



Filipina Women and the Remaking of Rural Japan

Social Change in East Asia

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Lieba Faier's Theoretical Concerns

- Lieba Faier, *Intimate Encounters: Filipina Women and the Remaking of Rural Japan*, UC Press 2009
- Central concern to historicize Japanese culture in order to avoid **reification** (treating culture as a static thing) and **essentialism** (seeing national identity as made up of unchanging essences)
 - This is important because of the centrality of *Nihonjinron* 日本人論 (discourse on Japaneseness) in Japanese people's discussion of their identity
 - *Nihonjinron* tends to be essentialist and it is often racialized—finding unique traits that only hereditary Japanese possess that distinguish them from all other people. In extreme cases commentators think Japan is unique in almost all aspects, and thus cannot be studied according to conventional social science.



Culture is constantly remade

- To avoid essentialism Faier uses theoretical concepts that focus on how culture is constantly made and remade during social encounters (rather than simply existing), and that emphasize the historical context that structures this making and remaking
 - You only see culture in performance; it doesn't exist otherwise except as an academic construct
- Faier sees cultural change being created as people from different cultures encounter each other and both come about with changed visions of national and personal identity



Culture is crafted and constantly recreated

- If culture is the meanings and subjectivities of social interaction, then *cultural encounters* are where people with different cultural background create new meaning
 - They come to these encounters already equipped with historically constituted discourses about social categories, themselves, and others
 - When people bring different discourses and assumptions together, their assumptions and discourses confront a new reality
 - As they confront new meanings and subjectivities people reconsider their social categories, themselves, and others—they create new forms of culture and identity



Dialogic Process

- Cultural encounters are *dialogic* processes because “words exist on the boundaries between their own context and alien contexts”
 - i.e. words don’t have inherent meaning, but the way we understand them is in constant dialogue with all the other ways they have been used by others
 - Stories about cultural encounters are similar in that they are in dialogue with other stories
 - Reading *Intimate Encounters* is a dialogic process for me because as I read about Filipinas and Japanese I constantly think about all the Filipinos and Japanese I have met and how they fit into this picture
- Students should read *Intimate Encounters* dialogically by using Faier’s concepts to reinterpret Karen Freeman’s *Making and Faking Kinship* (and visa versa)
 - For example, South Koreans came to redefine their national identity in dialogue with the Chosŏnjok whose story of their Koreanness is different from that of South Koreans’



Zone of encounter

- Mary Louise Pratt in 1992 *Under Imperial Eyes* used the concept of **contact zone**, “social spaces where cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other”
 - A way of looking at the cultural impact of imperialism by noting that whole countries didn’t confront each other, but individuals come into contact in particular kinds of places in which power is often asymmetrical
 - Participants negotiate and struggle over power and context
 - Pratt was concerned with the notion of the nation as an “imagined community” (Benedict Anderson), and wanted to emphasize that actual people meet and negotiate (don’t remain only at the discursive level)
- Faier uses the more abstract concept of **zone of encounter**, “constellations of social relations” rather than concrete spaces
 - “filamentary networks”—thread-like web of relations spanning Japan, the Philippines, and the United States
- (I mention Pratt here because her concept of “contact zone” is widely emulated, while Faier is the only one I know of who uses “zone of encounter”)



Filipina Marriage Migration to Japan

- This is one strain of a broader process that is going on throughout East Asia as women from poorer countries are marrying into rural areas of richer countries
 - 2006 6% of marriages in Japan were international marriages
 - 2013 3% of marriages in Japan were international marriages
 - 40.4% Chinese
 - 20.1% Filipino
 - 17.7% Korean
 - 6.3% Thai
 - Japanese women prefer Koreans (mostly born in Japan), Americans, & Chinese
 - Marriages to Filipinas peaked in 2006, but has since declined after 2005 changes to visa requirements
 - 1989 visa law opened skilled labor visas (Filipinas in Faier's book came on "skilled entertainer visas) while keeping unskilled labor closed except for trainees (kenshūsei 研修生), and ethnic Japanese from abroad (Nikkeijin 日系人) most of whom were Brazilians
 - 2005 and after stricter screening of foreign residents and of entertainer visas has reduced the number of Filipinas marrying in Japan

