

# Filipina migrants in rural Japan and their professions of love

## ABSTRACT

During fieldwork in rural Nagano, I regularly heard Filipina migrants assert that they loved their Japanese husbands. Most of these men had been customers the women met while working as “entertainers” at local Filipina hostess bars. Here I explore how, why, and to what ends these women emphasized their love for their husbands as they crafted lives and selves in both Japan and the Philippines. Taking a transnational perspective to feminist work on emotion, I explore how love is made meaningful through global processes and the roles it plays in migrants’ efforts to craft new gendered and sexualized subjectivities. [*migration, sentiment, gender and sexuality, labor, marriage, rural Japan, Philippines*]

“*J* *ōdan lang* [Just joking]. I love my husband.”<sup>1</sup> Tisya’s comment surprised me. Only minutes before, she had suggested that she had married her Japanese husband *Kato-san* because she was scared of Japan’s new immigration law.<sup>2</sup> *Kato-san* had been one of Tisya’s customers at a Filipina hostess bar in Central Kiso, the region of depopulated mountain towns and villages in southwestern Nagano prefecture where I had been conducting fieldwork.<sup>3</sup> Tisya explained that when she first told *Kato-san* that she was pregnant, he had asked if she wanted to marry him just to secure a visa. At the time, a spousal visa was one of two types of visas (a six-month entertainer visa [*kōgyō biza*] being the other) under which Filipina women without postsecondary educations could legally work full-time in Japan, and Tisya had run away from her third legal contract on an entertainer visa nearly five years earlier. I asked her if *Kato-san* was still concerned about her reasons for marrying him. “Only in the beginning,” she responded. “Not any more. I love my husband.”

In professing love for her husband, Tisya was not alone among the Filipina migrants I had met in Central Kiso. Many women married to local Japanese men made similar assertions, frequently in English—what many in the region identified as an elite “global language”—and sometimes in the context of discussing the difficulties and vulnerabilities of their lives in Japan. I also heard women assert their love for their husbands in the presence of other Filipina women, and some women even attested to other Filipina women’s love for their respective spouses. The overwhelming majority of these women—upward of 90 percent of the 65 who had married Japanese men in the region—had met their husbands while on entertainer visas, working as “hostesses” or “companions” in Filipina hostess bars.<sup>4</sup> Although Filipina migrants working in hostess bars are not legally permitted to have sexual relations with customers (and many do not), they are clearly paid to “love” these men. Why, then, did the women I met in Nagano place such emphasis on the special love they felt for their husbands? What was the significance of love in their lives?

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In this article, I explore how love had come to have meaning for Filipina migrants in Japan through the transnationalities of their daily lives. I focus on love as a term of global self-making: at once a language and a set of conditions through which these women articulated globally recognizable forms of agency and subjectivity within transnational relations of power. I argue that, when professing love for their husbands, Filipina women I knew in Central Kiso were claiming a sense of humanity, countering the stigma associated with their work in bars, and articulating a sense of themselves as cosmopolitan, modern, and moral women who possessed an emotional interiority. In addition, I suggest that, by enabling these women to craft moral senses of self in their married lives, love also facilitated their commitments to financially supporting their families in the Philippines and to becoming new citizen-subjects in Japan. Love was significant for them both because it engaged globally translatable languages of cosmopolitan and modern personhood and because it made the transnational ties of their lives possible.

In what follows, I focus first on the ways that Filipina women's work in hostess bars informed their professions of love for the men they married. I explore how their work in these bars promised them entry into a cosmopolitan, modern, and exciting capitalist world. I suggest that love was simultaneously part of the effort these women expended to participate in this world and among the unexpected pleasures and surprises it offered. I then consider how women invoked their love for their husbands both to challenge the stigma associated with their lives in Japan and to express indebtedness and gratitude when their husbands supported their desires, particularly their desire to send money to their families in the Philippines. Here, I explore how love became a means by which Filipina migrants managed both the perils and the promises of their transnational encounters.

My analysis is based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted between September 1998 and August 2000, primarily in rural Nagano but also during three trips to metropolitan ("Metro") Manila and surrounding Philippine provinces. It is also informed by work I did in 1995, 1996, and 1997 with an NGO in the Tokyo metropolitan area that assists Filipina and Filipino migrants throughout Japan. I became acquainted with some Filipina women in Central Kiso through my involvement with this NGO. I also met women through a local-government-sponsored Japanese-language class for foreign wives in the area.<sup>5</sup> Throughout my fieldwork, I attended government-sponsored events for Filipina wives as well as prayer meetings and social gatherings that women organized for themselves. I regularly visited women's homes and the bars in which they worked, and I lived with three Filipina-Japanese families in the region. I also returned to the Philippines with three women to visit their families there.<sup>6</sup>

## Love in global encounter

By focusing on love as a key term through which Filipina migrants in rural Japan craft lives and selves, I foreground the affective dimensions of contemporary transnational processes. Although many recent studies have illustrated the roles that global flows of people, capital, and popular media play in the formation of new identities and cultural forms, few have seriously considered the intimate and affective terms through which the transnational is lived.

My exploration of love as part of the processes through which Filipina women married to Japanese men craft transnational lives builds on two bodies of literature. First, over the past two decades, feminist anthropologists, ethnopsychologists, and other scholars have demonstrated that sentiments, such as love, are socially constructed (Abu-Lughod 1986; Abu-Lughod and Lutz 1990; Fajans 1997; Lutz 1988, 1990; Lutz and White 1986; Lynch 1990; Rebhun 1999; Rosaldo 1980, 1984; Rosaldo 1989). These scholars have challenged notions that emotion is rooted in either universal biological processes or autonomous ideologies and have focused, instead, on how sentiments are discursively produced and tied to sociocultural practices and processes.<sup>7</sup> Because these studies have aimed to illustrate the cultural variation and specificity of emotional experience, using emotion as a "lens" (Rebhun 1999:11) for understanding specific forms of social organization and cultural difference, they have tended to focus on the construction of sentiment in discrete and bounded "cultures" or "societies." Here I build on these analyses to show how sentiments such as love are produced at sites of global encounter in which different "cultures" come together and remake each other.

Second, I build on the work of feminist scholars who have argued for attention to the ways that intimacy and desire figure in global processes (Brennan 2002, 2004; Constable 2003; Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2002b; Hochschild 2003a, 2003b; Kelsky 2001; Manalansan 2003; Parreñas 2001; Rofel in press; Tadiar 2004; Wilson 2004). Whereas scholars in this group who have discussed love have asked whether it is compromised or commodified under global capitalism, they have not yet considered how intimate and cultural meanings of love are produced through transnational practices or the roles that they play in transnational subject-making processes.<sup>8</sup> I extend these inquiries by considering what scholars can learn from an exploration of the multiple and sometimes contradictory ways that love figures in Filipina migrants' transnational daily lives and presentations of self. Doing so, I suggest, can help us in our efforts to look beyond empowerment-resistance models of globalization and enable us to better understand the ways that power works in transnational processes by producing unequally situated gendered and sexualized subjects.

