Diagnosing Transnationality: Therapy Discourse and Psy Practices in the Ethicalisation of Transnational Living

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The paper uses multimodal discourse analysis (Jewitt C., 2004; Kress, 2010; Norris, 2012) to uncover the discursive technologies through which therapeutic practice (as well as genres and institutions implicated in it) is employed to exercise and rationalise transnational ethics. By borrowing from the methodological repertoire of Membership Categorisation Analysis (Sacks, 1992; Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998), Virtual Ethnography and Website Analysis (Herring, 1996; Hine, 2000) the paper investigates the construction of transnational living as an ethical subject, the modes through which the actors become invited to problematize their transnational conduct and the telos to which they are impelled to aspire (Foucault, 1983; 2005; Hodges, 2002).

Taking mediated action as a primary analytical unit, the paper traces how transnational living becomes assembled as a problem along and across connections between diverse social sites, physical spaces and practices. Data is drawn from an archive of discussion topics in the computer-mediated Russian-speaking social space, Rusforum; the website of a Psychopathologic and Psychosocial Care Service and Group of Health Assistance for immigrants and refugees in Spain; and the website of Iguana Journal, a publication for Russian-speaking immigrants in Spain.

The analysis demonstrates how discursive practices, dispersed across multiple modalities, participate in forming the alliances of diverse regimes of transnational living: computer-mediated transnational spaces, diaspora communities, national and para-national institutions and professional associations. In doing so, it makes visible how new agents and authorities become recruited for administering transnational conduct. The paper argues that these assemblages and the transnational ethics made visible through the analysis prime the mechanisms of transnational governmentality and prepare a foundation for a restrictive morality (Foucault, 2005) through which transnational conduct can be regulated.

Keywords: Multimodal discourse analysis, Transnational governmentality, Psy practices.