

# MIGRANT SECURITY: 2010

Refereed proceedings of the national symposium titled  
*Migrant Security 2010: Citizenship and social inclusion in a transnational era*

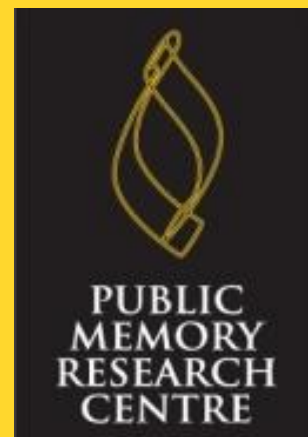
Hosted by the  
Public Memory Research Centre  
Faculty of Arts  
The University of Southern Queensland

15-16 July 2010

On the lands of the Giabal and Jarowair

Editors:

Dr Anna Hayes  
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# **Migrant Security 2010: Citizenship and social inclusion in a transnational era**

**15-16 July 2010**

**Public Memory Research Centre  
Faculty of Arts, University of Southern Queensland**

The symposium convenors would like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians,  
the Giabal and Jarowair, on whose land this meeting takes place.  
We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

The national symposium 'Migrant Security: Citizenship and social inclusion in a transnational era' was hosted by the University of Southern Queensland's Toowoomba campus on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> July 2010. The symposium attracted delegates from across Australian universities, as well as delegates from New Zealand, the United States and Europe. In addition, presentations and papers were provided by governmental and non-governmental bodies affiliated with the provision of services for migrants and refugees. The conference proceedings that follow offer a selection of some of the over seventy papers presented during the two days of the main symposium. Each of the papers included in the proceedings have been double peer-reviewed in their entirety, prior to acceptance in this online collection.

Migration has been central to Toowoomba's history for thousands of years, with a major Indigenous meeting place located close to the city. More recently, Toowoomba has welcomed large numbers of African refugees from various backgrounds. Indeed, twenty five per cent of Toowoomba's overseas population has arrived within the last decade. The new presence of these visibly different and culturally diverse groups has prompted large proportions of the city to recall and to question the historical and contemporary nature of whiteness and blackness in the Darling Downs region and south-east Queensland. As such, it was particularly apposite that the symposium was hosted at the University of Southern Queensland.

The symposium probed new formulations of migrants' experience of community and individual security through their engagement with civic life. It drew particular attention to the changing nature of belonging in modern societies, and the implication of this for citizenship. Contributors proved especially interested by the various forms of insecurity that prevented migrants from attaining a sense of inclusion and belonging, and how local and transnational networks might mitigate this. Key themes that are explored in the proceedings include the nature of inclusive education, the role of interculturality in the modern society, and ways to develop meaningful forms of cultural security and social.

# Exploring transnational sentiment through embodied practices of music and migratory movement

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## Abstract

This paper employs ethnographic material from an anthropology doctoral thesis that explores the relationships between music, place and embodiment in the context of transnational migratory movement. More specifically, the study brings place into focus through practices of migration and music as embodied practices. Phenomenological lenses assist in exploring how relationships between body and the social world are forged through music. The fieldwork for this study was conducted among migrants from a diversity of ethnic backgrounds in a major regional inland city. For these migrants, music links people and people to place. Employing Jackson's view of metaphor (1983), these migrants verbally articulate the unity of bodily being in the world in the recurring metaphorical correspondence between music and life. Such a correspondence articulates part-whole relations in the most frequent and recurring statement that 'music is part of life'. In this paper, I focus on migratory movement and music as occasioning reflection on habitual being involving transnational sentiments through emotional links to place. Persson's recent critique (2007) of Casey's phenomenological perspective (1993) in which the void occasions anxiety would appear to suggest space as a more appropriate concept, especially in consideration of the fluidity of migratory places. However, these migrants' metaphorical correspondence between music and life demonstrates the instrumentality of music, restoring unity to disruptions of habituated ways of being. Music and migration are mutually occasioning bodily practices of place, for which I argue that the principal emotion is desire. Taking Persson's work as a point of departure, and following Casey (1996), such practices entail a series of interconnected places, linking part and whole, autonomy and unity, isolation and connection and constraint and freedom.