I restrict my discussion below to the ways that love was performed, professed, and made meaningful by Filipina

women I knew in rural Nagano, not to defining whether, how, or to what degree they “actually” felt it. Writing of Filipina–Japanese marriages in urban areas, Nobue Suzuki argues for “the possibility of affective relationships developing between the spouses” (2003a:95). Suzuki (2003b) and others (Kuwayama 1997) also describe cases of Filipina women in other parts of rural Japan who had professionally mediated marriages with men for whom they claimed to feel little affection or who found “love” in affairs with other (Japanese and Filipino) men.<sup>9</sup> I prefer to leave open the question of whether Filipina women in Central Kiso “really” loved their husbands and, thus, the possibility that different women understood their relationships in different ways at different moments. Rather, I explore the conditions of possibility for, and introduced by, love in these women’s lives. I focus on love as a cultural discourse and a self-making term, part of those “techniques of the self” (Foucault 1990:10–11)—those “intentional and involuntary actions” (Foucault 1990:10)—through which women not only established and conformed to rules of conduct but also sought to transform themselves and their lives through their global encounters.

### Filipina hostess bars and the transnational labor of love

Nearly every Filipina woman married to a Japanese man in Central Kiso had met her husband while working as a labor migrant in a local Filipina hostess bar.<sup>10</sup> Most of these women came from urban or rural poor communities in the Philippines, often from Manila and its surrounding provinces; few of them had postsecondary educations; and none were eligible for work visas other than entertainer visas.<sup>11</sup> Hostess bars, then, both offered the women opportunities to go abroad as migrant laborers and enabled Filipina migrants to meet their husbands by facilitating their passage to Japan. Yet every woman with whom I spoke insisted that she had not planned to marry a Japanese man when she went abroad to work; women explained that they had had boyfriends in the Philippines at the time and plans to return home. All of these women maintained that they had gone abroad for financial reasons, primarily to help their families. More than just creating logistical opportunities for these Filipina women to develop relationships with their future husbands, then, hostess bars also shaped the ways that Filipina migrants learned to relate to Japanese men, the forms of intimacy that developed between members of these groups, and the ways these women came to understand their relationships with Japanese men in terms of love.

Relationships between Filipina migrants and rural Japanese men in Central Kiso were in part shaped by the capitalist organization of the women’s work in hostess bars. As part of their jobs, Filipina women were expected both to serve and entertain customers and to perform “emotional la-

bor” (Hochschild 2003b:7), to convince men that they cared for them and were having a good time so that the men would patronize the bars and increase their tabs.<sup>12</sup> Through training courses in the Philippines and instruction by recruiters, hostess bar owners, and other more experienced hostesses, women learned to steam and present *oshibori* (moist hand towels), pour drinks, sit elegantly, sing karaoke, and dance, flatter, and flirt with customers.<sup>13</sup> Many Filipina hostess bars also instituted quota systems—“drink back,” “request,” and *dōhan* quotas—that offered financial incentives and penalties, not unlike commissions, for getting men to, respectively, order a certain number of drinks, request the women’s presence at their tables, and arrange to take them on “dates.”<sup>14</sup> Because of these quotas, Filipina migrants had strong financial incentives to encourage customers to remain and spend money at their bars.

Women were also under financial pressure to get customers to like them so that these men would request their presence and take them on dates. Such endeavors frequently involved spending a lot of time with customers and developing intimate relationships with them. Women described how they learned to attend to these men on a personal level, remembering details of their lives as well as their favorite drinks and songs. They would slow dance, flirt, and cuddle with them. Such efforts were not limited to the space of the clubs. During the day, women (even those who were married and continued to work in bars) would call their customers on their cell phones, sometimes repeatedly over the course of a single afternoon. They would flatter these men in Japanese, telling them how much they liked them and how they missed them when the men did not visit the bar. In this sense, being “loving”—a practice of affection, caretaking, and careful attention—was a key component of the women’s labor in hostess clubs.<sup>15</sup>

Filipina women in Central Kiso were aware that their employers and customers expected them to be attentive and loving. They also knew that many rural Japanese men came to local hostess bars to meet girlfriends and wives. Over the past few decades, Japan’s economic “growth” has proven bittersweet in rural places like Central Kiso. Although people in the region have, to some degree, benefited from, and come to identify with, postwar national affluence, the steady decline of local industries and the paucity of viable possibilities for an economically independent regional future have inspired a sense of instability among many living in the area.<sup>16</sup> According to local residents, one effect of these political-economic problems is that young Japanese women no longer are willing to live in rural areas and do not consider rural Japanese men, particularly those who work construction or other blue-collar jobs, desirable marriage partners; Japanese women want to live in cities and marry white-collar workers. In a country in which social adulthood has commonly been believed to begin with marriage (Lebra 1984), local residents referred to the “*yome busoku*” (bride shortage)

or “*yome hideri*” (bride drought) as one of the more painful ways that Central Kiso’s marginality has played out for local men.

Anne Allison has demonstrated that, for urban Japanese white-collar men who are emasculated in their work environments, hostess bars are important sites for rearticulating masculine and class-based identities. She describes how, in the elite hostess bars in Tokyo in which she conducted fieldwork, Japanese businessmen paid premium amounts of money to have beautiful, educated, and charming (Japanese) women pour their drinks, light their cigarettes, and talk with them. In these bars, hostesses were paid to make customers feel special, at ease, and indulged, or, as one customer explained to her, “feel like a man” (Allison 1994:8).

Filipina hostess bars have played a similar role for Japanese men who patronize them in Central Kiso. However, the difficulties local men have had finding wives also affected the ways these men perceived these bars. Most patrons of the Tokyo bar that Allison describes were married, and few of the elite men who patronized such establishments would have considered marrying a Japanese woman who had worked as a hostess.<sup>17</sup> In contrast, I was told that many men in rural areas had few marriage prospects outside the bars. Moreover, Japanese residents in Central Kiso widely viewed Filipina women who worked in bars as poor and, therefore, available to men from a “wealthy” country like Japan. Thus, in Central Kiso, hostess bars—which almost exclusively employed women from the Philippines—were places in which rural Japanese men were not only able to feel like men but they could also feel like adult, cosmopolitan, wealthy, and modern Japanese men, in part by meeting Filipina women they could flirt with, date, and even marry.<sup>18</sup>

### Pleasures and possibilities of love

The possibility that a male customer could be looking for a serious relationship enabled Filipina women working in these bars to interpret their interactions with these men outside the framework of “hostess” and “customer” and to reframe their interactions in terms of romance and even love. These reframings were also encouraged by women’s perception that going to Japan as an entertainer could be glamorous and exciting. Most Filipina women referred to the stints they worked in Japan on entertainer visas as their years as “talents,” identifying themselves as either “singers” or “dancers” and stressing the glamour and cosmopolitan possibilities of the work. Several factors informed their framing of their bar employment in this way. First, because of Japan’s restrictive visa laws, Filipina migrants who entered on entertainer visas were literally hired as cultural performers.<sup>19</sup> Women signed with “promotion agencies” as “overseas performing artists” (OPAs). They underwent dance and performance training and had to pass an exam-

ination before they were licensed as dancers or singers, and they formally auditioned for recruiters and bar owners from Japan before receiving their visas.

Second, Filipina migration to work in bars in Japan has historical links to an elite and glamorous tradition of cultural dance performance in the Philippines that dates to the early 20th century.<sup>20</sup> According to one woman, Cherie, the image of “performing in Japan” only changed during the mid-1970s—the height of Japanese sex tourism to the Philippines—when bars in Manila initially established to serve U.S. military personnel and tourists began to attract Japanese men. Around that time, Japanese promoters began to recruit Filipina women to work not only in hotels in Japan but also in hostess bars. Links between professional and university cultural dance troupes and OPAs, however, remained strong. Professional Filipino folk dancers worked as trainers, promoters, and examiners for Filipina women going to Japan, and some former cultural dancers used capital acquired through this work to start businesses recruiting Filipina women to work in bars.

