

PHD Defence

After Displacement: Excavating Memories of Migrant Sex Workers and Becoming Entangled with the Water Trade in Yokohama by Ayaka Yoshimizu

This is a news update from School of Communication, Simon Fraser University
News Editor: Siboc Chen

Our dear colleague, Ayaka Yoshimizu, will defend her PHD Dissertation on Monday, October 3rd 2016 at Mallinson Conference Room (K8657) on SFU Burnaby Campus (1:00 pm – 4:00 pm). Here is the abstract of her dissertation “After Displacement: Excavating Memories of Migrant Sex Workers and Becoming Entangled with the Water Trade in Yokohama”.

Abstract

In January 2005, a raid organized by the Prefectural Police in Yokohama, Japan, evicted independent sex trade businesses run by migrant women, predominantly from other regions of Asia in the marginalized district of Koganecho. The police and a group of local residents promoted the eradication of *baishun*[prostitution], using slogans about making the neighbourhood “safe” and “secure” and free of illegal foreigners and HIV carriers.

Based on the ethnographic fieldwork I conducted over nine months, this dissertation explores question, *what happens after transnational migrant sex workers are displaced from the city?* in two ways. Organized into two parts, this dissertation first aims to critique the processes through which the lives of displaced migrants get further erased in the “memoryscapes” (Yoneyama 1999, Riano-Alcala 2006, McAllister 2010, 2011) of the city at both material and discursive levels. I analyze the built environment, official historical discourses in museum exhibitions and municipal policies, and local grassroots cultural productions in the forms of photography, films and film festivals.

After analyzing the dominant memoryscapes of Yokohama, my dissertation brings to light the site of displacement where I encountered people of two *water trade* communities, one primarily Japanese and the other primarily Thai that emerged or survived in the aftermath of the police raid. Here I highlight the processes where I was “entangled” (Ingold 2008) with the local social relations and “confronted” by people in the field (Fabian 2001, p.25), having my research rejected or questioned in unexpected ways. Those moments forced me to be reflexive and turned my gaze from memories and experiences of others to my own as a site of critical scrutiny and ethnographic practice. In Part

Corresponding Editor: Siboc Chen (siboc@sfu.ca)

II, I attempt to share an embodied sense of what happens after displacement at an everyday interaction level, which I tentatively call an alternative memoryscape of the city.

While the two parts respond to my research question differently, they share a common epistemological premise that the knowledge I present in my dissertation emerged through my “body as a site of knowing” (Pink 2015), as I engaged with the social, sensory, imaginary and material place of my research.

Keywords: displacement; transnational migration; memory; sensory ethnography; sex work; Yokohama