## Keywords

Place; embodiment; emotion; habit; migratory movement; music phenomenology; practice

## INTRODUCTION

This paper explores connections between bodily affect and the social world, affective links which are forged through music in the context of transnational migratory movement. The way in which music links body to world provides the underpinning for an exploration of place, the broader focus of my anthropology

doctoral thesis. More specifically, it explores bodily being in the world in relation to music and migration as embodied practices. Such a focus hinges on the place related meanings of music among these migrants, particularly how music links people and people to place. This paper describes how emotion is entailed in articulating the relationships between body and the social world, especially in terms of migration occasioning reflection on habitual being. These emotional links to place involve bodily practices of music and migratory movement. Emotional connections forged through music in such situations of crisis are, for these migrants, means of linking into, improvising on, and transcending the constraints of the social world.

## THE ETHNOGRAPHIC SETTING

The ethnographic material employed was gathered during twelve months of fieldwork in the regional city of Toowoomba, among migrants from a diversity of ethnic backgrounds. Toowoomba is the largest regional centre both of Queensland and Australia, with a population of a little over 90 000 people, approximately 10 per cent of whom were born in an overseas country, and an Indigenous population of about 3 per cent (Toowoomba.org 2008; ABS 2006). Current figures detail that the majority of the population of Toowoomba is Australian born, around half of the migrant population are from English speaking countries, while a majority of the non-English speaking migrants are from Northern European countries such as the Netherlands (Upham & Martin 2005: 6). The previous census registered a significant increase in overseas born arriving in Toowoomba for that census period, particularly people from African countries, owing the previous Federal Government's broadening of its regional settlement program (2005: 4).

Prompted by economic imperatives, the previous Federal Government expanded its regional settlement scheme, including a policy of dispersing migrants around the country to counter fears of creating a social and cultural divide between regional and major centres

(Carrington & Marshall 2008: 117&125-126). Toowoomba instituted a similar settlement policy, dispersing refugees throughout the city to counter fears that enclaves would emerge (Carrington & Marshall 2008: 125-126; Carrington et al. 2007: 121-122). The increased arrival of migrants under the scheme coincided with reports of racial conflict, settlement difficulties for some Muslims in what is a predominantly 'Christian city', and feelings of isolation, particularly for refugees (Carrington & Marshall 2008: 124-125; Upham & Martin 2005: 17). The migrants with whom I conducted the series of ethnographic conversations for this study came to Toowoomba at different times and from many different countries, which includes some of the countries of Africa, South-Asia and the Asia-Pacific, of Northern Europe, the Middle East, and North and South America.

### **MUSIC AS LIFE – BEING IN THE MUSICAL PLACE-WORLD**

The main analytical focal point in my paper is these migrants' metaphorical correspondence between music and life. The analysis has involved employing Jackson's (1983) perspective of metaphor as giving verbal expression to the fundamental unity of body and world. According to Jackson, a metaphorical link that is normally taken for granted becomes instrumental in a crisis or 'double-bind' situation, resolving the tensions of social situations, and verbally articulating the potential to restore a sense of unified being (1983: 132-134 & 138). This process resolves tensions related to social situations attributed to bodily distress as it 'mediates transference from the area of greatest stress to a neutral area which is held to correspond with it' (Jackson 1983: 138). The most frequent and recurring statement regarding the importance of music is that 'music is part of life', suggesting a part/whole metaphorical relation between music and life. Jackson notes that the practice of forging relationships between parts and wholes implies that they are mutually occasioning influences (1983: 128 & 144n). For example, these migrants listen to and/or perform music to 'relax' or to relieve 'stress' in their everyday lives. Verbally articulated in such metaphorical correspondences between music and life is the body's habitual relationship to the world, a relationship for which music has the potential to restore in situations of crisis and double-bind.