Third, many women said that they decided to apply to go to Japan after witnessing the success of relatives, friends, or other women in their neighborhoods who had built large new homes for their families in gated subdivisions or purchased *dyipnis* (jeepneys) or *sari sari* (general) stores. Women described how impressed they had been by the new consumer items and glamorous appearance of women who had worked in Japan and “become beautiful.” For example, the cousin of one Filipina in Central Kiso, a woman I met in Manila while she was awaiting her sixth contract to work in Japan, explained in Tagalog sprinkled with English that she had asked herself, “Why are [other women who go as talents] beautiful when they return to the Philippines? Why are they beautiful when they come home? How do they become so beautiful? Their hair is colored; they bring bracelets, necklaces. So I became curious. I want[ed] to go to Japan. . . . Maybe I could become beautiful.”

Fourth, Filipina women described being treated like celebrities when they were recruited and trained to go to Japan. They explained that when they signed their contracts they were often given cash advances with which to go shopping for clothes and makeup to take abroad. As part of their training, women had costume fittings and professional makeup applications. They were invited to photo shoots at which professional photographers took portfolio photographs of them in full costume and makeup under professional lighting. These photos were then sent to Japan by their Philippine promoter. In some ways, becoming an OPA offered Filipina migrants an opportunity to live a life imagined only for models or movie stars. In fact, *The Philchime Career Manual for Overseas Performance Artists*, the standard text used at the time in the Academic Training Program for Filipina women applying to work in Japan, asserts, “The honor, glamour, and privilege of this profession are only for

those who can be considered as talented and beautiful according to standards of show business" (Esguerra 1994:42).<sup>21</sup>

The potential that working in Japan offered Filipina women to become beautiful, glamorous, and cosmopolitan—in short, to have the exciting life of a celebrity—not only informed their decisions to sign up as OPAs but also shaped the ways women made sense of their encounters with their Japanese male customers, who women knew might be looking for a long-term relationship. Many Filipina women I met spoke with pride of the attentions they garnered from customers and of their abilities to attract and manage these men. Ruby, for example, described with a sense of accomplishment how she would sing and dance with customers so that they would remain at her club and increase their tabs. "If you're a good salesperson," she explained in Japanese, "you say, 'Shall we dance? Shall we sing?' and the customer thinks, 'Wow, this is fun.' He'll say, 'O.K., I'll have another beer'; he won't go home yet and more time passes, drink by drink."<sup>22</sup> Tessie described the "technique" that she and other hostesses would use to get customers to take them on *dōhan*. She savily recounted how the women would tell their customers, "Oh, I want to buy such and such, do you know where I can find it?" According to Tessie, the customers would then offer to take the women shopping. The men not only wound up buying the women whatever they wanted but also took them out to dinner and then to the club.

Some women who had grown up in strict Catholic homes or who did not have money or time to care for their appearance in the Philippines enjoyed having admirers and receiving attention from men with the means to take them out on dates and buy them gifts. Women boasted of being the "number one request" in the bars in which they worked, attesting to their popularity and desirability. Ruby bragged of the expensive gifts—televisions, jewelry, and money—that her adoring customers gave her. Many women also spoke with amusement about the customers who vied for their affection and who wanted to marry them. Tessie described having multiple "boyfriends" (her relations with whom, she reported, had not been sexual) who took her out. She complained, with a deep sigh, of the difficulties of juggling these men and of staving off their jealousies, "because they know that you have other customers, so [each] one wants to think that he's your favorite." Other women spoke with confidence of the strategies they had developed for deflecting the advances of *sukebei* (lecherous men) while still cultivating their business.

### Finding love in a hostess bar

Women's descriptions of the pleasures they found in receiving attentions from customers were only heightened in their discussions of the men they had decided to marry—and whom they professed to love. Many women told dramatic

and romantic love stories about their courtships, speaking of their love for their husbands as something that had developed unexpectedly while they worked in bars, the result of either their husbands' romantic courtship or love at first sight.

Tessie, for example, stressed the attentiveness and generosity of the man she decided to marry. She had been on her third six-month contract as an entertainer—a "third-timer," as women I knew would say—when she met her husband, Yoshimoto-san, at a bar in a small town in Central Kiso that had once been the center of the now-moribund lumber industry. Tessie confessed that she had not "liked" Yoshimoto-san when he first began courting her. At the time, he was one of several customers who were vying for her attention, including two other men who wanted to marry her. She sensed that one of these men was a *babaero*, a womanizer; the other she found too controlling. Her feelings for her future husband had grown, she said, because she felt that he was *majime* (serious): He had a steady job, he did not drink heavily, he was not lecherous or pushy, and he took marriage, and her, seriously. She described with pleasure how she and Yoshimoto-san had conspired while they were dating so that she could avoid the attentions of undesirable men. She boasted that he came to see her every night, requesting her at his table and lavishing her with attention, and she estimated that he spent upward of 3,000,000 yen (about \$28,500) during the three contracts she worked in Central Kiso. She also told me that Yoshimoto-san had traveled hours to visit her on weekends when she worked at a bar in Chiba, staying in a hotel so that he could patronize her bar and take her out to fancy restaurants on her days off. At the time, Tessie explained, she also had a boyfriend in the Philippines. She was frustrated, however, because he had not proposed marriage and did not have a job that would enable him to support a family. Her feelings for Yoshimoto-san developed, and when he proposed marriage, she said yes.

Many Filipina women I knew in Central Kiso related stories similar to Tessie's of how they had grown to love husbands they met while working as entertainers. These women similarly described the excitement of their courtships, of going to restaurants or for drives, and of being called and visited regularly by their future spouses. Such stories evoked the possibilities and pleasures of love and of working at bars in Japan, where love might unexpectedly be found. Some women offered even more dramatic examples than Tessie of the surprise of love they had discovered in hostess bars. One day in January, I went to Pilar's home with my mini-disc recorder to interview Pilar about her life. Pilar wanted to practice her English, so that was the language we spoke as we sat at her kitchen table. I asked her how and why she had come to Japan and how she had met her husband. Pilar was a short, round woman with an unfailingly cheerful disposition, and her eyes sparkled as she described her reaction when her husband, a customer at the bar where she

had worked, first caught her eye. “Ooh, I like that guy,” she had thought to herself. She explained that her feelings had been reciprocated and her husband had also felt—What was the English word? she queried—“*hitome bore*” (love at first sight).

Indeed, several Filipina women in Central Kiso told me that they had felt “love at first sight” when they first eyed their husbands. Sharyn, for example, explained that she had decided that her husband was her “type” the minute he walked into her club. She reenacted the first time she saw him, demonstrating how, tall and handsome, he had strolled into the bar with his jacket slung over his shoulder. There was just something elegant and special about him and the way he was holding his jacket, she explained. To meet her husband, Sharyn had circumvented the rules of the club, which usually permit only customers to select which women will serve them, and had arranged to sit at his table when the hostess he had requested was busy with other clients.