International marriage

- Kokusai kekkon 国際結婚
 - Concept exists in Japan but not the Philippines where interethnic marriage is commonplace
 - This term for marriage of a Japanese with a foreigner *reinscribes* Japanese ethnic homogeneity with nationality used as an “index of difference”
 - N.B. “reinscription” here is “re-establishment of an existing concept in a different form or context”
 - Question: is marriage with a Filipina true kokusai kekkon?
 - N.B. similar concept of *kukche kyōrhon* in Korea similarly reinscribes Korean ethnic homogeneity
 - However, families with married-in foreign women are called “multicultural families” (tamunhwa kajok), and the rate of foreign marriage is much higher than Japan now
 - N.B. *guojie jiehun* (same characters) is also used in China, but in China it reinscribes national belonging (rather than ethnicity) because China is officially a multiethnic country
 - China officially recognizes 55 national minorities who have cultural rights within China
- N.B. compare the American concept of “mixed marriage” with the Japanese concept of “international marriage”



Faier's concerns

- Not about the relationship of “Japan” to the “Philippines” or the process of foreign marriage migration per se
- But about how certain Filipinas structured by history, politics, affect, and desire create dialogic space in encounters with certain Japanese structured by history, politics, affect and desire
 - The Filipinas are women who worked in rural hostess bars, and met and married a Japanese
 - The Japanese, residents of the Kiso valley in Nagano Prefecture in central Japan who are situated in a certain regional and class position within Japan, interact with the above Filipinas, and how that affects their subjectivity and their relationship to the rest of Japan
- This is micro-cultural anthropology rather than migration studies
 - Focus is on micro processes of cultural innovation and change

Kiso Valley Nagano Prefecture





Figures of Desire

- How Filipina migrants and Central Kiso residents **narrated the dreams and desires** they brought to their relationships
 - *Desires* “ways that cultural and political- economic processes play out at the level of the subject” (Faier p 35)
 - Desires are historically situated and structured by social and political processes
 - Narration is important, so think “how do they tell their story?”
 - There will be a beginning, middle, and end
 - There will be a plotline that structures the story
 - The teller will present him/herself as a particular kind of person
 - “Why do they tell their story in a particular way?”
 - Contingent historical reasons (i.e. historical experience shapes their narrative, and the way Filipinos/Japanese understand their history will shape their narrative)
 - Cultural reasons (what roles, values and assumptions do their narratives embody?)
 - Political-economic reasons (how are they positioned politically and economically within their own country, and between countries?)
 - Ethnographic reasons (how did the circumstances of their encounter with the ethnographer affect how they told their stories?)
 - In real life informants may not tell their story the same way in different contexts



Japanese family ideals

- Ie 家 is one way of understanding the family as a “house line” that is maintained through succession, but there are other images as well
- Uchi 内・家 is the family as the “in group” in which I can be myself
 - Honne 本音 (true expression) possible in uchi while Tatemae 建前 (socially expected presentation of self) is expected in the outside (soto 外)
 - In the “house line” family role expectations tend to be paramount
- Each Japanese person lives in concentric circles of larger and larger uchis, with the largest one being Japan itself
 - One’s neighborhood is uchi in relationship to “outside” neighborhoods, a workplace is uchi in relationship to people who do not work there, Japan is uchi in relationship to other countries

Meiji (1868-1912) Family Construction

- After encasing the *ie* 家 in the Meiji Civil Code (1898) to make sure each citizen was in his/her proper place
 - Authority and property vested in a person of the house head (who was usually, but not always, a male)
 - This in essence took the samurai family structure and universalized it for the Japanese (peasant families had historically not been so patriarchal)
- During the Taishō (1912-1926) industrialization the concept of the “modern”(Western modeled) residential family (*katei* 家庭) or “home” based on husband and wife as a consumption unit appeared
 - Here women were given primary responsibility as “good wives, wise mothers” *ryōsai kenbo* 良妻賢母
 - Good wife = good, scientific manager of the household who pursues a hygienic modern lifestyle with appropriate consumption of modern household appliances and taste
 - Wise mother = raise obedient, educated, patriotic children who will build the Empire (and fight for it if necessary)



Partition in the Prewar *ie* (家)

- Inheritance in prewar Japan was impartible (not divisible), so partition of the family was usually avoided
- Successor 後 to the headship 家主 succeeds to the house headship 家督する and household property devolved on him undivided (“primogeniture” if male, but could be female so not really primogeniture)
- The successor if he or she wished *might* set up a younger son or servant or brother-in-law as a branch house 分家する by giving them some property
- Only the main house 本家 (honke) will do ancestor worship, and branch houses 分家 (bunke) will have to attend these ceremonies
- Marriage of successor was timed to be shortly before retirement of house head
 - Usually 5-7 years after the successor marries the old house head retires 陰居 (inkyō) turning the house headship over to his successor



