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**Metonymic Figures: Cultural Representations of Foreign Domestic Helpers and Discourses of Diversity in Hong Kong**

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**Abstract:** Foreign Domestic Helpers account for nearly half of Hong Kong’s total ethnic minority population and are therefore integral to any discussion of diversity in the postcolonial, global Chinese city. In Asia, discourses of diversity have evolved from the juncture of complex historical, political, and cultural factors including colonialism, postcoloniality, traditional and precolonial customs and values, religious and spiritual beliefs, as well as Western-derived liberal-democratic discourses of rights and citizenship. “Diversity” has been identified as one of the core values and attributes of the territory by the Hong Kong Government yet it is not a concept that is carefully interrogated and delineated. This essay examines discourses of diversity via analysis of a varied set of cultural representations of Foreign Domestic Helpers, including a television programme and advertisements, a work of short literary fiction, online erotic fiction, social media, as well as an example of multi-media artwork. Taken together, these representative forms provide insight into the cultural imaginary that shapes private and public discourse and perception. Using an approach informed by both cognitive linguistics and postcolonial studies, the essay focuses on metonymic techniques, for example, doubling and substitution to argue that representations of Foreign Domestic Helpers reveal the anxieties, fears, and desires of the dominant culture. The essay shows that the Foreign Domestic Helper becomes a critical figure around whom linked questions of ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and class in the majority ethnic Chinese population of Hong Kong circulate.

**Keywords:** ethnic minority, gender, Hong Kong, migrant labour, multiculturalism

The number of households in Hong Kong that hire a Foreign Domestic Helper (henceforth FDH) has steadily increased since the early 1980s when the first short-term visas and work-contracts were issued to meet the growing demand for domestic workers. In the last population census of 2011, over 220,000 domestic households included an ethnic minority who was an FDH, that is, nearly 10% of all households in Hong Kong. Notably, nearly 72% of all households in Hong Kong with one or more ethnic minorities included an FDH (Hong Kong Government 2011, 11). In 99% of cases, foreign domestic helpers are female (Hong Kong Government 2011, 20). They predominantly hail from the Philippines and Indonesia and in smaller numbers from Thailand, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. In 2013, there were around 320,000 FDHs, constituting around 3% of the total population of Hong Kong and just under half of the territory’s total ethnic minority population (SCMP Topics). It is therefore evident, that any discussion of diversity in Hong Kong must consider this group, that is diverse in and of itself.

In Asia discourses of diversity have evolved from the juncture of complex historical, political, and cultural factors. Addressing multiculturalism in Asia, Will Kymlicka and Baogang He recognize the simultaneous need to “identify the legacies of precolonial and colonial traditions for managing diversity, their reinterpretation under conditions of postcolonial independence and globalization, their relationship to Western liberal models of multiculturalism and to emerging international norms of human and minority rights, and their long-term prospects” (Kymlicka and He 2005, 2). For best practice, they emphasize that universal human rights instruments and Western-derived rhetoric must be balanced with attention to “local traditions, national mythologies, regional practices, and religious doctrines” (Kymlicka and He 2005, 2). Moreover, as a means of nuancing the understanding and application of diversity in Asia, some analysts have proposed the concept of “vernacular communitarianism” (Chua, 2003, 175) to draw a contrast between the individualism and competitiveness often attributed, rightly or wrongly, to Western liberal-democratic political systems. As opposed to state communitarianism which may often function as a veneer for authoritarian forms...
of organization and control, “vernacular communitarianism” denotes the sense of obligation amongst people to their local community, be it religious, ethnic, or linguistic. Indeed, Daniel A. Bell and Nicola Piper draw upon such a distinction in their discussion of diversity and rights in relation to foreign domestic workers in Hong Kong. They argue that rather than solely focusing on liberal-democratic conceptions of rights, it is important to consider an ingrained consciousness of Confucian ethics when examining the expectations of both migrant workers and employers. Discussing “best case” situations, Bell and Piper suggest a shift to focusing on mutual concern and caring rather than solely the more legalistically definable values of fairness and respect when assessing the situation of foreign domestic workers. Such a shift is dependent on a flexible concept of family attributed to Confucian values wherein ethical familial relationships may be extended to include nonfamily members (Bell and Piper 2005, 216, 218). Noting that in the context of domestic work, the employer-employee relationship takes place within the home, Bell and Piper acknowledge that “[i]f the concern is to improve the welfare of FDWs, the informal rules of engagement within the home are often just as fundamental, if not more so, than the set of rights guaranteed by law” (Bell and Piper 2005, 201).