Scholars have suggested that, in many parts of the globe, romantic love is associated with a modern, “Western” world (Ahearn 2001; Lipset 2004; Rebhun 1999). As L. A. Rebhun writes, “The practice of romance reflects a prestigious involvement with the ‘West,’ its economic domination, its glorious cultural heritage, its prestige, and its modernity, especially regarding romance as expressed in marriages for love celebrated by women in white dresses and men in dress suits, attended by identically dressed witnesses and blessed by church and state ceremonies” (1999:5). Writing in a related vein, Elizabeth Povinelli (2004) suggests that, in the “liberal diaspora,” forms of loving become the bases of embodied hierarchies through which people (and societies) might be ranked and evaluated in relation to unmodern Others. Identifying love as a mode of governance linked to forms of sovereignty, Povinelli explains that the ability to “love” in an “enlightened” way becomes the basis (the “foundational event”) for constituting free and self-governing subjects and, thus, “humanity.”

Insofar as women’s love stories stressed their agency in their marriages, these narratives presented the women as individual, modern, and glamorous subjects who were free to form intimate and romantic relationships regardless of financial, familial, or other concerns. Tessie, for example, stressed that she had chosen to marry her husband, preferring him over both a Filipino boyfriend and several other Japanese men. Others, like Sharyn, described how they had gone after the men they married. These women’s stories focused on personal factors (he was my type; he visited me every day), rendering unimportant the context of the bars in which their relationships developed or the women’s employment in the bars at all. Such stories stand in stark contrast to the women’s discussions of their motivations in coming to Japan, which focused on the poverty of their lives in the Philippines and their desires to help their families abroad. The stories women told of their courtships were not

narratives about supporting their families overseas or even about bar hostesses and customers. These were stories about women who were so desirable that men would go to great lengths to win them over and about lovers who were meant to be together—and who were free to acknowledge and respond to the call of fate.

### The global stage of love

One might understand these love stories as self-conscious claims of belonging to a modern world and universal humanity defined both by the ability to love as a free, self-governing subject and by the competencies in cosmopolitan languages (like English and “romance”) that these stories demonstrated. One day I asked Ruby why she thought Japanese men found Filipina women attractive. We were driving home from her divorce mediation hearings in Matsumoto, listening on her car stereo to a collection of Tagalog and English love songs sung by Zsa Zsa Padilla. I had been asking Ruby about her marriage and her job as a *mamasan* (propietress), and Ruby responded to my query without missing a beat: “*Malaming kami* [We’re affectionate], very loving.” Ruby then compared Filipina women with Japanese women, who, she explained, were not affectionate at all.

Several Filipina women, and some Filipino men, whom I met in both Japan and the Philippines explained their own and others’ attitudes toward or behaviors in their marriages and intimate relationships by saying, “We Filipinos [*sic*] are very romantic.” Such claims can also be found widely in Philippine popular culture. For example, in 2001, a Social Weather Station survey concluded, “Filipinos More Romantic than Americans.”<sup>23</sup> National newspapers in the Philippines have also been known to invoke “Filipinos’ romantic culture” (Malaya Entertainment 2004) and to cite a 2003 Sieman’s Mobile Lifestyle Survey finding that people in the Philippines were the “most romantic” among cellular phone users in six Southeast Asian countries (Casanova 2003; Casiraya 2003; Friginal 2004).

One might, then, read women’s assertions that “Filipinos [*sic*] are very romantic” as claims that they are fully—even paradigmatically—modern. Indeed, these assertions suggest that when it comes to being romantic and loving, people from the Philippines can both hold their own on a global stage and participate in a “universal” humanity. Such claims were manifest not only in the stories that Filipina women told me about meeting and dating the men they married but also in the women’s extravagant weddings, which they viewed as the culminations of their courtships. For example, Tessie pulled her wedding album out of a downstairs closet one frosty evening in early January when I was living at her house. Like many Filipina women in Central Kiso, she had married Yoshimoto-san in a choreographed ceremony held at a church in the Philippines. Yoshimoto-san had paid for the wedding and for the professionally produced photo

album that documented the event. Tessie explained that her manager in the Philippines, the person who first arranged for her to go to Japan as an entertainer, had recommended the photographer. Adding that the photographer had done the photos in a “fantasy” style, Tessie left me to look through the album as she went upstairs to put her two children to bed. As I flipped through the heavy pages, I first noticed a series of photographs of Tessie in heavy makeup putting on gold earrings and holding her wedding gown as she gazed at herself from different angles in a mirror. Then there were pictures of Tessie and her husband with caged white doves: a photo of them kissing beside the cage, one of them releasing the doves, and then one of them with their faces above the cage. After a series of images from the formal ceremony and grand, catered reception, the last two photos in the album depicted Tessie’s husband, who wore a formal *barong Tagalog*, carrying her onto a white bed and then kissing her as he gently laid her on it.<sup>24</sup>

Later, as Tessie and I looked through her wedding album together, I asked her about the elaborate matching gowns and dress clothes worn by her wedding party. In English (a language in which she was not confidently fluent but that she wanted to practice that evening), she explained that her husband had purchased her bridal party’s clothing and even bought outfits for her guests. She wanted everyone to look “at the same level,” she said, so that no one would feel embarrassed or left out. She then bragged that her wedding dress had cost ₱45,000 (at the time, more than \$1,000). Now she regretted spending so much, she said. “But that’s every girl’s dream,” she explained knowingly, “to be a bride, the ‘Wedding Day.’ ”

### Managing the *japayuki* stigma

Through their encounters with men they met in hostess bars, not only were Filipina migrants able to accumulate capital, buy consumer items, and send money to their families in the Philippines but they also articulated identities as successful businesspeople and desirable, modern, and cosmopolitan women. In this way, hostess bars provided Filipina migrants both entry and socialization into glamorous, exciting, capitalist worlds, not unlike the ways that, as Ara Wilson (2004) describes, bars in Thailand educate rural women to maneuver through sexualized market economies. Unlike the situation described by Wilson, however, “love” figured centrally in these processes. Love was part of both the emotional labor women performed in these bars and the pride and the pleasures they found in their employment. In this sense, love was more than a strategic display of emotion (Brennan 2004) or a form of “deep acting” (Hochschild 2003a) for these women. Love was also a term for claiming selfhood and asserting belonging in a modern, global world.

Yet, just as these women’s professions of love enabled them to craft modern identities and senses of self, their

love stories are neither straightforward evidence that the women believed that they were free, individual subjects nor, correspondingly, proof that they had adopted “modern” or “Western” notions of subjectivity. These stories must also be understood in the contexts of negative perceptions of the women’s work in bars and of their relationships with their husbands after their marriages.

Despite the pleasures that Filipina women found working in hostess bars and the important ways their jobs enabled them to identify as cosmopolitan, modern women, the work also stigmatized them (see also Piquero-Ballecas 1998; Suzuki 2002). Because of the relationships between Filipina migration to Japan and Japanese sex tourism to the Philippines, Filipina women who go to Japan on entertainer visas are widely perceived as prostitutes in both countries and disparaged as *japayuki* or *japayukisan*.<sup>25</sup> When I began my fieldwork, my Japanese landlady cautioned me against associating with Filipina migrants. She explained that these women must be poor and desperate as well as *keihaku*—shallow, frivolous, and immodest—to work in bars. When I tried to protest, my landlady asserted that her parents would never have let her take such a job, even if they had been reduced to the direst of circumstances. People in the Philippines shared similar perceptions. For example, the Filipino uncle and nieces of a woman living in Central Kiso explained (as one of this woman’s nieces put it), “The reputation of *japayukis* here is not very good: They are thought of as prostitutes.” So pervasive in Japan was the association of Filipina women with sex work that most Filipina migrants found their lives affected by it.