1947 Constitution—*kazoku* 家族, not *ie* 家

- *Ie* abolished as a legal entity, but family registration was retained
 - family registered in name of husband or wife (with husband and wife having the same surname)
- Modern *kazoku* based on the “modern” nuclear family promoted
- Inheritance made partible among all children
 - In Old Middle Class (landowning and business-owning) families, all of the children but one commonly decline inheritance so that a successor can be set up to maintain an *ie*-like family succession
 - In New Middle Class (based on employable skill) families, however, education is the means of maintaining class position, so inheritance is divided up
- Children today don’t need the permission of the house head to marry since the new ideal is supposed to be neolocal residence
 - Neolocal residence achieved only by a minority at first because of housing shortages, but now quite common
- Wife still responsible for care of children and aged



Old Middle Class

- Old Middle Class (sociological category that applies world-wide—cf. C. Wright Mills)
 - Existed before industrialization—artisans, land-owning peasants, educated professionals (law, clergy)
 - Artisans and small landowners squeezed out with industrialization, but self-employed professionals still exist (doctor, lawyer) and small-scale business still exist
 - Passed on class position by passing productive property (or intellectual property) from one generation to the next
 - *In Japan even today, these classes maintain ie-like families in order to keep property intact between generations*
 - Land-owning peasants, small-scale business owners



New Middle Class

- New Middle Class (sociological category that applies world-wide cf. C. Wright Mills) developed with industrialization
- Skilled managers, engineers, teachers, bureaucrats who have appeared in larger and larger numbers as part of the managerial elite of big business and industry
- Get their position in society through technical skills acquired through education (rather than through inheritance of social position or property)
- Can only ensure the social position of their children by making sure that they succeed educationally
- Work separated from family residence

New Middle Class as Postwar Japanese Ideal

- “bright new life” 明るい生活 of the New Middle Class (cf. Ezra Vogel, *Japan's New Middle Class*, William Kelly “New Middle Class ideology” Faier p111)
- Urban salary man サラリーマン in a large-scale enterprise as post-war ideal
 - Job security
 - Regular salary
 - Separation of home and work
 - Regular vacations
- Post-war concept of the “three sacred treasures” (sanshū no jingi 三種の神器) expressed consumer ideal—but what they were kept changing
 - 1950s—electric fan, television, electric rice cooker
 - 1960s—television, refrigerator, washing machine
 - 1970s—garbage disposal, air conditioning, stereo
 - 1980s—kokusaika (internationalization) added foreign travel and knowledge of English



The New Middle Class Ideal is a Dialogic Image

- By-and-large the subjects of Faier's study are not New Middle Class (and Faier's informants know it)
 - Japanese husbands in Kiso are not Old Middle Class farmers looking for a daughter-in-law to marry, take care of parents, and continue the family line in ie-like families
 - Most of her male informants are in construction or pachinko parlors
 - (Of Faier's informants Emiko who owns the boutique Matsubara is the only Old Middle Class type. Note that Matsubara 松原 is her maiden name as she continues her father's business, and her store is built with high-class "traditional" materials.)
 - Neither are they the ideal New Middle Class white collar (or blue collar at large enterprises) living the "bright new life"
 - A couple of Faier's informants are sararīman but most who married Filipinos are not white collar
- The images are important, however, because the Japanese in Nagano Prefecture live in dialogue with them
- They are also important because readers about Japanese society and culture will have these cultural expectations in mind and thus are going to read this book in dialogue with these images



Sites of Encounter

- NB different from “zone of encounter”
 - Zones of encounter are webs of social relations, while sites of encounter are actual places (sites of encounter are more similar to Pratt’s contact zones)
- Women configured within unequal relations of power
 - Hostess bars キャバクラ (cabaret + club) provide entertainment for Japanese men (check Faier p42 for details)
 - Japanese men go to them to be treated as “powerful and desirable males”
 - High class ones for business entertaining (settai 接待) have the most beautiful and refined hostesses, while lower ranked ones cater to less elite customers
 - Hostess bars developed in Kiso 1957-61 during dam construction to entertain construction workers
 - Later in Kiso local men and women got employment in logging and construction, so laborers were the new base
 - Hostesses were originally Japanese, but by the 1980s young Japanese women had migrated to the cities and would no longer work at hostess bars
 - Younger Southeast Asian girls recruited to take Japanese’ place (Filipina and Thai)



