

Love Gain: The Transformation of Intimacy among Foreign Domestic Workers in Singapore

Kayoko Ueno

Previous scholarship on the transformation of intimacy among foreign domestic workers has focused mainly on the care/love drain on the children left behind in workers' countries of origin. It has neglected the ways in which individual domestic workers struggle to gain love and care in destination countries. Among foreign domestic workers who have extended their stays partly because of their bonds with boyfriends, partners, or even "husbands" working in Singapore, the care drain widely observed among the families of foreign domestic workers in their home countries can be coupled not only with monetary gain but also in some instances with a gain in love and care for the foreign domestic workers themselves. A decade of participant observation and qualitative interviews, conducted mainly with domestic workers, also indicated that intimacies are also shaped by Singaporean policies on foreign domestic workers and by the strong economic demand from their families back home.

Keywords: love gain, transformation of intimacy, foreign domestic workers, Singapore.

Previous research has brought the discussion of love and sex into studies of migration. That research has focused largely on settled migrant communities, for instance Mexicans in America (Hirsch 2003) and Filipinos in Japan (Faier 2007; 2009), or on topics such as "mail order brides" (Constable 2003; Piller 2011) and online romance (Constable 2003; Saroca 2012).¹ Migration studies concerning the feminization of labour migration have thus begun to address issues

of intimacy and the lives of women as sexual beings. However, these concerns have rarely been applied to the foreign domestic workers who are a vital part of feminized migration streams (Chammartin 2004, pp. 41–44). Although classic studies by Constable (1997) in Hong Kong and Lan (2006) in Taiwan have considered the holiday activities of domestic workers, intimacy and the intimate relationships of female domestic workers have not been adequately explored.

Intimacy or intimate relationships as discussed here follow Constable (2009, p. 50): "social relationships that are — or give the impression of being — physically and/or emotionally close, personal, sexually intimate, private, caring, or loving". Previous landmark studies on the transformation of intimacy among foreign domestic workers have focused overwhelmingly on the relationship between a foreign domestic worker and her children in her country of origin (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997; Horton 2009; Parreñas 2001*a*, 2001*b*, 2004, 2005*a*, 2005*b*). Those studies dwell on the ways in which a mother who is expected to be a breadwinner struggles to maintain the gendered relationship of caring for children. They use such terms as "transnational parenting" (Parreñas 2001*a*) and "transitional motherhood" (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997). These studies have been linked to the idea of a global care chain, a term that refers to a "drain" in care from countries that are sources of female migration (Hochschild 2000; Isaksen et al. 2008). The argument for a care drain derives from an understanding of care or love as a precious resource, heavily exploited by the First World, which otherwise could have been utilized by kin and community members in domestic workers' countries of origin.

An explicit hypothesis behind the care/love drain argument is that it is grounded in structural oppression caused by the global economy of the First World. Third World women are, the hypothesis goes, pushed out of their own countries because of structural adjustment policies introduced by the World Bank and IMF, the devaluation of their countries' currencies, and the closure of local industries. The structural oppression characteristic of the global economy thus distorts their intimate sphere (Chang 2000; Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2004;

Lindio-McGovern 2003, pp. 517–19; Parreñas 2001a). This line of argument, which reveals “the hidden price of global inequality” (Isaksen et al. 2008, p. 414), remains valuable. A focus on the mother-child relationship has revealed negative aspects of the international division of labour (Parreñas 2001a).

While scholarship on the love/care drain has made important contributions to the study of women working outside their countries of origin, such approaches associate those women’s work abroad with the destruction of their intimate sphere or commons in their home countries (Hochschild 2000; Isaksen et al. 2008). They therefore undervalue the efforts and struggles of women to secure intimacy in destination countries. The intimate relationships of women working abroad are transformed not only in their home countries, but also in their destination countries. The care drain argument also takes for granted that conventional relationships in women’s home countries are benign. Studies have, however, already pointed out that women may leave their countries of origin not only to seek economic gain for their families but also to escape domestic violence (Dannecker 2005; Oishi 2005, pp. 120–22), unhappy marriages (Tacoli 1996, p. 18), or social exclusion from their communities (Ueno 2011, pp. 27–28). Women sometimes leave their countries to acquire autonomy and put their families at a distance (Dannecker 2005). Jobs abroad provide a socially acceptable way for such women to escape difficulties at home (Tacoli 1996, p. 18). The women involved may not always perceive the transformation or even destruction of conventional relationships in negative terms.

The ways in which foreign domestic workers in Singapore create new relationships in their destination country are the focus of this article. In Singapore, as of June 2012, about 208,400 women are working in the homes of their employers (Ministry of Manpower 2012c). In 2005, Human Rights Watch reported that one third of foreign domestic workers in Singapore extended their contract with the same employer (Human Rights Watch 2005, p. 3). A recent study conducted by Singapore’s Ministry of Manpower even found that 7 in 10 foreign domestic workers want to continue working in

Singapore after their contracts expire. Among these women, close to 9 in 10 want to stay on with their current employer (*New Paper*, 12 August 2011, p. 8). Although the report took this figure to imply some employers were kinder than others, further analysis of such data is needed. Working abroad brings about not only pure economic gain but also alternative opportunities to have intimate relationships by increasing the possibilities for reconstructing relationships with others. Among intimate relationships, the focus of the present article falls largely on sexual relationships, which may constitute a vital part of everyday life for migrant workers (Pattana 2008). Although the media discourse on foreign domestic workers has depicted them as sexually active or seeking pleasure,² the situations of foreign domestic workers have rarely been documented and discussed in academic studies.

This paper argues that, among foreign domestic workers who extended their stays in Singapore, the care drain widely observed among the families of foreign domestic workers in their home countries can be coupled not only with monetary gain but also in some instances with a gain in love and care for the foreign domestic workers themselves.

Structural Factors Shaping Intimacy

Intimacy, including sexual expression, can be seen as social actions intertwined with various structural factors. In the case of Singapore, previous studies have addressed the ways in which the gaze of the Singapore state regulates and disciplines the sexual practices of Thai male and female workers (Pattana 2008) and in which Singapore’s patriarchal immigration policy affects Thai women married to Singaporean men (Rattana and Thompson 2011). As shown in these studies, immigration policies are noteworthy among the factors influencing the intimate relationships of foreign domestic workers. So too is inadequate legal control of both employment agencies’ and employers’ treatment of domestic workers, which is discussed below.