As a result, all the Filipina women I knew in Central Kiso were extremely self-conscious of the stigma attached to working as an entertainer, and these concerns sometimes overshadowed the pleasures they found in their employment. Ligaya, one of the few women in Central Kiso who had met her husband through a marriage mediator, maintained that she had never even set foot in a hostess bar. Filipina women who had worked in hostess bars were sensitive both to the ways they were perceived by others and to the requirements of the job itself. One woman named Elsie, who worked at Ruby’s bar, told me that, as a Catholic, she believed she was committing a sin by working in hostess bars because she was “entertaining men.” One day while we sat around playing cards before the bar opened, she and several other women working at the club explained that they were “embarrassed in front of God” to do such work. “But it is O.K. to work in a place like this if you have a good reason,” Elsie added. She and the others agreed among themselves that one could justify working in a club if one did not do so for selfish purposes, that is, just for personal gain or to buy expensive things. Elsie maintained that more than 50 percent of her salary went to her family in the Philippines.

The stigma associated with bar work, especially the notion that Filipina women would do anything for money,

also attached to these women's marriages (see also Suzuki 2003b). Many Central Kiso residents told me that Filipina women married Japanese men for instrumental reasons, particularly so that they could escape the poverty of the Philippines and live in Japan, a wealthier country. One middle-aged former employee of the region's long-closed forestry bureau office dismissively explained of Filipina migrants and local Japanese men who marry, "It's not that they purely fall in love" [*junsui ni rabu to rabu ja nai*]. He explained that Filipina-Japanese marriages resulted from two intersecting factors: Rural men could not find brides because young Japanese women wanted to live in the cities; and Filipina women wanted to live in "rich" Japan, preferring life in even rural Japan over life in the Philippines.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, in the Philippines, the uncle of one Filipina woman living in Central Kiso explained, "Most [Filipina entertainers] go to Japan because they want to marry a rich Japanese."

Filipina women I knew sometimes challenged these perceptions by explaining that their married lives in Japan, like their employment in hostess bars, were part of the "sacrifice" they were making to help their families abroad or their children in Japan. Cora described her life in Japan as her "trials," suggesting that, following Jesus, she too suffered for a greater good. (In making such claims, women invited *awa* [pity], the right to be treated with dignity and as having equal human value regardless of how they were situated within relations of power [see Cannell 1999:232–233].) Married women went to great lengths to demonstrate their selflessness. Most regularly sent large amounts of money and gifts to their families in the Philippines. When women returned home for visits, they brought large boxes of goods ranging from television sets to packages of instant ramen to distribute among friends and family. Through consumption, display, and gift exchange, Filipina migrants demonstrated their commitments to their families abroad and reinforced the idea that they had not gone to Japan simply for selfish economic interests.

Claiming that one loved one's husband, then, was another important way that Filipina women I knew responded to the stigma attached to both their work in hostess bars and their marriages. This point was made clear to me in an exchange I had with a woman named Girlie, who was herself unmarried and working without papers at a Filipina hostess bar in Central Kiso. On a warm afternoon in late August, Girlie and I were ambling toward the cool retreat of the house I was renting on the Kiso River. We had been talking about Irma, Girlie's *mamasan* at Club Ilo Ilo, and Irma's gregarious husband, Sato-san, who owned the bar Irma managed. Together with the other Filipina women employed at the club, Girlie was living in the house the couple rented on the sylvan hillside above the center of town. I asked Girlie about her current employers and how she found living with them. Their situation was unusual, she told me, especially compared with that of other Filipina women she knew. She

explained that, whereas many Filipina women married to Japanese men have to "adjust to Japanese ways," in this case, it was Sato-san "who has to adjust to Filipino culture." She pointed out that Irma cooked mostly Filipino meals.

"How did Irma and her husband meet?" I asked. Girlie replied that they had met a few years earlier when Irma was working at a bar in town. Sato-san was 23 years older than Irma, she added. He was once divorced and had two daughters Irma's age. "But they're in love," Girlie maintained, "Other people can't necessarily understand that, but they are." I told Girlie that I was not shocked by marriages across significant age gaps, explaining that my own parents were nearly 24 years apart. "It seems that many Filipina women in Japan marry men who are notably older than they are," I observed. "Yes," Girlie replied, "it is common." But this did not mean that the women marry the men simply for visas or for financial gain, she maintained. "Filipinas can't do that . . . just marry a man for financial reasons. They're not so cold. They love their husbands."

Girlie's assertion that Irma and other Filipina women "love their husbands" was an explicit challenge to the stigma attached to these women's marriages. She maintained that Filipina women "are not so cold" as to instrumentally marry men for financial gain; rather, Filipina women are warm—capable of feeling and emotion—and, thus, marry for love. In making such a claim, Girlie delineated two types of people: those who were cold and calculating and those who were loving and decent. She suggested that loving one's husband was a measure of both morality and humanity—of an emotional interiority evidenced by love.<sup>27</sup>

One might understand Girlie's assertion that Filipina women marry for love in terms of the sharp distinction posed in Christian theology between actions motivated by love and those motivated by financial gain (Rebhun 1999). As Rebhun explains, because God is seen as the ultimate expression of love, being a moral person means behaving in a loving manner. Wealth and love are viewed as incompatible, and actions motivated by economic interest are morally irreconcilable with those motivated by love (Rebhun 1999:60). For Filipina migrants in Central Kiso, all of whom were raised Christian and the overwhelming majority of whom were Catholic, loving one's husband was part of a language and discipline through which a woman might craft a moral sense of self. Love was both how a woman lived as a good Catholic and how she maintained (to herself and to others, in a language translatable in the Philippines, if not through significant portions of the world) that she had an emotional interiority—in short, that she was both moral and fully human. In this light, love offered women not only the pleasures that might be found in working at hostess bars but also a means of managing the perils, including the stigma, of their lives in Japan.

Cherie, who was married to a Japanese man in Tokyo, stated on several occasions that she was "*nakahiya*" (ashamed, embarrassed) by the idea that a Filipina would



get married just for a visa. This seemed to her an insult to the “sacrament of marriage.” Cherie’s assertion was clearly shaped by Catholic ideas about gender, love, and marriage circulating in the Philippines. Indeed, as divorce is not legal there, the pressure to take marriage seriously is legally institutionalized. Moreover, if one believes marriage to be a sacrament and a life commitment based on love, one has little choice but to try to find a way to love one’s spouse. Nevertheless, Cherie’s comment also suggests one final framework through which one might understand what loving one’s husband meant to some Filipina women in Japan: that of the Tagalog notion of “*hiya*,” shame or disgrace, and its relationship to “*loob*,” an “inner loc[us] of will, feeling, and action” (Tadiar 2004:235).

Although the meanings of such terms have clearly changed over time, and although not all Filipina women in the Central Kiso were Tagalog, Vicente Rafael suggests a provocative historical framework through which one might conditionally make sense of Cherie’s comment.<sup>28</sup> Rafael explains that in the 17th and 18th centuries, Spanish missionaries who aimed to teach lowland Tagalogs to confess used the notion of “*loob*” as an equivalent of a subjective locus of love, sorrow, conscience, and repentance (see Rafael 1988:91–109). Rafael argues, however, that such efforts were only partly successful in circumscribing *loob* in Western terms of subjectivity. Rather, Tagalogs did not understand *loob* as a subjective site for love and contrition toward God but made sense of it through pre-Christian relations of reciprocity, specifically, the notion of “*utang ng loob*,” an unsettled debt of gratitude. As a result, Tagalogs participated in Catholic confessional practices not as guilty and repentant subjects but to avoid the shock of *hiya*, the shame that comes from one’s failure to bargain with a contracted creditor (one to whom an *utang ng loob* is owed) through symbolic gestures of respect and repayment (Rafael 1988).