With these important qualifications in mind, what does “diversity” mean in Hong Kong? As part of the process of establishing Hong Kong as a Special Administrative Region of China, following the handover from British rule in 1997, and with the objective of clarifying the identity of the postcolonial and global Chinese city, Hong Kong branded itself as “Asia’s World City.” “Diversity” is one of the core values and attributes defined by the Hong Kong Government and is defined in the following terms: “Pluralistic and tolerant, Hong Kong has a rich culture and traditions, and a modern cityscape that contrasts with a rural landscape full of varied plant and animal life” (Hong Kong Government, “BrandHK”). As such, the concept of diversity in Hong Kong seems to relate equally to multiculturalism, cultural heritage, and bio-diversity. The connections made between the three dimensions of diversity in the city’s branding are quite bewildering and raise questions about the meaning and significance of diversity in Hong Kong identity, culture, and politics. While it may not be a concept that is carefully interrogated and delineated, the allure of diversity periodically catches the public imagination. For example, in March 2017, a police officer whose family is of Pakistani origin was hailed as a hero and became an overnight social media sensation, when he successfully prevented a man from committing suicide, by virtue of being able to communicate with him in Urdu. Ifzal Zaffar, the policeman, who reportedly speaks Cantonese, English, Punjabi, Putonghua and Urdu, is one of eleven graduates of Project Gemstone launched in 2013 as a mentoring programme for ethnic minority officers with the objective of recruiting greater numbers from the growing population of ethnic minority residents in Hong Kong (Blundy 2017).

Yet, the case of Zaffar, involving a young and photogenic figure in the public sphere is a success story for diversity whose energies are not reflected in most of the cases relating to Hong Kong’s largest ethnic minority population of migrant workers. A counteracting example that registers the tone and nature of public discourse on diversity in Hong Kong is an image from the New General Studies P3 textbook titled Living in Hong Kong (Figure 1) which went viral on social media in 2014. In a chapter titled “Racial Harmony,” students are asked to link occupation to ethnicity. The textbook is clearly based upon problematic ethnic stereotypes, particularly in the equation of “Filipino” with “Domestic Helper,” which shuts down alternative associations of ethnicity as well as gender and class variations. However, the primary school exercise does reveal the degree to which the domestic helper as Filipina dominates cultural representations of the foreign worker figure. This is related to the fact that, historically, the largest number of foreign domestic workers have come from the Philippines, although Indonesians now nearly equal Filipinos in the number of migrant workers to the territory (Hong Kong Government 2011, 17). A second satirical image (Figure 2) appeared during the public debate generated by the school textbook and contests stereotypes about ethnic minorities. It poses the challenge: “Which minority community is excluded from the census because they’re not real people?” (hongwrong.com, 2014) referring to the fact that the FDH is treated as an exceptional case excluded from normative census groups because foreign domestic workers are not granted citizenship no matter how long they reside and work in Hong Kong. The FDH is thus excluded from legitimated conceptions of Hong Kong identity, not to mention access to public housing, education, and political representation, and constitutes a disenfranchised class. Some analysts, such as Bell and Piper (2005, 213–214), astutely point out the ways in which equal citizenship rights can potentially harm the same group they are meant to protect as they would inevitably restrict the number of opportunities open to migrant workers and thereby impact negatively on their families in their sending countries. While this essay is not the
place to debate the implications of this claim about the socio-economic dynamics of migrant contracts, it does aim to open a space for necessary exploration of the hazy concept of diversity in Hong Kong that underpins the socio-political discussion of the city’s culture and identity in relation to its minority population.