While a minimum wage law protects neither foreign nor local workers in Singapore, foreign domestic workers are further excluded from coverage under the Employment Act, which regulates working

hours, overtime, and holidays. Since foreign domestic workers must by law reside with their employers (Ministry of Manpower, 2012a), they frequently find themselves subjected to overly long working hours. Non-coverage by the Employment Act causes the systematic devaluation and marginalization of foreign domestic workers in the labour force. Further, the provision of the Employment of Foreign Manpower Act (91A) specifies that employers must not allow domestic workers to engage in any illegal, immoral or undesirable conduct or activity. Since January 2010, the Ministry of Manpower has reduced employers' liability in cases in which foreign domestic workers are found to be pregnant at the time of their semi-annual compulsory check-ups or breach other conditions relating to their behaviour. However, an employer must still make reasonable efforts to supervise the foreign domestic worker, report her to the ministry, and purchase a plane ticket and send her back to her country of origin if she breaches her contract or the conditions of her work visa, for instance, by becoming pregnant. Consequently, employers have adopted numerous restrictions and surveillance strategies aimed at curtailing the behaviour of domestic workers, typically by confining them to the employer's house most of the time. Domestic workers' face-to-face interactions with others are thus often restricted. They rely on mobile phones as a primary mode of social interaction.

In addition, recruitment agencies in Indonesia and the Philippines adopt a policy of "fly now, pay later". Agency fees paid by domestic workers for initial two-year contracts in Spring 2011 amounted to 7–10 months' salary for Indonesians, and 5–8 months' wages for Filipinas, depending on the amount of allowance (usually from 10 to 50 Singapore dollars a month) granted during this period without salary. Each time during the period of their contracts that they are "returned" by their employers to employment agencies in Singapore, women incur a penalty of an additional two months' salary reduction and daily lodging fees of twenty Singapore dollars (Ueno 2011). In the case of family emergencies back home, especially during the salary reduction period, workers generally have to ask employers or friends for loans.

The rigid practices of employment agencies, combined with the lack of legal protection for domestic workers, may force domestic workers to become entangled in active relationships, including relationships with boyfriends, in order to meet not only needs for self-esteem and other emotional needs, but also economic needs.

Another important structural condition of labour migration in Singapore is that Singapore provides foreign domestic workers with a pool of "would-be boyfriends" from among male Singaporeans, permanent residents, and foreign technical and manual workers. According to official statistics, as of June 2012 some 931,200 male and female foreign workers (a figure that includes the 208,400 domestic workers noted above) held Work Permits issued for jobs in the construction, marine, service and manufacturing sectors with salaries not exceeding S\$20,000 a year (Ministry of Manpower 2012c). Singapore has adopted double-track (Yap 2000, p. 68) and now triple-track labour immigration policies. Unlike semi-professionals ("S Pass" holders) and professionals and entrepreneurs (Employment Pass holders), these manual labourers (Work Permit holders) are prohibited from bringing dependents to Singapore and ineligible to apply for permanent residence status. Moreover, because of the policies of agencies and employers, foreign domestic workers are not supposed to return home to visit their families during the period of their two-year contracts.

At the same time, the ages of most domestic workers in Singapore fall in the perceived ideal marriageable age range of many women. The Ministry of Manpower regulates age at first entry into the country as a domestic worker as 23–50 years of age at the time of the Work Permit application (Ministry of Manpower 2012b). While the government has not made public statistics on the age distribution of domestic workers in Singapore, a heavy concentration of women in their twenties and thirties is evident. Women in those age strata are generally more employable because they look more robust and healthy.

Boehm and Swank have pointed out that structural analyses tend to "overlook the personal interactions through which the emotional

dimensions of global migrations are experienced and expressed" (Boehm and Swank 2011, p. 4). The present article builds on this observation to demonstrate the ways in which the structural factors mentioned above affect the intimate relationships of domestic workers in the destination country. In particular, it concerns the variety of sexual encounters with boyfriends that foreign domestic workers in Singapore experience; a reliance on mobile phones makes these relationships intrinsically fluid. It next addresses some women's attempts to bind romantic love and economic gain, focusing on how love or care gain for a domestic worker tends to lead to money gain and vice versa. The article then argues that focus on the economic calculus of migration offers only one-dimensional understanding of the lives and decisions of migrants. Alongside economic motives and utility maximization, an understanding of affection and emotion is needed. In order to realize multiple desires, women pursue a variety of strategies and negotiations with people including employers and boyfriends.

Data Collection

The data on which this article draws were gathered between January 2002 and February 2012 over a total of seven months spent in Singapore, Indonesia, and the Philippines, interviewing foreign domestic workers and former foreign domestic workers. Interview data comes mainly from interviews with 25 women from the Philippines and 36 women from Indonesia, all of whom have experienced domestic work in Singapore. In examining the thesis that domestic workers may choose to remain in their destination country not only for reasons of economic gain but also for love or care gain, I primarily focus on those domestic workers who extended their two-year contracts with the same employers, or returned to Singapore to work for new employers. In addition to interviews, participant observation allowed the study of the ways in which workers spend their days off and communicate with boyfriends and partners on weekdays while working in their employers' homes. In some cases, I have been able to observe nearly

a decade of individual interviewees' interactions and communications. The marital status of these women has changed over the years, as has the range and quality of their intimate relationships. Initially, the women were between fifteen and fifty-four years of age, with most in their twenties and thirties. Half of the Filipinas were high school graduates, and the rest had completed at least some college or university studies, whereas an overwhelming majority of Indonesians had only finished junior secondary school or less. As for marital status, the interviewees included single, divorced, separated, married, and widowed women, but more than half were married or separated at one time or another during the research period. I also interviewed eleven Bangladeshi, Indian, Malaysian, Myanmar, Indonesian, and Singaporean men who had girlfriends working as domestic workers. All the names used are pseudonyms.

Intimacy, Money and Negotiation

"I Will Tell You Why I Go to Discos."