It is the centralising of the body in forging connections between person and world that requires the use of phenomenological lenses. I have employed Casey's phenomenological account of place because it privileges the body-place relationship (1993; 1996; 1997:

202-242). Displacement is made problematic through a phenomenological focus on the ways in which these migrants' emotional relationships to music link them to place. Thomas regards the spatiality of migrant embodied experience to be significant on account of the fact that 'migrants are always in some sense "out of place"' (1998: 75). According to Casey, being out of place occasions profound anxiety (Casey 1993: ix-x). In response to this sense of estrangement, our inability to imagine 'no place at all' entails a simultaneous 'filling' of the void; in situations of impending placelessness, 'we resort to elaborate stratagems to avoid the void' (1997; 3-22; 1993: ix-xi). There is a correspondence between the phenomenon of placelessness and its emotional indicators, such as homesickness (1993: x). However, due to scope, the specific concern here is that of place-related emotions that are entailed in filling the void. It is a process that can be summed up in the statement made by some of these migrants, that 'music makes me happy', thus involving responses which are integral to place's emotional power to move (Casey 1996: 23).

This view is contradicted in a recent anthropological critique by Persson (2007) of Casey's (1993) philosophy of place. The scope of this paper does not allow for a detailed examination of the critique. Generally, the critique argues against the notion that the void always evokes anxiety (Persson 2007: 49). While I do not discount the significance of cultural ideas such as 'void', the ethnographic material I take for analysis in this paper unsettles Persson's assertion that the concept of space is better suited to an analysis of her informant's statements, rather than place (2007: 45-46 & 51). Her arguments do not present a full account of the significance of Casey's emphasis on the priority, and specifying character of place, that spaces, as well as times, are always experienced in, and arise from, a particular place (Casey 1996: 13-19 & 36-38; 1997). Place is not simply the specific 'occasion for' what happens in space, but place itself is what happens, and this 'event' provides the occasioning influence for multiple spaces and times (1996: 38). Emotion is centrally involved in such musical 'events' among these migrants. Following Crossley (2001), I argue that the principal emotion involved in emplacement in the social world is desire. A number of the migrants in this study associate an absence of music with death, which is encapsulated in a statement made by a migrant from India who says that 'without music I am, like, dead' (2009, pers. comm., 18 March). Following Fernandez (1986: 9-10), this placing of music on a continuum between life and death aligns with

metaphorical strategies, which is movement along a continuum between desirability and undesirability. Music articulates the desire for social connection among these migrants because it is the occasioning influence for life, and a strategy for filling the void of displacement, the undesired aspect of the continuum.

Persson's analysis rests on the conscious attention paid to the body in Satyananda Yoga practice in Australia, involving the movement of consciousness inward, as well as outward away from the habitual life-world (2007: 44-45 & 51). Migratory movement occasions a crisis and, therefore, conscious attention to habitual life-worlds. For Persson's informants, conscious attention to habits involves a movement between the small of embodied grounding and the large of expansion, as well as 'a series of similarly dyadic experiential relations', such as 'autonomy-unity, insulation-connection, [and] discipline-freedom' (2007: 46-48 & 51). Such a series is also relevant to the statements about musical practices among the migrants in this study. Following Casey (1996: 41), and taking place to be the 'collocation' of a series of interconnected places, the series entails the collocation of part and whole, as well as autonomy and unity, isolation and connection, constraint and freedom.

### **EMOTION, CRISIS, AND GETTING BACK TO BEING IN PLACE**

The remainder of this paper focuses on the involvement of bodily affect in conscious attention to habitual life worlds occasioned by transnational migratory movement, for which music is mutually occasioning. The focus is bodily practices of place in which emotion is centrally entailed. Migration encourages reflection on habitual being, a tension which is resolved through music. It involves a crisis in the sense of a double-bind situation for migrants as they seek to establish and maintain links to two or more places at the same time (Basch et al. 1993). Anthropological studies such as those by Thomas (1998; in contrast to Warin and Dennis 2005; McKay 2005), which view migration through lenses of migrants' habitual interaction with the world, provide substantial ethnographic evidence for the critical strengths and weaknesses of the concept of habitus. The limitations of the concept of habitus are most significant in view of migration as occasioning a crisis of habitual being.

A sociological study, by Crossley, employs Merleau-Pontian phenomenology as means of addressing such critiques (2001: 120-139).