In this essay, I seek to uncover what is revealed about discourses of diversity in Hong Kong when we focus on the FDH. I present a varied set of cultural representations of FDHs, including a television programme and advertisements, a work of short literary fiction, online erotic fiction, news reportage on social media, as well as an example of multi-media artwork. Taken together, these examples constitute nodes in the cultural imaginary, that is, the thick fabric of interwoven cultural representations shaping private and public discourse and perception. I focus on the recurrence of metonymic techniques in cultural representations of the FDH. Simply put, I use metonymy to refer to representational techniques and ideological processes in which one element of identity or indeed one ethnic body is used as a substitute for another, for example, according to the school textbook mentioned above, Filipina for domestic helper or vice versa. As such, I argue that representations of the FDH are less about any particular individual or indeed less about any particular ethnic minority than about the anxieties, fears, and desires of the dominant culture which constitutes the substituted/displaced/hidden subject of the constructions of the other examined in this paper. As such, my analysis shows how the FDH becomes a critical figure around whom linked questions of ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and class circulate. I argue that in both the representations of the FDH figure and in the implications of these representational strategies for discourses of diversity in Hong Kong, what is revealed are questions and anxieties about gender, sexuality, and middle-class domesticity in the majority ethnic Chinese population of Hong Kong.

Analysis of metonymy very often occurs in the context of linguistic studies and Klaus-Uwe Panther and Linda L. Thornburg’s emphasis that “Metonymy is a cognitive phenomenon—not just a figure of speech—with a considerable role in the organization of meaning” (2010, 236) is pertinent to my analysis within this essay.
Postcolonial studies critic Homi Bhabha has articulated the most influential theory of metonymy in relation to the politics of representation within the context of the “ambivalence of colonial discourse.” Metonymic processes are key to Bhabha’s conceptualization of mimicry which, he argues, “conceals no presence or identity behind its mask” (1984, 129). In the complex circuits of identification and disavowal that determine colonial cognitive space, Bhabha finds that figures of mimicry are “the figures of a doubling, the part-objects of a metonymy of colonial desire which alienates the modality and normality of those dominant discourses in which they emerge as ‘inappropriate’ colonial subjects” (1984, 129).

The unsettling power of mimicry resides in the “partial presence” or “partial vision of the colonizer’s presence” activated by metonymic processes of identification, representation, and meaning. As such, mimicry is “like camouflage, not a harmonization or repression of difference, but a form of resemblance that differs/defends presence by displaying it in part, metonymically.” For Bhabha, the threat of mimicry arises in its revelation that colonial power is based upon a lack of essence, a lack of authorizing identity. Bhabha’s identification of the metonymic processes of “partial representation/recognition of the colonial object” and “authorized versions of otherness” (1984, 129) has proved to be highly influential in analyses of social and cultural hierarchies and power struggles in colonial and postcolonial spaces. I suggest that it is also useful for analyzing the energies, anxieties, fears, and struggles in Hong Kong as a postcolonial, global society, if we replace the colonizer and colonized other with the normative Hong Kong citizen and the foreign domestic worker. To substantiate this kind of correspondence, Chen (1994), for example, has used the notion of a “sub-empire” to analyze the unique and complex positioning of Hong Kong in Asia, foregrounding the territory’s status as a regional economic power that is able to draw upon the resources, including cheap migrant labour, of less developed countries in the region. In Chen’s formulation, Hong Kong stands as a primary node of power within a network of intra-Asian internal colonization.