Filipino tradition of cultural dance troupes a figure of desire

- Began in early 20th century Philippines as a cultural awareness movement based at universities
 - Faier doesn't tell us, but this was probably partially a reaction to American cultural influence during the colonial period
- Beginning in the 1960s these troupes began to entertain US troops in the Philippines, Saigon, Okinawa, Guam, Hawaii and the Japanese mainland
 - By the 1970s some were hired by cruise ships and hotels
- Under Marcos' martial law (1972-1986)
 - Peso was devalued, export agriculture was encouraged but green revolution exacerbated unequal land distribution
 - Sex tourism started with Vietnam R&R, but burgeoned in the 1970s when Japanese package sex tours for men visited Korea, the Philippines and Thailand—criticized by women activists in Japan as well as the affected countries
 - Filipinos began to migrate abroad for work as the economy deteriorated



Converging history

- Filipinos seeking to go abroad because of deteriorating economy coincided with Japanese shortage of women willing to work in hostess bars
 - Hostess bars combine stigmatized work in the sex industry with glamorous and elite performance traditions linked to *showbiz*
- Japanese visa system was tweaked so that Filipinas could come to Japan on entertainer visas (kōgyō biza 興行ビザ)
 - Recruited women often had little choice where they were assigned
 - Even when they worked in bars the girls had to demonstrate training as performers
 - Professional Filipino folk dancers were instructors, promoters, and licensing examiners
 - Girls from poor rural and urban communities in the Philippines who were recruited and trained as entertainers were almost local celebrities
 - Promoters often gave them cash to shop for clothes and makeup before going to Japan
- Crackdown on visas in 2005 because of concern about Filipinas overstaying their visas (and/or marrying Japanese?)



Hostess Bar Duties

- Manual duties of cleaning and serving
- Drink-back system (girls often had quotas)
 - Woman received ¥100 for each drink a customer bought
- Request system (men could ask certain women to sit with them)
- Hostesses and customers might talk during the day on the phone
- Dōhan 同伴 (accompanying a customer on a date and coming back to the bar-sometimes with quotas)
 - Women avoid sukebei (rakes) and favor majime (serious) men
 - Shopping could introduce girls to a world of glamour and brand name consumption
- Combination of financial pressure, but also intimate and caretaking relationship with male customers→in some cases leading to dating, romance, and love



Emotional Labor

- Process of managing feelings and expressions to fulfill the emotional requirements of a job or role
 - Usually face-to-face interaction (as in hospitality industry)
 - Worker needs to produce a certain emotional states in customer or role partner (happiness, relaxation, respect, feeling of success, feeling of masculinity or femininity)
 - Employer (or other powerful person like mother-in-law) exercises a degree of control through training and supervision
- Stereotyped female jobs and roles that require friendliness, deference, empathy, etc. are jobs that require emotional labor
- Women in Japanese hostess clubs must make men feel welcome, successful, masculine, and desirable (partly by acting feminine and deferential)—this would be considered emotional labor
- Japanese wives and daughters-in-law have to manage the emotions of their husbands and mothers-in-law, so this, too, would be considered emotional labor



Issues of Filipina Agency

- “Women have agency but “their agency is always configured with unequal relations of power” (Faier p40)
- Things that made Filipinas feel empowered:
 - Glamour of shopping
 - Customers’ attentions validated them as caring women
 - Dating their husbands brought the excitement of courtship, romance, and in some cases love—and marriage gave meaning to their work
 - Got satisfaction from their paychecks that allowed them to send money home and represent themselves as dutiful daughters and sisters
- Reservations Filipinas felt
 - Vulnerable to the mama-sans who ran the bars
 - Because almost all were Catholic they had reservations about the morality of their work
 - “Maybe it is a sin, but supporting one’s family is an exonerating circumstance”



Kiso Bar Patrons

- Some were *sararīman* but most worked in construction or worked at pachinko parlors or bars
- Most were past the suitable age for marriage (tekireiki 適齡期)
 - Men understood marriage as an obligation, not a choice, and something's "wrong" if you're unmarried over 35
- Socially marginal, then, because they were not living the ideal "bright new life" of the New Middle Class
 - Bars made them feel worldly and important by exposing them to a foreign culture they thought inferior (i.e. they felt superior *both* because of masculinity *and* because they were Japanese)
 - They also knew they didn't have a lot of choices because they are marginal and marriageable Japanese women have left the area



