org/10.1017/S0144686X06005757>
- Go, G. N. V. (1989). *Integrative aging in widowed immigrant Filipinas: A grounded theory study (Unpublished doctoral dissertation)*. Adelphi University, NY.
- Gorringe, K. (2003). *“Not exactly waiting for God”: Transnational retirement migration and postmodern identities (Unpublished master’s thesis)*. University of Auckland, Auckland.
- Grenier, A. (2007). Constructions of frailty in the English language, care practice and the lived experience. *Ageing and Society*, 27(03), 425. <http://doi.org/10.1017/S0144686X06005782>
- Guanzon-Lapeña, M. A., Church, A. T., Carlota, A. J., & Katigbak, M. S. (1998). Indigenous personality measures Philippine examples. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 29(1), 249–270.
- Gustafson, P. (2008). Transnationalism in retirement migration: The case of North European retirees in Spain. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 31(3), 451–475. <http://doi.org/10.1080/01419870701492000>
- Halliwell, E., & Dittmar, H. (2003). A qualitative investigation of women’s and men’s body image concerns and their attitudes toward aging. *Sex Roles*, 49(11/12), 675–684.
- Hawthorne, L. (2001). The globalisation of the nursing workforce: Barriers confronting overseas qualified nurses in Australia. *Nursing Inquiry*, 8(4), 213–229.
- Hochschild, A. R. (2002). Love and gold. In B. Ehrenreich & A. R. Hochschild (Eds.), *Global woman: Nannies, maids and sex workers in the new economy* (pp. 15–30). New York, NY: Metropolitan Books.
- Holstein, M. B. (2006). On being an aging woman. In T. Calasanti & K. F. Slevin (Eds.), *Age matters: Realigning feminist thinking* (pp. 313–334). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Hugh-Jones, S. (2010). The interview in qualitative research. In M. Forrester (Ed.), *Doing qualitative research in psychology: A practical guide* (pp. 77–97). London: Sage Publications.
- Hurd, L. C. (2000). Older women’s body image and embodied experience: An exploration. *Journal of Women & Aging*, 12(3–4), 77–97. [http://doi.org/10.1300/J074v12n03\\_06](http://doi.org/10.1300/J074v12n03_06)
- Jimenez, M. C. (1977). *Ang kabuluhan ng sikolohiya: Isang pagsusuri* [The relevance of psychology: An analysis]. In A. G. Carlos & A. R. Magno (Eds.), *The social responsibilities of the social scientist as an intellectual* (Third, pp. 68–77). Quezon City, Philippines: University of the Philippines.

- Joyce, K., & Mamo, L. (2006). Graying the cyborg. In T. Calasanti & K. F. Slevin (Eds.), *Age matters: Realigning feminist thinking* (pp. 99–121). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Krekula, C. (2007). The intersection of age and gender: Reworking gender theory and social gerontology. *Current Sociology*, 55(2), 155–171. <http://doi.org/10.1177/0011392107073299>
- Kwan, S., & Graves, J. (2013). *Framing fat: Competing constructions in contemporary culture*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Laws, G. (1995). Understanding ageism: Lessons from feminism and postmodernism. *The Gerontologist*, 35(1), 112–8. Retrieved from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/7890196>
- Laws, G. (1997). Spatiality and age relations. In A. Jamieson, S. Harper, & C. Victor (Eds.), *Critical approaches to ageing and later life* (pp. 90–100). Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Lazar, M. M. (2011). The right to be beautiful: Postfeminist identity and consumer beauty advertising. In R. Gill & C. Scharff (Eds.), *New femininities: Postfeminism, neoliberalism and subjectivity* (pp. 37–51). Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Leonini, L., & Rebughini, P. (2012). The consumption styles of immigrant families in Italy: Identifications, status, and practices. *Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal*, 41(2), 161–171. <http://doi.org/10.1111/fcsr.12005>
- MacNevin, A. (2003). Exercising options: Holistic health and technical beauty in gendered accounts of bodywork. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 44(2), 271–289. <http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1533-8525.2003.tb00558.x>
- McLaren, M. (2002). *Feminism, Foucault and embodied subjectivity*. New York, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Mendoza, S. L. (2006). *Between the homeland and the diaspora: The politics of theorizing Filipino and Filipino American identities*. Manila: UST Publishing House.
- Midlarsky, E., & Nitzburg, G. (2008). Eating disorders in middle-aged women. *The Journal of General Psychology*, 135(4), 393–407. <http://doi.org/10.3200/GENP.135.4.393-408>
- Norman, D., Udanga, R., & Udanga, F. A. (2011). *Faith bearers: The journey of Catholic Filipinos in the diocese of Auckland*. Auckland, NZ: Auckland Catholic Filipino Chaplaincy.
- Oksala, J. (2011). The neo-liberal subject of feminism: From discipline to self-advancement. *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, 42(1), 104–120.
- Orteza, G. O. (1997). *Pakikipagkuwentuhan: Isang pamamaraan ng sama-samang pananaliksik, pagpapatotoo at pagtulong sa Sikolohiyang Pilipino (Pakikipagkuwentuhan: A method of collective research, establishing validity, and contributing to Filipino Psychology)*. Quezon City, Philippines: Philippine Psychology Research and Training House.
- Palriwala, R., & Uberoi, P. (2008). Series introduction. In *Marriage, migration and gender* (pp. 7–18). New Delhi: Sage Publications India Pvt Ltd.

