Religious Placemaking and 'Migrant Worlds on Display': Spatialisation and Materialisation of Religion among Filipino Catholics in South Korea

Bubbles Beverly Neo Asor
De La Salle University Manila

Abstract

There has been a recent 'material turn' in migration studies which used to put primacy on movement of people over the movement of things. This paper aims to contribute to this burgeoning interest in the material perspective by examining the intersection of materiality and migration through religious placemaking. Based on a 13-month ethnography of Filipino Catholic migrants' spaces in Seoul Capital Area, South Korea, I analysed religious placemaking as a strategy by which Filipino migrants transpose religious buildings and surrounding semi-public spaces into migrant locales not only to display their 'migrant worlds' (Basu and Coleman 2008) to the Korean public but also to create a zone of belonging and community. First, I examined the Catholic church as a physical structure and religious building and the affordances it provides to multiple social actors in South Korea. Then I focused on the quotidian aspect of placemaking around the Catholic spaces that involves 're-staging' a Filipino market that sells objects and food that represent the mundaneity of Filipino migrants' life. This spatialisation and materialization of religion by Filipino migrants not only emplace an 'out-of-place migrant body' into the urban landscape of Seoul but also displace some of the spatial regimes that control and regulate the presence of the migrant body in Korean public spaces. This paper posits that the materiality of Catholic spaces in South Korea provides avenues for migrants to (in)advertently claim the 'right to appear' in relation to urban diversity.

Sacred Space in Non-Places:
An Analysis of Filipino Catholicism in the Age of Supermodernity

Mark Inigo M. Tallara
De La Salle University
mark.inigo.tallara@dlsu.edu.ph

Abstract

This paper is about non-places and how they have changed the religious spaces and practices in the Philippines. Non-places like shopping malls, as defined by Marc Augé (2008), are created by globalization and modernization. Through an ethnohistorical analysis, this paper has looked at how Filipinos have adapted to the rise of CCIM or Catholic chapels inside the malls in metropolitan Manila. What is a sacred space in a non-place? How are non-places shaping and changing Catholicism in the Philippines? These questions frame Catholic spaces in the context of supermodernity, a condition in which space and time are experienced in new and different ways. The key findings relied on the conceptual ideas of pamumuwesto, or how Filipino Catholics position themselves in a ritual space, and commutatio, or how substituting or exchanging a sacred site for the actual ritual space influenced their religious practices (Tallara, 2022). Both pamumuwesto and commutatio are critical to the discussion on how the sense of community and social connection associated

with sacred spaces challenges the notions of anonymity, transience, and disconnection of non-places.

Proselytising and Publishing: Evangelism Architecture of the Missions étrangères de Paris in Singapore and Hong Kong, 1888 – 1911

Ian Y.H. Tan
Independent Scholar
iantan@iantan.xyz

ABSTRACT
The proposed paper explores the Paris Foreign Mission Society's (Missions étrangères de Paris, MEP) role in developing the built environment of colonial port cities, and its role as agents in the introduction of imported building materials like structural iron and steel. I examine the construction of iron churches and printing house built in Singapore and Hong Kong respectively during the late 19th century. My research emphasises not only the significance of iron's ability to accentuate liturgical and ritual qualities required of these spaces, but also how architectural design, prefabrication, shipping, and construction reflected the complex web of global maritime shipping and the mobility of experts and patrons in transferring technology across colonial networks then. More specifically, I highlight challenges in the virtual interaction between constructors in France and local builders in Singapore and Hong Kong through letter correspondence, building plans and assembling actual components, and how each party attempted to realise the mission's ambition to evangelise local and regional communities. In doing so, my research presents a unique perspective on the intersection between architecture and evangelism, revealing the multifaceted roles of priests as promoters of modern architecture and technology during this period.

Navigating Hindu family and Christian belief: An ethnography of Christian prayer meetings in a Kolkata neighbourhood

Abstract
The paper is an ethnographic study of an urban Bengali Christian neighbourhood in Kolkata where Hindu women from nearby places attend the two Christian prayer meetings—Catholic and Pentecostal—run by the local preachers of the neighbourhood. Borrowing the theoretical understanding of belief, the paper interrogates the question, posed by Cannell (2006) 'what difference does Christianity makes' in the lives of these Hindu women? The paper looks into the experiences of these women in the intimate spaces of kinship, marriage and family as they undergo a form of separation from their Hindu beliefs yet remain largely embedded within

Hindu familial ties and obligations without engaging in the practice of baptismal conversion. The study enables us to interrogate the sharp binaries of religious divisions and argues that a focus on baptismal conversion only renders invisible the complex possibilities of what difference Christianity makes on the ground.

Multifunctional Role of Tamil Material Catholicism: A Study on the Transnational celebrations of **Our Lady of Velankanni**[i]

James Ponniah & Melisa Perry

Abstract

This essay, based on a comparative ethnographic study, explores the significance of the Catholic material religion of the Tamils in India and Malaysia through the celebration of the Marian feast of Our Lady of Velankanni in two sites, one at Chennai (Our Lady of Velankanni, Besant Nagar) and another at Kuala Lumpur (Our Lady of Good Health, Kampung Pandan) Just as both these sites attract large numbers of devotees across class, caste, creed and race during the feast days, the celebrations of this feast involve a complex interplay of materiality, religious beliefs and embodied practices rooted strongly in Tamil cultural universe. This study examines the various material objects and practices that constitute the celebrations, including the flag-hoisting, pilgrim walk, the distribution of food and other material offerings that circulate beyond religious, national, and ethnic boundaries.

The study finds that the material religion of Tamil Catholics offers a framework for understanding Marian devotional practices in Asia, one that acknowledges the significance of material religion as a tangible, religious and nostalgic link to the original shrine of Velankanni as a symbol of filial piety to the motherhood of Mary as expressed in the special formulae of love and gratitude embedded in Tamil cultural ethos. It is also evident in material offerings such as sarees, *thali* etc., that represent both intimate and caring relationship between Mary and her devotees. This paper highlights the role material Catholicism plays in Asian context not only in shaping people's religious, cultural, national, and ethnic identity but also in transcending them.