Long working hours sometimes accompanied by harsh treatment may increase foreign domestic workers' need for comforting and caring relationships. One Filipina domestic worker, "Olivia", said to me, "At the end of the day, I am exhausted with my work and Mum. I need someone to listen to my story."³ Foreign domestic workers are compelled to foster supportive relationships among themselves. They exchange short messages or converse via mobile phone during working hours, mostly without the knowledge of employers, and spend their days off together at gathering places that attract migrants from their own countries. Besides nurturing relationships with other domestic workers, they develop ties with male foreign workers or Singaporean men. When I asked domestic workers for a rough estimate of the proportion of domestic workers with boyfriends, many replied half, and others mentioned figures of more than 80 per cent.

When a domestic worker runs an errand at the supermarket, a male foreign worker might throw a paper slip with his name and mobile phone number into her shopping cart. Young domestic workers

obtain as many as five slips just from walking around the supermarket. If a domestic worker is window-shopping at a shopping centre, a foreign male worker might approach her and follow her to every shop with flattering words such as “you are cute”. If the domestic worker smiles back, it will be an indication that she is interested. If she points at a t-shirt and jokes, “You buy one for me, OK?”, he may take out his wallet.

In some discos, nearly all female customers are domestic workers. When I asked why they spend their precious free time at discos, one Indonesian, “Alley” from the Javanese city of Malang, explained.

My budget for off day is 15 dollars or less.... Same for my girlfriends. I meet my friends at lunch party in front of Tanjong Katong [a shopping complex]. We bring food, drink and dessert.... After party, I go shopping. I cannot buy anything. I feel sad. But if I go to disco in Bugis with my friends, I pay entrance fee, six dollars, and get one drink free. I can dance three or four hours. I dance crazy.⁴

In a disco, a large number of Asian foreign male workers and Western expatriates and a small proportion of Singaporean men also gather to enjoy themselves on Sundays. Some men offer sweet talk to the women: “Can I buy you a drink?”, “Do you have a boyfriend?”, “Give me your number”.

“Ruth”, another domestic worker from Malang, said, “I did not lose my control this month. But I don’t know about next month.”⁵ Ruth is often scolded by her employer for careless mistakes or even for no reason at all. She has been told, “You are stupid, you are liar, you have no brain.” She goes to the disco on her monthly day off to relieve stress. Like Ruth, another married Indonesian domestic worker, “Ati”, shows her son’s picture to every foreign male worker who chats her up in shopping centres or on the street. So far Ati has not been engaged in a serious relationship with any man in Singapore, but she wonders what it will be like if she becomes the girlfriend of a young Nepali worker who once kissed her cheek. At first, she missed her husband and two-year-old son immensely. To offset her pain, she started to join friends at Sunday gatherings at a

park on her days off, then went to a disco, and was soon attracted to a Nepali man introduced to her by her friend. It was not long before she became dissatisfied with her husband’s constant email requests for money. In addition, he calls her frequently to see if she is with other men. Even before her departure, her parents-in-law suspected that Ati would have an affair with another man in Singapore and leave their son because, in their village, women who go to Singapore are rumoured to be unfaithful. Incessant suspicion from her husband’s family and their financial situation make Ati susceptible to the allures of men. For others, such as, “Marisa”, a Filipina currently dating a Bangladeshi man, fifteen years apart have meant that her own and her husband’s lifestyles and personal values have grown different. She now feels that “there is no place for me [back home]”.⁶ Boehm argues that, “in part, transnational emotions reflect the gendered character of (in)fidelity itself and the fact that sexual infidelities within partnerships are nearly always committed by men” (Boehm 2011, p. 101). However, in Singapore infidelities are also likely to be committed by female domestic workers. As in the case of the left-behind wife of a migrant husband (Menjívar and Agadjanian 2007), husbands and families of domestic workers may fear abandonment or the possibility that they will no longer receive remittances.

What merits do relationships with boyfriends bring to domestic workers? For many women, feelings of loneliness and isolation in Singapore may lead to intimate relationships with men. Also, an intimate relationship may have a “massage effect”. A domestic worker is showered with flattering words by her boyfriend whose hands caress her body. This experience contrasts sharply, in many cases, with the harsh treatment that she might suffer from the employer’s family, the employer’s relatives, or even the members of her own family, such as an abusive husband or suspicious in-laws back home. In addition, domestic workers sometimes form bonds with men with whom they do not have sexual liaisons, such as gay men, and treasure their relationships with what are effectively their guardians. One Indonesian woman explained that a male friend who often

joins her day-off parties in the park “is like a brother to me”.⁷ In her case, an Indonesian ex-boyfriend harassed her after she broke up with him. He circulated her phone number with malicious intent. A male guardian friend of hers settled this problem by talking to her ex-boyfriend. Intimacy with a male friend can thus function to bring security from actual or potential harm for a woman in a foreign setting working in a marginal occupation. Her husband or fiancé in the distant home country cannot protect her as her boyfriend or “brotherly” friend does. Moreover, those men back home have less understanding of what it really means to be a “maid” in Singapore than does her boyfriend. One Bangladeshi male friend to a foreign domestic worker in Singapore said, “Employers here are very bad.... Treat her like a slave.... I got very angry. But her family needs money.”⁸ With or without sexual relations, this level of understanding and sympathy might not always come easily from a woman’s own family who usually have only a limited understanding of her situation in Singapore.

For foreign domestic workers’ families in their countries of origin, maintaining the transnational family via a long-distance relationship is the norm (Boehm 2011, p. 97). Their members struggle to uphold the notion of the family, which remains a defining feature of the lives of migrants and their families, though it may be used differently by the parties on either side of the geographical divide that separates them (Asis et al., 2004, p. 200). The importance of the notion of the family notwithstanding, communication with husbands or fiancés across long distances cannot always be equated with direct interaction.

“How Much Can You Pay for Me?”

The process by which a strange man becomes the intimate boyfriend of a foreign domestic worker involves several stages and a gradual process. The process usually begins with her encountering him in a gathering spot for foreign workers, where he approaches her with flattering words or a friend introduces her to him. If she gives the man her mobile phone number, it may be the first step towards an

intimate relationship. But the development of that relationship may bring some tests contrived by the woman. When a cute Bangladeshi man called “Mamie”, an Indonesian, for the first time, she dared not answer his call. Instead she sent him a short text message to say that she did not have “top up” (credit on her phone) for receiving calls. This was a test of his generosity. If he had asked the name of her phone company, so that he could send “top up” to her number, he would have passed this first test. Instead, Mamie received a short message stating, “I am working but you are working, too.” Mamie thus found the man stingy and has never answered his calls or messages since. At first glance, a domestic worker may prefer a cute, young and tall man, preferably one with fair skin and without strong body odour. However, a man’s generosity soon assumes greater importance, since the woman is usually not prepared to spend any money of her own on the relationship. Women tend to balance men’s ability to be (financial) “providers” with their physical attractiveness.