Drawing from Rafael, one might reread women’s assertions that they loved their husbands as articulations of a form of selfhood that was not necessarily identical to the Western free, individualistic self that scholars have elsewhere associated with romantic love (Ahearn 2001; Engels 1972; Giddens 1992).<sup>29</sup> Rather, one might also understand such claims in a sense parallel to the ways Rafael suggests that Tagalogs historically understood confession through notions of “*loob*” and “*hiya*”: as symbolic gestures of respect and repayment made in an effort to avoid the shame that comes from failing to bargain with a creditor.

### Maintaining transnational ties

As wives and mothers of Japanese, most Filipina women in Central Kiso were instructed by their husbands, in-laws, neighbors, and community members to do things “the Japanese way” (or as Japanese residents would say, “*nihon no yarikata*”). For example, they were expected to learn to

speak Japanese, to prepare and eat Japanese foods, and to interact with neighbors in prescribed manners. Because the spousal visas these women received were temporary visas issued for periods ranging from six months to three years, the women faced considerable pressure to comply with their Japanese husbands’ and families’ desires. They were dependent on their Japanese husbands to sponsor their visa renewals and, thus, enable them to remain in Japan. Many women expressed frustration with the discrimination they experienced in Japan. They spoke of their desires to eat Filipino foods and maintain a sense of Filipino identity. They also complained about the demands their Japanese husbands and families made of them, treating them, as some would say, like a “maid.” Other women lamented that their husbands were now *tsumetai*, cold and unaffectionate, and did not sufficiently share in the household division of labor. Tessie cautioned me against marrying a Japanese man, telling me that Filipino men were more thoughtful and romantic. “If I could get married again,” she said, “I’d marry a Filipino this time.” Tessie and others expressed wonder at how they had found themselves living in rural Nagano, and they sometimes discussed their desires to leave their husbands and return to the Philippines.

Their dissatisfactions with their marriages notwithstanding, women like Tessie also expressed feelings of indebtedness to their husbands and found pleasures in their married lives. One evening, Cora, Tessie, Ana, and I were sitting at the big country-style oak table in Tessie’s kitchen when Malou arrived with a big pot of chicken *adobo*, some green mangoes, and fresh *bagoong* (fermented shrimp paste) that she had brought back from her recent trip to the Philippines. It was a Thursday, Tessie’s husband’s mahjong night, and while he was gone Tessie was having her usual Filipino food potluck and get-together. Malou had recently built a large, elegant home for her mother in Manila, and she had thrown a big party to celebrate its completion. She proudly displayed photographs from her visit. The other women expressed envy, both that Malou’s husband permitted her to return to the Philippines so frequently and that he allowed her to continue to work in a bar where she made considerably more money than they did in their waged labor doing *naishoku* (piecework at home) and working in factories. Malou rarely spoke English, but that evening she announced with characteristic drama, “My husband is the best!” She then drew her arms to her chest in a sweeping gesture and continued, “I love my husband! I love-love-love my husband!” Chuckling at Malou’s performance, the other woman confirmed this: Yes, Malou loved her husband. He was the best. She was lucky.

When Tessie spoke of her relationship with her husband she also claimed that she was one of the “lucky” ones. *Lucky* was an English word some women used to suggest that they had navigated the vulnerabilities of their lives by choosing their husbands wisely. Yoshimoto-san was one of

the few husbands of Filipina women in the region who had a white-collar job, and Tessie was proud of her elegantly decorated house and that her husband could afford to take her to the nicest restaurants in town. But perhaps more important, Tessie maintained, Yoshimoto-san really listened to her and attended to her needs and desires. She explained, for example, that he permitted her to do waged labor (factory labor and *naishoku*) so that she could send money to her family in the Philippines, and he even helped her complete her *naishoku* when she was tired or busy. Sometimes, too, he assisted with child care and housework, doing the vacuuming or the dishes. He also supported her commitment to activist activities, including mobilizing Filipina women in the area to work for their rights, and he generously allowed her undocumented friends and relatives to live at their home rent free, sometimes for months on end. Tessie also appreciated that he regularly drove her to church in Matsumoto—more than an hour and a half away—and waited in the car while she went to Sunday mass, and that afterward he took her shopping at the large discount stores nearby.

Like Tessie, other women spoke with pride of their husbands' ability to support them and take them shopping. They cited verse from the Bible that stated that a man should support his family and a woman should remain in the home. Some women also expressed appreciation that their husbands drove them to church, permitted them to attend Filipino potlucks or prayer meetings, or let them do things, even small things like preparing meals, the "Filipino way." Tisya, whom I introduced at the beginning of this article, told me that she liked Kato-san in part because he was so affectionate and in part because, as he announced with excitement one night at dinner, he thought that because he was marrying a Filipina woman he should try to learn to speak Tagalog and to eat with a fork and spoon.

Perhaps above all, however, Filipina women in Central Kiso appreciated when their husbands were generous and understanding about their desires to send money to their Filipino families. Tessie shared that she was especially touched when, at her request, Yoshimoto-san agreed to give her family in the Philippines the money he had set aside for her Christmas presents and a much-anticipated annual family vacation. As Malou put it, she "love-love-love[d]" her husband for allowing her to work at night and to visit Manila regularly. And, notably, when women's husbands refused to let them send money to the Philippines, the women sometimes ran away.<sup>30</sup> In fact, a Filipina NGO worker once suggested that if Japanese men married to Filipina women better understood and supported these women's desires to help their families abroad, the men would have less reason to worry about their wives wanting to leave.

For at least some Filipina women in Central Kiso, love for one's husband was tied, in measurable ways, to the way he treated one, and in particular, to actions that inspired appreciation or gratitude: Love was linked to a man's ability to

financially and emotionally support his wife; to the small, daily kindnesses he showed her; and perhaps, above all, to the degree to which he supported her desire to send money to, and visit, her family abroad. Thus, when women asserted that they loved their husbands, they gestured to forms of intimacy and subjectivity that enabled the transnationalities of their lives. They suggested that love was not only a product of their migration to Japan but also of their ability to maintain their ties to the Philippines. In this regard, however, these women's assertions of love were not simply claims of the freedom and pleasures they enjoyed through these transnationalities. They were also efforts at managing the debts incurred through them and concessions to the stigmas and hardships these women faced.

### **Love makes the world go 'round**

Renato Rosaldo (1989) has argued that emotions come to have experiential meaning in reference to social positioning. He uses the notion of "emotional force" to refer to the thoroughness with which emotional patterns are internalized and the centrality or marginality of such emotions in people's lives (Rosaldo 1989:2). I have illustrated here how the meaning and force of love in the lives of Filipina migrants in rural Nagano were tied to these women's positioning within global relations of power. Love was a key, if contradictory, term through which Filipina migrants in Central Kiso crafted senses of self as they carried out and made sense of their transnational daily lives. Love enabled these women to claim both globally translatable senses of modern personhood and a sense of humanity in the face of their work in hostess bars. Love also made the transnational ties of their lives—and their accumulation strategies—possible. Women who did not "love" their customers did not meet their quotas or get new work contracts; and if a woman could not "love" her husband, because, for example, he was abusive or would not let her send money home, she was constrained in her ability to support her family abroad. Love was an integral part of what enabled Filipina migrants to work in Japan on entertainer visas and what encouraged them to remain in Japan after those visas expired.