- Pambansang Samahan sa Sikolohiyang Pilipino (PSSP). (2015). Mga nakaraang kumperensiya [Previous conferences]. Retrieved May 14, 2015, from <http://www.pssp.org.ph/mga-nakaraang-kumperensiya/>
- Paredes-Canilao, N., & Babaran-Diaz, M. A. (2011). Sikolohiyang Pilipino: 50 years of critical-emancipatory social science in the Philippines. *Critical Psychology in a Changing World: Building Bridges and Expanding the Dialogue*, 10, 765–783.
- Parreñas, R. S. (2001). *Servants of globalization: Women, migration, and domestic work*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Parrini, R., Castañeda, X., Magis, C., Ruiz, J., & Lemp, G. (2007). Migrant bodies: Corporality, sexuality, and power among Mexican migrant men. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, 4(3), 62–73. <http://doi.org/10.1525/srsp.2007.4.3.62>
- Peat, C. M., Peyerl, N. L., & Muehlenkamp, J. J. (2008). Body image and eating disorders in older adults: A review. *The Journal of General Psychology*, 135(4), 343–58. <http://doi.org/10.3200/GENP.135.4.343-358>
- Pe-Pua, R. (2000). Implications of government policies on working conditions of Filipino workers in Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan. *Pilipinas: An Interdisciplinary Scholarly Journal of Philippine Studies*, 34, 63–90.
- Pe-Pua, R. (2003). Wife, mother and maid: The triple role of Filipino domestic workers in Spain and Italy. In N. Piper & M. Roces (Eds.), *Wife or worker? Asian women and migration* (pp. 157–180). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc.
- Percival, J. (2013). Charting the waters: Return migration in later life. In J. Percival (Ed.), *Return migration in later life: International perspectives* (pp. 1–20). Bristol, Great Britain: Policy Press.
- Phillipson, C. (2002). Ageism and globalization: Citizenship and social rights in transnational settings. In L. Andersson (Ed.), *Cultural gerontology* (pp. 45–58). Westport, CT: Auburn House.
- Pool, I. (2002). New Zealand population: Then, now, hereafter. *Joint Special Issue, Journal of Population Research and NZ Population Review*, (September), 23–38.
- Population Statistics Unit. (2007). *Permanent and long-term migration from the Philippines*. Wellington, NZ: Statistics New Zealand.
- Potter, J., & Wetherell, M. (1998). *Discourse and social psychology*. London: Sage Publications.
- Prilleltensky, I., & Nelson, G. (2002). *Doing psychology critically: Making a difference in diverse settings*. Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Protacio-Marcelino, E. (1996). *Identidad at etnisidad: Pananaw at karanasan ng mga estudyanteng Filipino-Amerikano sa California* [Identity and ethnicity: Views and experiences of Filipino-American students in California]. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of the Philippines.
- Renzaho, A. M. . (2004). Fat, rich and beautiful: Changing socio-cultural paradigms associated with obesity risk, nutritional status and refugee children from sub-Saharan Africa. *Health & Place*, 10(1), 105–113. [http://doi.org/10.1016/S1353-8292\(03\)00051-0](http://doi.org/10.1016/S1353-8292(03)00051-0)