The second stage may typically involve the woman’s circle of friends scrutinizing the generosity, appearance and other personality traits of the man. When a man asks a domestic worker out for a drink or lunch for the first time, she typically asks if she can bring friends. One day, “Nana”, a domestic worker from Indonesia, was proud that her prospective Indian boyfriend did not mind her inviting five friends to KFC and he tried to be friendly to them. After he left the table, Nana and her girlfriends assessed him with loud and happy voices. Collective evaluation of a boyfriend can in cases like this one take the form of a shared expression of joy or disappointment among female foreign domestic workers (Boehm 2011, p. 101).

A handsome or generous boyfriend makes a domestic worker look good in her friends’ eyes. The marital status of the woman and her prospective boyfriend is often of little relevance in comparison with the man’s appearance and generosity. There is a “hierarchy” of what foreign domestic workers desire in a boyfriend. It is a ranking based on ethnicity and immigration status, in which Singapore citizens or permanent residents and Caucasian expatriates are on top, foreign semi-professionals (S-Pass holders) are in the middle, and Asian Work

Permit holders are at the bottom. This hierarchy is related to both the man's economic power and his contribution to his prospective girlfriend's image. A boyfriend actually becomes an accessory, an important part of his girlfriend's "identity kit" as conceptualized by Goffman (1961, p. 20), for the management of her self-presentation. Recruitment agencies, employers, and the Singapore government tend to deprive women of their value when they arrive in the country as workers (Ueno 2011, pp. 37–65). Such devaluation is perceived as downward occupational mobility, particularly for Filipinas with higher educational backgrounds (Constable 1997, p. 65; Parreñas 2001a, p. 3). Being with a man who is highly valued by her friends brings reassurance that a woman is a valued person, one who merits the attention of a special man.

The third stage in the process of developing intimacy is becoming a man's steady girlfriend. Usually a man buys a "top up" for the foreign domestic worker's mobile phone and gives her gifts. At this stage, competing or multiple desires become clear. In fact, the majority of domestic workers cajole money out of boyfriends so that they can increase the amount of money remitted to their families, even as they seek romantic love from these boyfriends. If a boyfriend pretends to be indifferent to subtle suggestions about money, his girlfriend may specifically ask, "How much top up can you give me?" or "Can you buy a PC for my son?"

Of course, men initiate some negotiations about money for their own sexual satisfaction. A domestic worker might initially be introduced to a man who pays her for sexual services, or she may approach a man with purely economic motives. In cases of the former kind, a woman's clients are likely to be male foreign workers. On the man's side, however, there is a strong financial incentive to transform the relationship into romantic love. If the woman becomes his steady girlfriend, he does not have to pay a fee for his sexual gratification. On top of that concern, "sex with love is better than sex without love" for both the man and the woman, in the words of one Filipina informant.⁹ A domestic worker, isolated most of the time in her employer's home, may not resist a man's advances

very much if he is attractive. Above all, a young, handsome man who could be popular among other domestic workers puts her in a weaker position negotiating the nature of the relationship. Domestic workers with multiple desires are likely to be forced by their sexual partners to transform the nature of the relationship from economic to romantic.

"Wow, You Are Really in Love."

The most stable relationship for domestic workers is generally one with a Singaporean man or permanent resident, since such men are free from the burden of remittance payments and unlikely to leave Singapore soon. Usually, these boyfriends will give his domestic worker girlfriend a monthly allowance and inexpensive jewellery, or sometimes a personal computer. Again, it seems that his marital status is not important to a domestic worker because she is likely to be married as well. One Malay Singaporean introduced an Indonesian domestic worker to me as his "second wife".¹⁰ A boyfriend's economic stability also matters to women's friends. If he is the generous type, he will pay for her birthday party, lend money to her close friends in case of emergency and invite her friends for lunch. The longer a domestic worker with this kind of boyfriend stays in Singapore, the more money she has access to there and the greater her feeling of superiority to other domestic workers.

A foreign domestic worker can also be the one in the relationship who pays for the food and drinks and the hotel charges and who even lends money to her boyfriend. This happens in foreign domestic workers' relationships with male foreign workers who carry heavy remittance burdens. A married Indonesian in her early thirties, "Sasah", is seeing a Malay Singaporean who is in his early fifties. Sasah came to Singapore to escape from her husband, a member of a gang. When Sasah asked for a divorce, he told her to kill herself. Sasah immediately left her son with her husband's family. Her Singaporean boyfriend, by contrast, attends to her emotional needs and provides her with numerous gifts and a monthly allowance. But Sasah has recently also begun seeing a Bangladeshi worker in his late

twenties for whom she has become a provider. One Sunday evening, she was candid about the difficulties associated with having intimate relationships with two men simultaneously. One Indonesian friend was critical of her Bangladeshi boyfriend, whereas a Filipina domestic worker at the table commented in a sober tone, "Wow, you are really in love with this Bangladeshi."¹¹

Although some domestic workers introduce their boyfriends to their friends, others hide them or reveal their existence to only a few close friends. "Michelle", from the Philippines, said, "I want to keep it secret. I am a bit cautious not to let my employer know it."¹² "Agnes", another Filipina, met her Bangladeshi boyfriend on her day off far from her employer's house because one of her friends had been sent back to the Philippines after a neighbour of her employer found out about the woman meeting a man and took a picture of them. The attitude of most employers towards their domestic workers having boyfriends is negative, partly as a result of media coverage of the trouble caused by domestic workers with boyfriends (Ang 2011; Arul 2009, 2010; Phua and Yong 2012; Koh 2010; Yong 2011) and also as a result of an employer's legal responsibility for their domestic workers. On their days off, some domestic workers change clothes and put on make-up in public toilets so that their employers do not know that they will be meeting their boyfriends.

"My Boyfriend said, 'Don't Kill My Baby'."