While further comparison between former colonial hierarchies and current labour relations in Hong Kong is beyond the scope of this essay, I do intend to draw out the critical potential of analyzing metonymic processes in situations which depend upon unequal social, cultural, political, and economic positionalities. As such, I launch my analysis of the imbrication of the FDH in mainstream social and economic issues in Hong Kong through an initial focus on the television comedy sketch “I am Maria” (我係 Maria) which was broadcast for nearly a year in the late 1980s on the popular, long-running variety show “Enjoy Yourself Tonight” (歡樂今宵) on the terrestrial channel Television Broadcasts Limited (TVB). The sketch portrays the trials and tribulations of Maria, played by Elvina Kong (江欣燕), a Filipina helper in a Hong Kong Chinese household. In an episode called “A Story of a Love Letter,” Maria reveals to her employer that she has a pen-friend, a Chinese man, who she is planning to meet. However, she has lied to this man and pretended that she herself is a tai tai (wealthy married woman) and has used her female employer’s name as her pen-name. Maria begs her female employer to swap roles with her so that she will not have to reveal her deception. Later, Maria’s male employer returns home with his friend to find the love letter written by Maria’s pen-friend and somewhat inevitably jumps to the conclusion that the letter is intended for his wife. When he asks Maria if his wife is having an affair, her misunderstanding of his questions leads to a false affirmation. When his wife returns, they have a spirited argument.

The sketch relies on a blunt stereotype of the inept, naïve, foolish, and wily Filipina that others have shown dominates cultural representations of the FDH. For instance, exploring the relationship between cultural representation and social practice up to the late 1990s, Cherry Law finds that representations of Filipina domestic helpers had an “overwhelmingly significant portrayal in newspapers” (1998, 65) rather than in any other medium. Law argues that such media portrayal constitutes an overrepresentation in the sense that portrayals were nearly always tied to negative depictions of crimes and court cases. Conversely, Law notes that positive images and portrayals of a variety of aspects of life were underrepresented. Overall, Law notes a lack of variation of representation in newspaper discourse as well as in visual media such as advertisements in which the Filipina maid is “always a dark-faced girl, [with] thick lips, with curly dark hair, and wearing a petticoat” (1998, 66). Indeed, Law argues that Maria establishes an “iconic” (1998, 67) image for the Filipina domestic worker.

In the television sketch, the stereotype that determines the representation of Maria is the source of comedy, including her absentmindedness and awkwardness, as well as her stilted Cantonese pronunciation and misunderstanding which creates a language barrier that

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serves to emphasize her cultural difference, the latter of which is represented by the dark make-up or blackface used as a visual signifier of her Filipina ethnicity (Figure 3). Laughter is also provoked at specific moments when Maria’s black make-up slips off onto the cheek of her Chinese suitor; when Maria orders her “Ma’am” around during the role-reversal; when Maria gets caught up in her lies and has to explain why she is “black” while her supposed “brother” is “white”; as well as the slapstick physical scuffle as husband punches wife and wife slaps husband back. Laughter in the “Love Letter” episode depends upon metonymic techniques of doubling and substitution as seen in the role-reversal and mistaken identity plots. The use of blackface itself depends upon metonymy in the form of racial parody. In the portrayal of Maria, humour is generated by the audience’s knowledge that the character of the maid is actually a Chinese actress performing as Filipina. The capacity of blackface to tease, entertain, and shock is shown when the slippage of black make-up onto Maria’s Chinese suitor’s cheek occurs—this moment is both tantalizing and disturbing, a sign of a transgressive pleasure as well as a tainting smear as skin meets skin, suggesting that such intimacy is problematic.

Blackface developed as a theatrical practice in the highly popular minstrel shows of nineteenth-century America. In order to perform “black,” white actors would use burnt cork, greasepaint, or shoe polish to darken their skin and would wear woolly wigs and tattered clothes, reifying stereotypes of race and class (Figure 4). As Susan Gubar explains in *Racechanges*, her study of blackface in American culture, racial masquerade actually has little to do with real African Americans and instead “illuminate[s] the psychology of whites who have evolved through a series of oppositional identities predicated on black Others. The ‘black’ [...] operates as a generic commodity constructed by the white imagination for white people” (1997: xv). The analysis of blackface as a commodity that reveals more about the dominant imagination rather than the minority it both figures and disfigures through representation is pertinent to understanding the use of this performative technique in the popular Hong Kong television show. This analysis urges us to consider how the use of metonymic techniques (blackface, role-reversal, mistaken-identity in the example above) to represent FDHs, reveals not the identity of the foreign maid but the anxieties, fears, and desires of the dominant culture with regard to issues including gender roles, socio-economic status, and the shaping of a disciplined and productive labour force. In the case of the “Love Letters” episode, the troubling laughter generated by the exploitation of ethnic stereotype is a diversion from gendered anxieties related to the potentially destabilising role of the woman in the construction of successful middle-class domesticity. Moreover, by presenting the threat of sexual transgression and domestic violence as farce, the sketch seeks to neutralise anxieties about gender roles in the transitioning social, economic, and political context of Hong Kong in the late 1980s.