Filipina Migration Figures

- Triangular imaginary of Philippines, America, and Japan shows migration not simply “home and abroad”
- Philippines Story
 - Grow up in poverty, see examples of successful migrants building houses etc., develops a “dream of migration” as a dutiful and responsible daughter
- America Dream
 - US where Filipino elites go for education, and celebrities visit
 - Many have relatives in the US
 - “colonial mentality” where example of US labor migration of the middle classes a model of upward mobility through migration that can be emulated
- No “Japan Dream”
 - For Filipinos memories of WWII are still bitter in many cases
 - Naturalization, while possible in Japan, is difficult and less accepted than in US
 - Japan, then, is an alternative America where they get stuck along the way with Filipinas’ dream partially, but not wholly, fulfilled



A Japanese Image of Filipinas

- Japayukisan ジャパ行きさん “Ms Gone to Japan”
 - Common pejorative Japanese image of Filipinas coined by the author and filmmaker Tetsuo Yamatani 山谷哲夫
 - 1979 “Threshold year of Japayuki” ジャパ行き元年 when Filipina migrants first exceeded 10,000
 - Modeled on karayuki 唐行きさん Ms. Gone to China—Japanese women prostituted in China in the late 19th and early 20th centuries



Specters of Comparison

- Benedict Anderson (1998) *The Spectres of Comparisons: Nationalisms, Southeast Asia, and the World*.
 - From José Rizal (1861-1896)—Filipino nationalist and writer executed by Spain in 1896 during an anticolonial rebellion
 - Specter=a ghost, or something that haunts or perturbs the mind
- Illustrates how nationalism lives by making comparisons
 - Faier uses to “historicize and therefore denaturalize essentialist and racialized notions of Japanese national and cultural identity”
- Specifically, residents of the Kiso valley are “haunted” by their comparison with the rest of Japan
 - Complex about being “hicks” (inakamono 田舎者)
 - Embarrassed by local dialect instead of hyōjungo 標準語



Feeling Japanese

- Didn't feel Japanese until confronted with foreigners as a result of Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone's 中曾根康弘 (PM 1982-7) "internationalization" program (kokuzaika 国際化)
 - Nakasone was an adherent of Nihonjinron who believed the US is inferior because of too many immigrants
 - In this context some say kokuzaika was a "boundary strengthening discourse" to make Japanese more aware of their Japaneseness by comparing themselves with others as Japan takes its proper place in the world
 - Others saw it as a mechanism to increase international understanding



Internationalization and Japanese Identity

- William Kelly (1990) “Regional Japan: The Price of Prosperity and the Benefits of Dependency”
 - International travel now one of the “three treasures” of New Middle Class consumption
- Jennifer Robertson (1998) “It Takes a Village: Internationalization and Nostalgia in Postwar Japan”
 - Internationalization and rural nostalgia (furusato 故郷) in a dialectic relationship to one another (furusato is to Japan as Japan is to the world—different uchi)
 - For rural Japanese this is “double displacement” since they lack both the modern urban dimension as well as the cosmopolitan dimension



Are Filipinas gaikokujin?

- For many Japanese “foreigners” gaikokujin 外国人, Japan’s **specter of comparison**, are fundamentally Euro-American
- Long quote of Kato-san pp118-20
 - To qualify as gaikokujin that provide internationalization (kokuzaika) foreigners have to “be at the same level”
 - Filipinas who come to make money are not the same level so they are Asians (ajiajin アジア人) and don’t contribute to kokuzaika [they are not a specter of comparison]
- Sachiko (Old Middle Class) on the other hand does see them as contributing to kokuzaika
 - Does her class position leave her room to not feel superior?



Specter of Cosmopolitanism

- Japanese markers of identity
 - Economic miracle, wealth, and cultivation
 - They rank well in the world—West is highest, then Japan, then the rest of Asia
 - Since modernity historically came from the West in the 19th century, and Japanese modeled themselves on the West to catch up, they have an inferiority complex toward the West (seiyōjin 西洋人)
 - “We are a homogeneous nation of middle class people”
- Kiso double-edged specter of comparison
 - Filipina’s presence evidence of region’s achievement—Japaneseness expressed as wealth and class, as well as cultural, social (and for some people racial) superiority
 - Filipina’s presence *a/so* marked the marginality of the regional economy and of rural life in the face of the national government and the decline of local industry that created the Japanese bride shortage