One potential consequence of a foreign domestic worker's relationship with a boyfriend is an unexpected pregnancy, with ensuing pressure to have an abortion and possible termination of the relationship. While gaining love and additional money for remittance to their families through their relationships, some women have proved weak in negotiating sexual practices such as condom use in their relationships with men (Blanc 2001). Women shoulder the consequences of such weakness.

One widowed Indonesian working in Singapore, "Susanti", met a Malaysian. She became pregnant but wanted to continue to work and to remit money to her parents. She also had a strong emotional

bond with her Malaysian boyfriend. She tried to abort the baby by eating young pineapple and durian and taking abortion pills, to no avail. She went back to Indonesia to give birth, but the baby was born with a serious medical condition and required expensive medication. She left the sick baby with her mother and returned to Singapore to see her boyfriend and to send money for her son's medical treatment. Her sick son in Indonesia died at the age of four, but she could not attend the funeral because her employer did not know anything about her son or her boyfriend. For domestic workers, pregnancy is a critical life event since pregnant domestic workers cannot continue to work in Singapore. If a woman returns to her country to give birth and returns to find a new employer, costly agency fees are incurred. Domestic workers thus generally feel pressure to abort their pregnancies.

Furthermore, pregnancy often leads to the termination of a domestic worker's relationship with her boyfriend. "Etry", for example, came to Singapore in 2006. Her employer's mother lived apart from the employer but cooked dinner for her daughter's family. Etry commuted to the mother's house in late afternoon to clean, iron clothes, and fetch the dinner for her employer's family. After one year, she was approached by an Indian worker when she was passing by a construction site along her usual route. He told her, "I saw you walking the street every day." A few months after they began dating, she became pregnant. When she told him about her pregnancy, he said, "Don't kill my baby." She was delighted by his words. However, shortly thereafter he disappeared by cancelling his mobile phone number. Etry had missed the window of time for an abortion, and she was unable to find the father. Under the surveillance of employers and with limited days off, domestic workers rely on mobile phones as their primary means of communication with their friends and boyfriends (Pattana 2008, p. 602). Relationships reliant on communication by mobile phone can be uncertain and fluid. Just as domestic workers block calls to their mobile phones from unfavourable men's numbers, so male foreign

workers do the same, as they also have a pool of eligible girlfriends to choose from in Singapore.

A considerable number of unwanted pregnancies may occur among foreign domestic workers in Singapore.¹³ Filipina domestic workers note in interviews that, when returning to the Philippines on holiday, they buy not only contraceptives but also abortion pills, to be sold at a mark-up in Singapore. While some domestic workers observed that their friends flew back to Indonesia and the Philippines without completing their contracts because of pregnancies, others spoke of accompanying their friends to medical clinics. A woman's secrets are often revealed when she shares her story with friends from whom she borrows money for an abortion.¹⁴ It is sometimes a friend's Singaporean or expatriate boyfriend who lends money to a pregnant foreign domestic worker.

A woman's longing for companionship with a boyfriend and partner in the destination country is thus often also embedded with pain. Pregnancy may well lead to the end of the relationship, high abortion fees and forced repatriation, each of which one might interpret as a consequence of irrational behaviour on the part of a foreign domestic worker whose putative purpose in working overseas is economic gain. Even in such cases, a woman may not maximize love, but the joy found in a relationship may nevertheless represent a gain. And one can interpret the foreign domestic worker's having a boyfriend as a "reasoned", if not rational, act (Hirsch 2003, p. 4). Thus releasing her frustration or anger might be still less devastating than hurting herself or a member of her employer's family out of despair, stories of which have often appeared in the Singapore press. We may consider the case of Etry: although her friends suspected that her boyfriend lied to her to avoid having to pay for an abortion, Etry disagrees. She continues to admire him and count her relationship with him as the only good thing that happened to her in Singapore.

"I See My Husband on Sunday."

Piper and Roces have argued that migration studies have treated Asian women either as brides or as workers (Piper and Roces 2003).

Instead, they propose seeing those women in a perspective centred on the idea of the transnational life course. While previous studies have regarded labour migration and marriage migration as different phenomena, in this perspective one might instead view international marriage as a result of labour migration, or vice versa (McKay 2003; Piper and Roces 2003).

Cases from Singapore underline the value of this perspective. "Sisi", an Indonesian domestic worker, dated a Malay Singaporean once a month on her day off. Before she completed her two-year contract, he asked her to marry him. She returned to Indonesia and came back to Singapore with a new passport, issued under a different name. Her decision to obtain this passport stemmed from the widespread belief that a former domestic worker may find it difficult to register a marriage in Singapore. Sisi did not invite any of her domestic-worker friends to her wedding party because her husband's family wanted to keep her previous work a secret. Later, she obtained permanent resident status in Singapore and had a child. She now sells Malay delicacies at the market, regularly sending a good sum of money to her parents in Indonesia.

Sisi's case is precisely the type of success story circulated by Indonesian domestic workers. Such stories help encourage the continuing flow of migrants from Indonesia to Singapore (Cohen 1988, pp. 79–80). Actually, some foreign domestic workers counted, in addition to earning money to send home, on finding a husband as a central purpose in going to stay in Singapore. Among the women studied here, this purpose was most conscious among Filipinas. In general, Filipinas travelling to Singapore as domestic workers are older than Indonesians, partly because some attend college and work before going to Singapore. They are also likely to be "married", at least on paper. But in reality some of the "married" domestic workers are actually separated from their husbands. After breaking up with their husbands, the need to provide for their children often constitutes a reason for their going to Singapore. Former primary school teacher "Joana", for instance, left her three-year-old son with her mother and aunt to work in Singapore. She was determined to

find a foreign husband there. She explained to me that she goes to an Internet cafe on every one of her precious days off to chat with family members and with men with whom she has been matched on several Internet dating sites. She targets Singaporean men, expatriates, and permanent residents since she can actually meet them in person in Singapore and possibly fall in love with one of them. Importantly, Joana assumes that any man from these three categories can afford to pay the costs — amounting to 200,000 Philippine pesos, for a lawyer, psychiatric evaluation, and court fees — of annulling her marriage in the Philippines. In many cases, a woman's personal goal of finding a decent man with the earning power to make a difference in her life is embedded within a family project in her home country (Yeoh et al. 2002, p. 4). Nothing but a successful marriage with a foreigner will drastically improve the financial condition of her family back home.