Discussions of the lives of Filipina migrants in Japan, and, more generally, of women who work in sex industries or meet their husbands through marriage mediators, often center on whether these women have come to their jobs and their marriages of their own accord or whether they were "trafficked." Behind many of these debates lie questions of love and human rights: Are these women free to love, that is, to choose their sexual partners freely on the basis of love, and, if not, in what ways are their human rights being violated? However, the stories and experiences of Filipina migrants in rural Nagano illustrate that love is much more than a matter of freedom. Love is a powerful condition of these women's transnational lives, a term of global self-making that is made

meaningful through and that enables their transnational everyday practices.

In recent years, scholars have worked to understand how new forms of identity and subjectivity have emerged through contemporary global processes. These scholars have considered how a variety of factors—global capitalist flows (Ong 1987; Wilson 2004), travel and migration (Basch et al. 1994; Manalansan 2003; Ong 1999; Tsuda 2003), a global imagination (Appadurai 1996), new technologies like the Internet (Bernal 2004; Constable 2003), the circulation of cultural and media forms (Clifford 1997; Kondo 1997), and language practices and ideologies (Koven 2004)—are transforming the ways people craft identities and senses of self in a transnational world. Here, I illustrate how attention to the affective terms of global processes can promote understanding not only of the constraints and possibilities through which new transnational subjectivities are taking shape but also of the ways that transnational practices themselves are made possible by sentiments such as love and the gendered and sexualized subjectivities they enable.

## Notes

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1. Because my research was conducted in a mixture of three languages—Japanese, Tagalog, and English—I have used the following typographic conventions to mark words and direct quotations from each: For words or phrases in Japanese I use *italics*; for those in Tagalog I underline. For Japanese words that are now widely used in the Philippines, I use *both*. If words within quotation marks are not italicized or underlined, they were said in English. When paraphrasing, I have tried, when relevant, to indicate if statements were made in Japanese, English, or Tagalog. Often, however, several languages were used in one conversation and sometimes in one sentence. Moreover, I sometimes recorded informal conversations in English in my notes, noting key phrases or expressions in the original language used. When I summarize these conversations, I note language use only when relevant.

2. *San* is a respect suffix added in Japanese to names and terms of address. Following Japanese convention, I refer to Filipina women's husbands by their last names and the suffix *-san*. I refer to the women, however, by their first names because this is how I addressed them.

3. As I discuss subsequently in the text, a Filipina hostess bar is a bar that employs Filipina women to clean and care for the bar, serve drinks, entertain customers (usually by talking, flirting, and dancing with them and singing karaoke), encourage customers to return and spend money, and sometimes go on dates with customers. Before the 1980s, most hostess bars in Japan employed Japanese women as hostesses, and some still do. The past two decades, however, also witnessed the development of specialized hostess bars that hire Korean, Thai, Chinese, Russian, U.S., Canadian, Australian, Latin American, and European women. These bars are ranked, both by their services and by the ethnicity of hostesses. Those hiring Japanese women and white women from Anglophone countries tend to be more expensive than those hiring women from other parts of Asia and from Latin America. For a smart ethnography of a high-class hostess bar in Tokyo, see Allison 1994. Haeng-ja Chung (2004) has done a careful study of Korean hostess bars. For descriptions of bar work involving Japanese women, see Jackson 1976 and Mock 1976.

4. The remainder had met their spouses through marriage mediators, friends, relatives, or other work or social arrangements.

5. I found that some women initially were interested in speaking with me because they saw me as a resource for advancing their grassroots efforts to organize Filipina women in the region. Others expressed desires to practice their English and to introduce their "American friend" to neighbors and family members in the Philippines.

6. About one-third of the Filipina women married to Japanese men in the region continued to work in hostess bars; others did piecework at home or worked in ballpoint-pen or computer-parts factories in the area. A few opened small businesses out of their homes, importing food and cosmetic products from the Philippines.

7. Scholars have explored, for example, how sentiments are embedded in cultural contexts that give them meaning (Rosaldo 1984); rooted in lived, positioned personal experience (Abu-Lughod 1986; Rosaldo 1989); produced through social relationships (Lutz 1988); articulated as discursive social practices within relations of power (Abu-Lughod and Lutz 1990); and experienced and expressed through embodied physical processes (Rebhun 1999). For an excellent recent set of essays that builds on this literature by working to break down the individual-social binary in studies of emotion in Southeast Asia, see Boellstorff and Lindquist 2004.

8. Those who have focused on love have primarily discussed the ways it is commodified and unequally distributed (Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2002a; Hochschild 2002; Parreñas 2001) or rendered possible or impossible under global capitalism (Brennan 2002, 2004; Constable 2003). For example, Arlie Russell Hochschild (2002, 2003a) and Rhacel Parreñas (2001) have written of the objectification and, thus, diminishment of forms of love under global capitalism. They have suggested that maternal love becomes an unequally distributed commodity that children in the global north receive at the expense of those in the global south. Denise Brennan (2002, 2004) has demonstrated that Dominican women sacrifice "emotion-based" or "authentic" love for upward mobility in marriages to Western men. In an important study, Nicole Constable (2003) argues that love and political economics are intertwined through a cultural logic of desire. She strategically makes such an argument to suggest that romantic love is possible in correspondence marriages between Filipina and Chinese women and U.S. men.

9. In Central Kiso, I knew of only one woman, Ruby, who was rumored to be having an affair with another Japanese man in the region. Even so, Ruby still spoke at length of her love for her husband and was clearly pained by her pending divorce. I also heard of two married women in the region who had an affair with each other. One of these women told me that she loved her husband; the other woman ran away from her Japanese family because, I was told, her husband would not let her support her family in the Philippines.

I also knew well a woman who had met her husband through a marriage mediator in the Philippines. They had one of the more stable marriages in the region and often openly wondered how they had met each other through such an unlikely arrangement.

10. While I conducted research in Central Kiso, at any one time, between 10 and 15 Filipina bars were open for business in the main towns in the region (which had a combined population, not including the outlying villages, of about 15,000). In 1999, there were 191 Filipina women registered in Kiso County (almost exclusively in the central region), including the 60 women married to Japanese men. At the time, five women married to Japanese men had run away.

11. Of the 51 women for whom I have information regarding place of origin in the Philippines, the largest groups came from Metro Manila (22 women), most from what women described as “squatter areas,” and from poor rural communities in other parts of Luzon (23 women), frequently from provinces close to Manila, such as Rizal and Laguna. Six women were from Mindanao and the Visayas. About half of the women I knew had children they were supporting in the Philippines.

12. According to Hochschild, emotional labor is “the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display” (2003a:7).

13. In addition to these job responsibilities, women clean up the bar after closing and set up the club before it opens. They roll hand towels, refill napkin and toothpick holders, set out ice buckets, wash dishes, wipe down tables, prepare snack foods for customers, refrigerate beer, rearrange furniture and decorations, accompany their mamasans to buy supplies, and periodically vacuum the carpet and clean the toilet and kitchen. Bars are required to provide housing for the “entertainers” they employ, and many have dorms or apartments that the women must also keep clean. I also know of a case in which women lived at their mamasan’s home, communally sharing the cooking and cleaning and helping her out with child care.