In 1984 the Sino-British Joint Declaration decided the future of the territory and initiated a critical period of political and socio-cultural transition. As Eliza W.Y. Lee explains, this period “led to the production of oppositional discourses on the real meaning of being Chinese and patriotic, and the proliferation of a local Hong Kong identity” and also “elicited discussion on what the postcolonial political
system should be like, as issues of democratization, civil liberty, and social justice were reflected on” (2003, 13). Gender roles and relationships both exemplified and constituted currents of flux and transformation. As Lee recognizes, this period saw the rise of a local women’s movement as well as the class polarization of women due to the shift from an industrial and manufacturing economy to a financial and service economy. While educated middle-class women entered the workforce in increasing numbers, many working-class women who had provided the “cheap, unskilled, and flexible labourers that made possible the postwar industrial success” (2003, 6) were not able to adapt to the new economy and were effectively “redo-mesticated.” Yet, while the traditional patriarchal family had been declining since the 1970s—a trend registered by the rise of the nuclear family, the fall in the birth rate, and in the delayed age of marriage—research by the Equal Opportunities Commission in 1997 into gender equality in Hong Kong showed that “substantial gender inequality still exists in the household division of labour, employment, and community and political participation” (2003, 12).

As the role of women in private and public life continues to evolve and transform in the millennium, shaped by factors including the continual increase in women’s participation in tertiary education, connection to global women’s movements, and greater attention to the working conditions of foreign domestic workers, it is nevertheless surprising and revealing that metonymy continues to significantly shape cultural representations of FDHs in postcolonial and global Hong Kong. In order to understand this residual strategy, we can consider three television advertisements for commodities such as milk, insurance, and the maid as product herself. A Kowloon Dairy advertisement of 2012 plays up the ways in which maternal anxieties fixate on the FDH, both within the heart of domestic space as well as out and about in the public domain. In this ad, the plump, dark, curly-haired figure of the maid dressed in casual clothing, uses a more subdued form of blackface than “Maria” (Figure 5). Yet, the ad exploits the gendered division of labour which sees domestic work transposed from the mother to the maid. Anxiety arises from the mother’s perception that her role is substituted and her presence negated by the helper, for whom the child demonstrates unbridled affection. The crux of the ad is reached when the troublesome doubling of mother and maid collapses through the lure of the “simply tasty” milk which has the power to return filial love and maternal attributes to their rightful owner.

Similarly, a 2014 Hong Leong Bank insurance advertisement is an homage to “Maria” with blackface, curly wig, and uniform intact and gauche behaviour retained. (Figure 6). In this advertisement, the same male actor plays both maid and employer, thereby constituting a further take on doubling. It is worth noting that following complaints this ad was reworked with a female actress, ironing out the racial and gendered transgressions of the original (Figure 7). Revealingly, when blackface is edited
out of the new advertisement, so is the associated performance of clumsiness and cultural difference conveyed through the maid’s accented Cantonese.

A final advertisement to consider, by Overseas Employment Centre in 2014, does not use blackface at all, but it does engage in the same kind of metonymic play through doubling and substitution that we have already seen and takes it to a new level (Figure 8). As the early morning sun shines on the iconic Hong Kong skyline, a uniformed contingent of maids is significantly positioned on the very walkways that are, in reality, occupied by FDHs on their rest days. Here, the somewhat robotic line of maids is replicated as far as the eye can see. In this advertisement, doubling or replication is a sign of professionalization. As they press the shirts of Hong Kong’s workforce, the maids’ diversity (i.e. ethnic, linguistic, age-related differentials) is ironed out to allow a desirable and reassuring litany of qualities—enthusiastic, diligent, meticulous, wholehearted—to arise. It is surely noteworthy that the metonymic techniques we first saw in “Maria” are in evidence in each advertisement, repeated and adapted, and thereby revealing insights into key constituents of diversity in Hong Kong, namely ethnicity, gender, and class. Taken together, the advertisements open critical space for an exploration of ethnicity through blackface; gender through the doubling and substitution of female duties and roles; and class through the sartorial marker of uniform, the division of domestic labour, and the professionalization of the maid.