Not all domestic workers seeking to marry Singaporean men end up legally married. An Indonesian domestic worker, "Yoga", went back to her village to divorce her husband, intending to marry the Singaporean whom she had been seeing for years. But they could not successfully register their marriage in Singapore. Her friends think that the reason might be her boyfriend's low salary or her own previous employment as a domestic worker, but no one knows the real reason. Yoga still works in Singapore, so that she can see her boyfriend on all her days off.

A more common occurrence is that some foreign workers in Singapore — for example, male Malaysian workers and female Indonesian domestic workers — continue to work in Singapore even after marrying there, in order to send money to their families. When a new Malaysian groom works at a construction site, and an Indonesian bride works as a domestic worker, they may stay in contact by mobile phone during the week and meet on days off. They perform "transnational rendezvous" in metropolitan Singapore. There are also instances in which a woman joins her fiancé working in Singapore and becomes a domestic worker there. The case of a couple from Myanmar has become a high profile case in the Singapore media

(Tai 2011). The woman followed her fiancé, who was working as an electrician in Singapore, and became a domestic worker there. With the help of a non-governmental organization, they threw a wedding party and even registered their marriage in Singapore, in what was perhaps the first such case. When I interviewed this couple after their wedding party, they explained that they had been seeing each other for six years in Yangon, and both wanted a stronger commitment to their relationship. This is similar to the phenomenon of partner migration (Kingma 2006, p. 15), but this Myanmar couple could neither live together nor have a child. Foreign domestic workers in Singapore are required to reside in the homes of their employers, and they are not allowed to become pregnant.

"In My Heart, I Am Always Man."

The intimate relationships of domestic workers also include homosexual relationships. Women who behave like men in their home countries, called "tomboys", may go to Singapore or Hong Kong as domestic workers to find same-sex partners. Each of these compact, urban destinations creates favourable conditions for a domestic worker to find a girlfriend and maintain a sexually intimate relationship. After her return to Indonesia or the Philippines, a "tomboy" who faces her parents' pressure to marry may fly to the destination country again. Some extend their stays abroad in order to perpetuate their relationships. "Olivia", for example, once returned to the Philippines from Singapore but soon went back to Singapore because she missed her Myanmar girlfriend there.

In her study of Thai female factory workers, Suchada (2004) found inconsistent features in women's sexual subjectivities. She attributed her finding to the Thai patriarchal system, which provides an ideological discourse about what constitutes a "good woman". Among foreign domestic workers in Singapore, too, are those who had formerly been in relationships with husbands or boyfriends, but had begun to express their own sexual preference after travelling overseas. One Indonesian informant described having suffered sexual violence at the hands of a boyfriend and later becoming involved

in a same-sex relationship, as the feminine partner of a domestic worker with masculine traits. She had recognized the possibility of indicating her sexual preference, as some of her friends had done. Prevailing homogeneous value systems in many foreign domestic workers' communities of origin made the pursuit of a same-sex lifestyle difficult.

The work of Cantú (2009) on gay sexualities and transnational migration depicted the migratory experiences of gay asylum seekers from Mexico. The enclaves in which domestic workers in Singapore spend their days off can, similarly, serve as temporary havens for those in same-sex relationships. Sexuality is a matter not only of physical relationships in the private sphere; it also has a performative nature in the public sphere (Hirsch 2003, p. 4). Foreign domestic workers encounter a diversity of sexual lifestyles in the places in which they gather on their days off. They can in those locales actually observe same-sex partners cuddling during Sunday lunch gatherings. Although some domestic workers may be interested in displays of same-sex relationships, other domestic workers may find such relationships odd, or even incomprehensible. Nevertheless, the performative expression of these lifestyles has become an ordinary scene in the gathering places of foreign domestic workers in Singapore. The hegemony of the conventional heterosexual relationship, seemingly taken for granted in previous contexts, grows weaker in these new contexts.

Giddens noted the "popularising of the self-description 'gay' as an example of that reflexive process whereby a social phenomenon can be appropriated and transformed through collective engagement" (Giddens 1992, p. 14). The presence of women in open same-sex relationships among foreign domestic workers in Singapore represents the collective and reflexive emergence of a new social phenomenon in a foreign setting.

Taken in sum, the interviews with foreign domestic workers in Singapore drawn on here make evident that these women are not merely "maids" from poorer Southeast Asian countries. They are neighbours and daughters, mothers, and wives in their own countries

but also girlfriends, contract wives, common-law wives, and legal wives of either foreign or Singaporean men or same-sex partners in their countries of employment. In addition to relationships with their kin working in Singapore, with other domestic workers and perhaps with their employer's families, other bonds — emotional and economic as well as sexual bonds — with boyfriends and partners may lead some domestic workers to choose to extend their stays in Singapore. That choice reflects the reality of the love gain of this article's title.

Conclusion

The argument of this article contrasts with the implications of the care/love drain hypothesis, which emphasizes the deficit of care or love in the families or home communities of overseas workers. Arguments based on that hypothesis have assumed that domestic workers' relationships in their home countries are benign. In reality, some foreign domestic workers go to Singapore to escape from domestic violence, and some to look for a new partner to help take care of themselves and their children. The Filipinas and Indonesians studied here make use of "their femininity" and especially their "power to migrate" (Morokvasic 2003, p. 102) as resources to make a difference in their lives. Labour migration may reflect a wide variety of situations, ranging from economic deprivation at home and separation from a spouse to a woman's strategy to improve her emotional as well as sexual quality of life or find a partner of better financial means while working abroad. Importantly, despite the institutional and structural constraints regarding pregnancy and the registration of marriage with Singaporeans or permanent residents, not a small number of foreign domestic workers contrive to improve the emotional as well as material quality of their lives through intimate relationships and sexualized companionship in Singapore. Some women treated in this study emerged as active performers of intimacy and love and as seekers of romance. Sexual activity is not only an important part of the lives of both male and female migrant workers but also a crucial arena of negotiation in which women gain or sometimes lose power

vis-à-vis a boyfriend. Agency among such women was most clearly exemplified in the case of the Filipina searching for a future husband and seeking lawyer's fees from him in order to annul her marriage in the Philippines.