Crossley maintains that such a phenomenological perspective gives bodily grounding to the agent in its emphasis on the 'circuit' between body and world, and resolves some of the conceptual weak points of habitus (2001: 3-5). From this perspective, Crossley addresses the wide gulf which he says Bourdieu (1990) posits between incorporated habits and the capacity to turn back upon those habits and inspect them as a basis for improvisation (Crossley 2001: 115-119; 140-160). Improvisation thus comes about according to the reversibility, or the ability to be conscious, of our habits, as 'our capacity to turn back upon and inspect ourselves derives from an incorporation of the perspective of others into our habitus' (2001: 6). This is an important perspective from which to view these migrants' practices of constituting place. Through the reflective possibilities of habit, all concepts, including those linked to emotion, are grounded not just in the body, but in the body's interconnection with the world (2001: 45). This is what Dennis refers to as the 'embodied sociality' of emotion, which is fundamental to musical connectivity as the social connectedness of emotion expresses relationships between persons as well as person to place (2007: xvi-xxiii).

A way of conceptualising emotion is required for purposes of linking emotion and speech about music, one which accords with these migrants' own emotional senses of the musical facilitation of social bonds. Wierzbicka (1999: 2) is critical of anthropological concepts of emotion as 'bodily thoughts'. She prefers to consider emotions in terms of 'feeling' and 'thought-related feeling' in order to avoid the English classification of emotion with the body, which does not occur, for example, in the French term 'sentiment', which links thought and feeling (1999: 2-3 & 24-31). She maintains that emotions should be conceptualised according to universal concepts – such as 'feel', 'want' and 'know' – as these occur across different linguistic communities and are acquired through socialisation processes (1999: 8-9; 24 & 28).

The arguments made by Wierzbicka (1999) are useful because they highlight how social interaction is the basis of emotion concepts. However, they are limited in terms of opposing bodily habit by recourse to 'habits of mind' (1999: 31-34). Crossley's (2001: 42-45) view of emotion concepts as socially referenced rather than "inner worldly" corresponds to the requirement for connecting emotion to these migrants' talk about music and their reflections on music. As he notes (2001: 84), speech is a bodily habit grounded in the relationship of speech and affect, or the embodied voice that is 'singing the world' (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 187). Crossley states,

We tend to think of emotions as feelings and we think of feelings as inner occurrences. This is because the language by which we refer to emotions is predominantly a language of 'feeling': that is, we claim to 'feel' happy, sad, jealous, angry and so on. When we ascribe emotional feelings to ourselves we do not describe those feelings...however, rather, we attribute a cause or meaning to them ... which, in itself, need be neither physical or mental and will, in all likelihood, identify a social situation which occasions the feeling (2001: 42-43).

The body is always intertwined in a social context, Crossley remarks, and it is that to which a sensation or particular sets of sensations and bodily disposition is referred, and to which the cause of bodily sensations is attributed; as such, the linking of sensation to social context is means of making sense of bodily states rather than defining them (2001: 45). This conception of emotion resonates with affective links to place through music as described by a migrant from Saudi Arabia, for whom the meaning of music is expressed in 'music without lyrics'. He says that in music without words, 'you can feel it's sad, just sad, and because you are sad' (2008, pers. comm., 2 April). This migrant specifies the social context to which the feeling is referenced, saying that such music is 'expressing how you're feeling – exactly...yeah, so [in a song with words] if they are talking about how you broke up with your girlfriend...[...] it's not the same as what you are feeling' (2008, pers. comm., 2 April). Crossley's (2001: 42-45) way of conceiving of emotion concepts as linking bodily feeling to a social context assists in understanding how, for these migrants, being in the musical place-world involves affective embodied links to musical and extra musical social contexts.

Music is viewed among these migrants as having the capacity to influence a person's relation to the social context through affect. For a Liberian refugee and musician, Wallace, a key informant of the study, who writes what he refers to as 'Negro spiritual songs' (2008, pers. comm., 2 April), the most important aspect of music is the 'message' and the most important kind of songs are 'songs of freedom' (2008, pers. comm., 9 June).<sup>1</sup> The 'message' of 'songs of freedom', for Wallace, exemplifies dyadic relationships involved in attending to one's embodied habits of being in the world. He says that,

No matter what type of song you sing, it has a message in it. And that message is needed by somebody somewhere ... and my message to the world is ... mainly about freedom. So really, freedom for me is living without fear. It [music] must be able to erase every kind of mental slavery, psychological slavery, emotional slavery and spiritual slavery. Therefore, my type of songs of freedom is not all about nations getting independence, it's all about people and the situation they find themselves in. (2008, pers. comm., 9 June).