- Riessman, C. K. (2008). *Narrative methods for the human sciences*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.
- Salazar, Z. (1985). Hiya: Panlapi at salita [Shame: Affix and word]. In A. Aganon & M. David (Eds.), *Ang Sikolohiyang Pilipino: Isyu, pananaw at kaalaman* [Sikolohiyang Pilipino: Issues, viewpoints and knowledge] (pp. 288–296). Manila: National Bookstore.
- Slevin, K. F. (2006). The embodied experiences of old lesbians. In T. Calasanti & K. F. Slevin (Eds.), *Age matters: Realigning feminist thinking* (pp. 247–268). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Slevin, K. F. (2010). “If I had lots of money... I’d have a body makeover”: Managing the aging body. *Social Forces*, 88(3), 1003–1020.
- Sontag, S. (1972). The double standard of ageing. *Saturday Review of Society*, 23(1), 29–38.
- Spivak, G. (1988). Subaltern studies: Deconstructing historiography. In R. Guha & G. Spivak (Eds.), *In other worlds: Essays in cultural politics* (pp. 197–221). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Statistics New Zealand. (2014a). 2013 Census QuickStats about culture and identity. Retrieved from <http://www.stats.govt.nz/Census/2013-census/profile-and-summary-reports/quickstats-culture-identity/birthplace.aspx>
- Statistics New Zealand. (2014b). Asian ethnic group. Retrieved from <http://www.stats.govt.nz/Census/2013-census/profile-and-summary-reports/quickstats-culture-identity/asian.aspx>
- Stuart, A., & Donaghue, N. (2011). Choosing to conform: The discursive complexities of choice in relation to feminine beauty practices. *Feminism & Psychology*, 22(1), 98–121. <http://doi.org/10.1177/0959353511424362>
- Twigg, J. (2004). The body, gender, and age: Feminist insights in social gerontology. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 18(1), 59–73. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaging.2003.09.001>
- Tyner, J. A. (2004). *Made in the Philippines: Gendered discourses and the making of migrants*. London: RoutledgeCurzon.
- Weedon, C. (1997). *Feminist practice and poststructuralist theory* (2nd ed.). Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers.
- Wetherell, M. (1997). Linguistic repertoires and literary criticism: New directions for a social psychology of gender. In M. Gergen & S. N. Davis (Eds.), *Toward a new psychology of gender: A reader* (pp. 149–167). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Willis, K., & Yeoh, B. (2000). Introduction. In K. Willis & B. Yeoh (Eds.), *Gender and migration* (pp. xi–xxii). Gloucestershire, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited.
- Wolf, N. (1990). *The beauty myth*. London: Vintage Books.
- Zontini, E. (2014). Growing old in a transnational social field: Belonging, mobility and

identity among Italian migrants. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, (July), 1–14. <http://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2014.885543>

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Michelle G. Ong, PhD, would like to acknowledge the University of Auckland International Doctoral Scholarship and the University of the Philippines PhD Incentive grant for supporting her doctoral research.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michelle G. Ong, PhD, is a full-time faculty member at the UP Department of Psychology. Her PhD thesis was on Filipina migrants' embodiment of aging in New Zealand. Her study was funded mainly by the University of Auckland International Doctoral Scholarship, and partially by the University of the Philippines. She may be reached through [michelle.ong@upd.edu.ph](mailto:michelle.ong@upd.edu.ph).

Virginia Braun, PhD, is Associate Professor at the University of Auckland School of Psychology. Her research on the influence of culture and society on individuals' lives, especially on matters of the body, health, and sexuality, is influenced by feminist, social constructionist, and discursive theory and practice. She is co-author of the introductory textbook *Successful Qualitative Research: A Practical Guide for Beginners* (Sage, UK), and has published numerous papers and chapters on Thematic Analysis. She may be contacted through [v.braun@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:v.braun@auckland.ac.nz)