Female migration has an impact on a domestic worker and her family that sometimes goes far beyond the realm of economic gain (Silver 2011, p. 4), but is often intricately intertwined with that gain, as the material welfare of women's families reinforces the idea that they are not engaged in sexual relationships for purely selfish reasons. We cannot make sense of the lives of foreign domestic workers without paying attention to their relationships with boyfriends or partners. Extended working years in Singapore among domestic workers should be understood in the context of their redefinition of intimate relationships.

Foreign domestic workers transform conventional relationships in their home countries and reconstitute new ones. If we turn the ethnographic gaze towards the lived experience of intimacy in Singapore, we find that domestic workers participate in and create a discourse of romantic love with others. As romantic love involves a personal quest (Giddens 1992), the domestic worker is consciously aware of herself as a woman selecting and being selected by men, making herself up heavily on Sunday, taking pictures of herself to post on her Facebook page, or observing her reflection in mirrors at the shopping mall to make sure that her appearance is appealing to men on the street. Domestic workers' love stories exemplify their conscious participation in the modern social environment defined by competencies in the cosmopolitan languages of English and love (Faier 2007, p. 153), and the communication tool of the mobile phone. In her employer's house, the domestic worker's hands are busy with cleaning, washing, and cooking, but she glues her mouth and ear to her hands-free mobile, talking and listening to her friends about the intimacy-related topics that occupy her thoughts. While working at her employer's house, dancing at the disco on Sunday or sitting in the Internet cafe with eyes fixed on the PC screen, she devotes herself to the constant negotiation of intimacy.

NOTES

1. Constable (2005) also contains insightful chapters on cross-border marriages in a range of locales.
2. Foreign domestic workers have been the subject of extensive, never-ending newspaper coverage in Singapore. Among recurrent issues is "pregnancy" or "wrong doing" by domestic workers in relationships with their boyfriends.
3. Interview, 27 September 2007.
4. Interview, 28 December 2010.
5. Interview, 21 September 2010.
6. Interview, 28 August 2011.
7. Interview, 19 February 2012.
8. Interview, 12 February 2012.
9. Interview, 21 August 2011.
10. Interview, 28 August 2012.
11. Interview, 7 August 2011.
12. Interview, 28 December 2009.
13. According to an article from *The Straits Times*, during 2010 about 100 domestic workers were returned to their countries of origin because of positive blood or urine pregnancy-test results. Also, some women aborted babies in order to continue working in Singapore (Liew 2010).
14. One newspaper article says that the abortion fee for domestic workers is S\$4,000; it cites information from an employment agency (Ang 2010). However, many domestic workers reported that the fee was S\$500 around 2007 and S\$700 after that.

REFERENCES

- Ang, Benson. "Agency Ordered to Pay for Maid's Abortion". *New Paper*, 22 September 2010, p. 4.
- . "Maid Slipped Out at Night to Meet Friends". *New Paper*, 19 July 2011, p. 9.
- Arul John. "She Slept with Lover in My House". *New Paper*, 16 April 2009, pp. 1–3.
- . "Indonesian Maid Killed by Bangladeshi Boyfriend". *New Paper*, 11 January 2010, pp. 8–9.
- Asis, Maruja, Shirlena Huang, and Brenda Yeoh. "When the Light of the Home is Abroad: Unskilled Female Migration and the Filipino Family". *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 25, no. 2 (2004): 198–215.
- Blanc, Ann K. "The Effect of Power in Sexual Relationships on Sexual and Reproductive Health: An Examination of the Evidence". *Studies in Family Planning* 32, no. 3 (2001): 189–213.

- Boehm, Deborah A. "Deseos y Dolores: Mapping Desire, Suffering, and (Dis)loyalty within Transnational Partnerships". *International Migration* 49, no. 6 (2011): 95–106.
- Boehm, Deborah A. and Heidi Swank. "Introduction". *International Migration* 49, no. 6 (2011): 1–6.
- Cantú, Lionel Jr. *The Sexuality of Migration: Border Crossings and Mexican Immigrant Men*. New York: New York University Press, 2009.
- Chammartin, Gloria Moreno Fontes. "The Feminization of International Migration". *Migrant Workers* (2004): 39–47 <<http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/gurn/00072.pdf>> (accessed 31 October 2012).
- Chang, Kimberly and L.H.M Ling. "Globalization and its Intimate Other: Filipina Domestic Workers in Hong Kong". In *Gender and Global Restructuring: Sightings, Sites and Resistances*, edited by M.H. Marchand and A.S. Ryan. London: Routledge, 2000.
- Cohen, Robin. *The New Helots: Migrants in the International Division of Labour*. Aldershot: Gower, 1988.
- Constable, Nicole. *Maid to Order in Hong Kong: Stories of Filipina Workers*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997.
- . *Romance on a Global Stage: Pen Pals, Virtual Ethnography, and "Mail Order" Marriages*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.
- . *Cross-Border Marriages: Gender and Mobility in Transnational Asia*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005.
- . "The Commodification of Intimacy: Marriage, Sex, and Reproductive Labor". *Annual Review of Anthropology* 38 (2009): 49–64.
- Dannecker, Petra. "Transnational Migration and the Transformation of Gender Relations: The Case of Bangladeshi Labour Migrants". *Current Sociology* 53, no. 4 (2005): 655–74.
- Ehrenreich, Barbara and Arlie Russell Hochschild. "Introduction". In *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy*, edited by B. Ehrenreich and A.R. Hochschild. New York: OWL Books, 2004.
- Faier, Lieba. "Filipina Migrants in Rural Japan and Their Professions of Love". *American Ethnologist* 34, no. 1 (2007): 148–62.
- . *Intimate Encounters: Filipina Women and the Remaking of Rural Japan*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009.
- Giddens, Anthony. *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love and Eroticism in Modern Societies*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992.
- Goffman, Erving. *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates*. New York: Doubleday, 1961.
- Liew, Hanqing. "100 Pregnant Maids Sent Home a Year". *Straits Times*, 29 September 2010, p. B5.