14. Under a “drink back” system, women received 100 yen (about \$0.95) for every drink a customer ordered above a weekly quota of, say, 50. Through the “drink back” system, women could increase their weekly salaries; however, if they did not meet their quotas, they did not receive any “drink back” money and were sometimes penalized. Many Filipina bars also had a “request” system through which customers could request that specific hostesses sit at their tables and serve them. At these bars, women frequently had “request quotas”; that is, a certain number of customers had to request their presence at their tables each week. In addition, many, but not all, bars had quotas on “dōhan,” which in this context referred to dates in which a man took a woman out to dinner or shopping, after which she brought him back to the club. In some cases, men had to pay the club to take a woman on “dōhan,” and women sometimes got a “dōhan back,” or a monetary bonus, for each date they went on.

15. Japanese women who work in hostess bars face similar expectations. As I discuss subsequently in the text, differences lie in both the economic means of men who frequent these clubs and the ways these women are perceived by these men.

16. See Ivy 1995; Kelly 1986, 1990; Robertson 1988; and Tamanoi 1998 for excellent discussions of the ways that discourses of modernity position rural places like Central Kiso as an “Other” against which a “modern” Japanese self might be constructed.

17. Central Kiso residents told me that Japanese hostesses earned relatively high salaries and were financially independent and street savvy. Although Japanese hostesses do marry wealthy benefactors, most do not do so until they are too old to work at bars. Some older Japanese hostesses become mamasans (Mock 1976).

18. Some men actually went to such bars expressly to find brides. Tessie shared that, after witnessing the success of her marriage, her husband’s brother had started patronizing a local bar because “he’s looking for a Filipina to marry.”

19. Work visas to Japan are issued only to foreigners who can perform a kind of “skilled” labor that is not available in the Japanese workforce. Technically, “entertainer visas” are visas reserved for “those who engage in sports and the entertainment business, such as actors, singers, sports professionals and their managers, etc” (Kitagawa 1996:XI5–12).

20. Previous studies have linked Filipina migration to Japan to histories of Japanese and U.S. sex tourism to the Philippines (DeDios 1990, 1992; Enloe 2000; Sturdevant and Stoltzfus 1992; Tyner 1996). Elsewhere I suggest understanding the current migration trend of Filipina women to Japan as entertainers as a product of the convergence of two labor niches: a tradition of Filipina cultural dance troupes performing abroad and the emergence of an internationally oriented sex industry during the Marcos era (see Faier in press).

21. *Philchime* stands for Philippine Chamber of Industries in Music and Entertainment Foundation, Inc. Its “member agencies” include a range of governmental and professional (talent, entertainment, and performance) groups. Although formal licensing exams and training programs have been required for entertainers since at least the early 1980s, the standardized training program was established in 1993 by a group composed of representatives from the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), the National Manpower and Youth Council (NMYC), and the Philippine Overseas Entertainment Industry (Esguerra 1994).

22. Ruby’s first language was Cebuano. She told me that she spoke Tagalog as an acquired language, just as I did. Ruby was not confident about her English. She sometimes spoke with me in Tagalog, usually when she was talking about personal or emotional things going on in her life or when I addressed her in Tagalog. At other times, we spoke Japanese.

23. This conclusion was based on a survey in which people in both the United States and the Philippines responded to a range of questions about love and relationships, including whether they “believed in and had experienced love at first sight” and believed in the idea of “one true love.”

24. For a provocative discussion of how bridal photography in contemporary Taiwan serves as a creative response to globalization and, particularly, dominant U.S. images of beauty, see Adrian 2003.

25. Filipinos (speaking Tagalog or English) often leave off the suffix *-san*. The term *japayukisan* (lit. one who has traveled to Japan) was first popularized by Yamatani Tetsuo, a Japanese freelance writer and documentary filmmaker, who produced the 1983 film, *Japayukisan: Tonan ajia kara no dekasegi shōfutachi* (Japayukisan: Migrant Prostitutes from Southeast Asia). Yamatani later published two widely read books on Asian migrant women in Japan, *Japayukisan* (1990), which went through eight printings, and its later revision *Japayukisan: Onnatachi no Ajia* (Japayukisan: An Asia of Women 1992). As evident by his titles, Yamatani’s work suggested from the onset that all labor migrants in Japan from Southeast Asia were engaged in sex work. Other, more critical, work on the topic has followed (see, among others, Tanaka 1987 and Usuki 1988). The term *japayukisan* recalls the *karayukisan* (lit. one who has traveled to China), Japanese women, overwhelmingly from poor peasant households in Kyushu (Amakusa and Shimabara), who were sold and sent abroad as prostitutes during the mid-19th to early 20th century. For a moving account of the lives and experiences of *karayukisan*, see Yamazaki 1999.

26. Although Central Kiso is not alone in Japan in the increasing numbers of women from other parts of Asia who marry rural men, according to the NGO workers who introduced me to the area, it is unusual to find a region of rural Japan where foreign wives are almost exclusively Filipina. This demographic pattern is tied both to the history of the logging industry, which initially introduced hostess bars to the region in the 1950s, and to the region’s role as an administrative center to some degree isolated from major cities. Other regions

of rural Japan are famous for arranging marriages between local men and women from the Philippines, China, Korea, and Sri Lanka (see, e.g., Furusawa 1992; Niigata Nippōsha Gakugeibu 1989; Higurashi 1989; Sato 1989; Shukuya 1988). There are also large numbers of Filipina entertainers and Filipina women married to Japanese men in urban parts of Japan (see Suzuki 2000, 2002, 2003a, 2003b).

27. I draw here on the work of Lila Abu-Lughod (1986), who has argued that because sentiments are valued differently in various social contexts, they can be used to symbolize something about the people who express them. She suggests that the expression of sentiment is an important form of representation of self within a moral order.

28. About 80 percent of the 65 women who had married Japanese men in the region identified as Tagalog. The remaining 20 percent identified as Bicolana, Cebuana, and Ilocana. It is important to note, however, that these are linguistic and residential categories, not ethnic-racial ones.

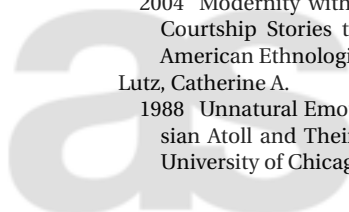
29. Friedrich Engels (1972) links the development of what he calls "sexual love" to the creation of "free" and "equal" people as one of the main tasks of capitalist production. Anthony Giddens (1992) has argued that romantic narratives, which he suggests emerged in western Europe in the late 18th century alongside notions of liberal individualism tied to capitalism, focus on the passionate involvement of two individuals and emphasize personal choice in one's destiny. Laura Ahearn (2001), too, discusses how romantic love is tied to shifts in understandings of agency as monetization, democratization, and a development discourse focusing on individualism reshape contemporary Nepal. See Lipset 2004 for a critique of approaches that assume romance and modern individualism are necessarily tied.

30. When I left Central Kiso in August 2000, 6 of the 65 Filipina women who had married Japanese men in the region had run away, and others had spoken of past or future plans to do so. For a discussion of these stories, see Faier in press.

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