From part of the song, or the 'message', musical affect links people and places, connecting to 'somebody somewhere', and connects also with larger entities, such as 'freedom'. As Casey (1996: 37) remarks 'relations and occurrences of much more considerable scope collect around and in a single place'. 'Songs of freedom', for this informant, has the capacity to remove fear, an emotional response to a particular situation and a simultaneous filling of the void. He told of an example of how when he had lost his job, he got into his car and began to 'reflect' on a Bob Marley song, and the lyric, 'when one door is closed, many other doors are open' (2008, pers. comm., 9 June) He remarked, 'It set my conscience free ... just that word, that line, from the song that Bob Marley made, set me free' (2008, pers. comm., 9 June). Through the song, this informant saw losing his job as an 'opportunity' to be available for his family at a time when his wife needed to get to hospital appointments in the lead up to the birth of their baby. Affect is integral to relations of part-whole, as well as the relation of constraint and 'freedom', here being 'freedom' from the constraints of fear. He states,

And what are some of the most important situations that music touches? From sorrow to joy, from this experience of disappointment to hope, from discouragement to courage, from loneliness to living with people, from being isolated to joining together with a family or with friends, poverty to riches. Music sharpens your mind. When you think you can't do it, you're gonna remain this way, the musician come and tell you that there is hope somewhere. And you listen to the song and say, "look, I've got to put what the songwriter says into practice", and from there you see yourself moving on. Like, I gave you an example of Bob Marley's songs – when one door is closed, that many other doors are

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<sup>1</sup> Any names appearing in this paper have been changed, with the exception of Wallace, who wishes for his name to be used.



opened. That has come true in my life today (2008, pers. comm., 29 June).

Such bodily practice of place through music involving the affective senses also entails the relation of isolation and connection. Music brings people together into a larger whole in its capacity to converge with affect, and thus is an integral part, or 'most important situation' for the process. According to this informant's reflection on his own experience of Bob Marley's songs, 'freedom' involves reflection on affective habits of being for people in such situations, facilitating movement between a place of isolation to a place of connection. Such movement is the event and the occasioning influence for space, which are bodily practices of place. Putting the part of the song, the 'message', into practice, facilitates 'moving on' into a unified space of connection with family and friends.

The overarching relation of part and whole is illustrated by a migrant from Northern Ireland, who also is a musician and songwriter. He remarks that,

the condensation of what a lot of songs can do is just condense a lot of emotions and feelings and experiences into just a few short lines, which, with the power of music, can create something profound (2008, pers. comm., 3 July).

Another sense of the series of dyadic relationships, particularly autonomy and unity, is the way in which this informant employed music in order simultaneously to set himself 'apart' and to connect with people. Having moved to Australia in the early 1970s, he adopted strategies, including musical strategies, in the attempt to abandon his 'Irish roots experience' and to 'integrate' both with the place and the young people in Australia. Music assisted this migrant to form social connections with other young people by listening to the music that they were listening to, which at the time, he remembers, was Daddy Cool's *Eagle Rock*. But even as he was engaging with music that linked him with people and with place, he was searching for music that would set him 'apart from the rest', listening to Double J and music that the others had never heard, which he says was 'all part and parcel' of the process. (2008, pers. comm., 3 July)

This migrant from Northern Ireland dislikes the 'stereotyped Irishness' of Irish contemporary folk music, and is 'irritated' by what he sees as the 'Irishness' of all musics associated with world music (2008, pers. comm., 3 July). To him, these are all 'just like folk music' and lack a 'visceral' base like

the rock music he prefers. Rock music, he remarks, 'gets down to the nuts and bolts and the driving instincts of humanity', a process involving, 'primal emotions' (2008, pers. comm., 3 July). For this Irish informant, rock music is bodily practice of place because it provides a way of 'getting back into place' (Casey 1993). Engaging in 'EGT', or 'electric guitar therapy', the 'primal emotion' connects and transcends two alternative dimensions of self. He says,

It's like there's two different aspects of myself. There's the, I suppose, rather intellectual, political economic, social justice person. But then there's the ..., ultimately, the punk thrasher that's been in me for...from whenever (2008, pers. comm., 3 July).