- Hirsch, Jennifer S. *A Courtship after Marriage: Sexuality and Love in Mexican Transnational Families*. Berkeley, CA: University of California, 2003.
- Hochschild, Arlie Russell. "Global Care Chains and Emotional Surplus Value". In *On the Edge: Living with Global Capitalism*, edited by W. Hutton and A. Giddens. London: Cape, 2000.
- Hondagneu-Sotelo, Pierrette and Ernestine Avila. "I'm Here, but I'm There: The Meanings of Latina Transnational Motherhood". *Gender & Society* 11, no. 5 (1997): 548–71.
- Horton, Sarah. "A Mother's Heart is Weighed Down with Stones: A Phenomenological Approach to the Experience of Transnational Motherhood". *Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry* 33, no. 1 (2009): 21–40.
- Human Rights Watch. "Maid to Order: Ending Abuses against Migrant Domestic Workers in Singapore". *Human Rights Watch* 17, no. 10 (2005): 1–124. <<http://www.hrw.org/reports/2005/singapore1205>> (accessed 31 October 2004).
- Isaksen, Lise Widding, Sambasivan Uma Devi, and Arlie Russell Hochschild. "Global Care Crisis: A Problem of Capital, Care Chain, or Commons?" *American Behavioral Scientist* 52 (2008): 405–25.
- Kingma, Mireille. *Nurses on the Move: Migration and the Global Health Care Economy*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006.
- Koh Hui Theng. "He Falls 3 Stories Trying to Escape". *New Paper*, 26 July 2010, pp. 1–3.
- Lan Pei-Chia. *Global Cinderellas: Migrant Domestic Workers and Newly Rich Employers in Taiwan*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006.
- Lindio-McGovern, Ligaya. "Labor Export in the Context of Globalization: The Experience of Filipino Domestic Workers in Rome". *International Sociology* 18, no. 3 (2003): 513–34.
- McKay, Deirdre. "Filipinas in Canada: De-skilling as a Push toward Marriage". In *Wife or Worker? Asian Women and Migration*, edited by N. Piper and M. Roces. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003.
- Menjívar, Cecilia and Victor Agadjanian. "Men's Migration and Women's Lives: Views from Rural Armenia and Guatemala". *Social Science Quarterly* 88, no. 5 (2007): 1243–62.
- Ministry of Manpower. "Employment of Foreign Manpower Act (Chapter 91A)", 2012a <<http://www.mom.gov.sg/Documents/services-forms/passes/WPSPassConditions.pdf>> (accessed 31 October 2012).
- . "Work Permit (Foreign Domestic Worker) — Before Employment", 2012b <<http://www.mom.gov.sg/foreign-manpower/passes-visas/work-permit-fdw/before-you-apply/Pages/basic-requirements-of-a-foreign-domestic-worker.aspx>> (accessed 31 October 2012).

- . “Foreign Workforce Numbers”, 2012c <<http://www.mom.gov.sg/statistics-publications/others/statistics/Pages/ForeignWorkforceNumbers.aspx>> (accessed 5 December 2012).
- Morokvasic, Mirjana. “Transnational Mobility and Gender: A View from Post-Wall Europe”. In *Crossing Borders and Shifting Boundaries: Gender on the Move*, edited by M. Morokvasic, U. Erel, and K. Shinozaki. Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 2003.
- New Paper*. “MOM Survey 1,350 Domestic Helpers: Most Maids Happy with Work and Bosses”, 12 August 2011, p. 8.
- Oishi Nana. *Women in Motion: Globalization, State Policies, and Labor Migration in Asia*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005.
- Parreñas, Rhacel Salazar. *Servants of Globalization: Women, Migration, and Domestic Work*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001a.
- . “Mothering from a Distance: Emotions, Gender, and Inter-generational Relations in Filipino Transnational Families”. *Feminist Studies* 27, no. 2 (2001b): 361–90.
- . “The Care Crisis in the Philippines: Children and Transnational Families in the New Global Economy”. In *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy*, edited by B. Ehrenrich and A.R. Hochschild. New York: OWL Books, 2004.
- . *Children of Global Migration: Transnational Families and Gendered Woes*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005a.
- . “Long Distance Intimacy: Class, Gender and Intergenerational Relations between Mothers and Children in Filipino Transnational Families”. *Global Networks* 5, no. 4 (2005b): 317–36.
- Pattana Kitiarsa. “Thai Migrants in Singapore: State, Intimacy and Desire”. *Gender, Place and Culture* 15, no. 6 (2008): 595–610.
- Piller, Ingrid. *Intercultural Communication: A Critical Introduction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011.
- Piper, Nicola and Mina Roces. “Introduction: Marriage and Migration”. In *Wife or Worker? Asian Women and Migration*, edited by N. Piper and M. Roces. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003.
- Phua, Amanda and Amanda Yong, “Employers Give Her Low-key Send-off...”. *New Paper*, 9 March 2012, pp. 2–3.
- Rattana Jongwilaiwan and Eric C. Thompson. “Thai Wives in Singapore and Transnational Patriarchy”. *Gender, Place and Culture* (2011): 1–33 <<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/0966369X.2011.624588>> (accessed 31 October 2012).

- Saroca, Cleonicki. “Filipino-Australian Intimacies Online: Love, Romance and ‘Naughty Emotions’”. *South East Asia Research* 20, no. 1 (2012): 53–82.
- Silver, Alexis. “Families across Borders: The Emotional Impacts of Migration on Origin Families”. *International Migration*, forthcoming in volume 50 (2012) [first published online 17 March 2011]: 1–38.
- Suchada Thaweessit. “The Fluidity of Thai Women’s Gendered and Sexual Subjectivity”. *Culture, Health, & Sexuality* 6, no. 3 (2004): 205–19.
- Tacoli, Cecilia. “Migrating ‘For the Sake of the Family?’: Gender, Life Course and Intra-household Relations among Filipino Migrants in Rome”. *Philippine Sociological Review* 44, nos. 1–4 (1996): 12–32.
- Tai, Janice. “Myanmar Couple on Work Permits Wed Though They’ll Live Apart”. *Straits Times*, 22 August 2011, p. B5.
- Ueno Kayoko. *Life Strategies of Women Working as Domestic Workers in Asia* [in Japanese]. Kyoto: Sekaishisoshu, 2011.
- Yap Mui-Teng. “Labor Migration in Singapore: Policy and the Role of the Media”. *Asian Migrant* 13, no. 3 (2000): 68–74.
- Yeoh, Brenda S.A., Elspeth Graham, and Paul J. Boyle. “Migrations and Family Relations in the Asia Pacific Region”. *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal* 11, no. 1 (2002): 1–11.
- Yong, Amanda. “She Had 2 Lovers Besides Dead Man”. *New Paper*, 9 November 2011, p. 6.