His 'electric guitar therapy' provides connection between two aspects of self that involves movement inward as well as outward, away from the habitual life world. 'Electric guitar therapy' works through emotion and from such 'primal emotion' arises 'transcendence'. The constraints of emotional tension, specifically 'anger and frustration', a situation involving the tensions of simultaneous links to two places, are relaxed, he says, through 'really loud music', which is 'cathartic'. He comments,

playing really, really loud music...is cathartic in that it is a very [pause] positive expression of anger and frustration [...] I've actually cracked ah, my guitar from ah, doing a version of "Won't get fooled again" by The Who, which is...a song at the end of which Pete Townsend used to smash his guitars [...]. I was playing, and at the end of it I just...in my exuberance just sort of threw my guitar up in the air...just let it come down wherever it landed. [...]. I think that's it...is that...it takes you out of yourself (2008, pers. comm., 3 July).

I was interested in this sense of music being able to 'take you out of yourself', and he elaborated in saying that 'playing the guitar [...] y'know, I do occasionally get lost – it's a transcendental experience, as such' (2008, pers. comm., 3 July). 'EGT' facilitates for this informant a 'positive expression of anger and frustration' as it transfers such tensions into the domain of music, reconfiguring these emotions as 'exuberance', and moving from constraint to 'transcendence' from habitual being. 'Transcendence' arises from 'primal emotion' and the desire to transcend the constraints of the social world, a process linking two or more places, and for which

music and migratory movement are mutually occasioning influences.

It was in relation to the recent social and political responses to movements of people occurring locally, nationally and globally that prompted the establishment, in 2006, of what would be a key site of fieldwork, a choir of migrant and non-migrant women 'singing songs from around the world'. The choir's musical practices involve movement along a continuum between isolation and connection and autonomy and unity. As an exclusively women's choir, it formed with a view to bridging the social isolation of migrant women at the time the choir was established, with the unanticipated outcome of drawing many non-migrant members who also were experiencing social isolation. A Filipino member spoke of the 'isolation' of living in a different country. The choir is a 'chance' for her, through a shared 'passion' for music to 'share my culture, and also to learn other cultures' (2008, pers. comm., 29 May). She has also lived in Saudi Arabia where she worked as a nurse and met her English husband, and lived in England for six years prior to coming to Australia. For her, music has provided a way into 'understanding other people's cultures...[and] I think we could always start from there' (2008, pers. comm., 29 May). She describes how the music of other cultures evokes a certain 'feeling' through which you can come to know 'the world is rich' instead of just 'what you know' (2008, pers. comm., 29 May). The autonomy-unity relation, from knowing only 'what you know' to knowing the world, arises from the emotional bonds to place forged through music, or the 'feeling you experience when you listen to different kinds of music'. For her, and other members of the choir, this feeling is linked to 'the beat'. For many members of the choir, 'the beat' and 'lively music' facilitates intercultural connection, linking choir members and also connecting the choir to the audience. This is something they know as it involves bodily practices of place through music, involving reflection on habitual being. Such practices involve inspecting the habits of self and others, as members of the choir can tell if the audience is enjoying the music by inspecting the affective bodily responses of audience members.

## CONCLUSION

In this paper, I have presented ethnographic material that demonstrates the body's interconnection with the world in and through music. These migrants' metaphorical linking of music and life, expressed through a relation of part-whole, entails emotional connections, which are bodily practices of place in relation to music and migratory movement, occasioning reflection on habitual being. Place

is co-constituted through embodied practices of migratory movement and music. This process is articulated through the affective voices of these migrants as a series of interrelated places along a continuum of desirability and undesirability. Movement is towards 'life', through music, and through desire for being in the place world.

## Acknowledgments

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