Constable discusses the discipline and self-discipline involved in professionalization via Foucault’s (1995) theorisation of “docile bodies” and “covert discipline.” Covert discipline is a modern form that is more subtle and indirect than older forms, for example, that involved in slavery. Covert discipline focuses on the body and bodily practices and involves uninterrupted and constant coercion in order to produce “docile bodies.” In relation to domestic workers, Constable identifies covert discipline in lists of duties and work-related regulations issued by employment agencies rather than enforced by employers. For example, a domestic helper may be more inclined to keep hair short and refrain from wearing lipstick and revealing clothes if guided to do so in the depersonalized agency rather in the home of an employer. In many cases, discipline, whether imposed or self-initiated is related to constructions and perceptions of gender and sexuality, as the above examples suggest. I turn now to consider more fully how the figure of the FDH functions in explorations of gender and sexuality in Hong Kong. I will be tracing a thread that involves the doubling and substitution of gender and sexual roles through reportage in 2015 of domestic workers as sexual predators on news and social media sites, a short story in which domestic work takes on a sexual dimension, and an example of online erotica which fixes on the figure of the foreign domestic helper. In each case, the private and public disciplining of sexuality and gender is critically involved in the representation of the cultural and ethnic other.

In her study of migrant workers in Hong Kong, Nicole Constable (2007) has drawn out significant connections between professionalization, discipline, self-discipline, gender, and sexuality that are pertinent to my discussion. In April 2015, Regina Ip Lau Suk-yee, Executive Council member, Chair of the New People’s Party, and lawmaker, caused a stir when she made comments about foreign domestic helpers. In an article for Ming Pao (April 17 2015) which was also published on her Facebook page and her blog, she referred to complaints that she had received during her time as security minister from 1998 to 2003. Her Facebook post utilised the provocative questioning headline: “Lots of Filipino maids provide sex services to foreign men?” In her article, she reveals that “foreign women” in Hong Kong had complained to her that the government was “allowing Filipino domestic helpers to seduce their husbands.” Ip criticizes the international media for downplaying “the issue of a large number of Filipino maids being turned into sexual resources for male foreigners” while instead emphasising the misdemeanour of employers and the victimhood of foreign domestic workers. Ip’s comments came at the time when the case of abused Indonesian worker Erwiana Sulistyaningsih was in the news as her employer Law Wan-Tung was sentenced to six years in jail in

Figure 8: Overseas employment centre advertisement, 2014.
February 2015 (Lau 2015). Ip’s comments were met with protest by a number of parties: the Philippine Consulate expressed its concern at her “unfortunate choice of words”; the Asian Migrants Coordinating Body rallied in front of the New People’s Party headquarters and demanded an apology while their spokesman, Eman Villanueva, urged the Philippine government to blacklist Ip as an “undesirable person”; Civic Party legislator Claudia Mo accused Ip of discrimination in a letter to the Equal Opportunities Commission and called for an investigation; Leo Tang, secretary of the Hong Kong Federation of Asian Domestic Workers Unions, said Ip’s comments showed she would do anything to get elected as Hong Kong’s next chief executive (ejinsight.com, 2015). In response, Ip stood by her words, demanding: “Why should I apologise? […] I have really received such complaints about the maids and I am only stating facts” (Lam 2015). Yet, she also sought to clarify her original words by saying that “I never [specified] who was ‘seducing’ whom in the article. The purpose of it was to show concern for those Filipino maids and pose a question as to whether they have been exploited” (Tsang 2015).

The damning equation of an entire ethnic minority socio-economic group with manipulative femininity at best and prostitution at worst is, of course, what caused public offense. However, there are other notable dynamics at work here. Ip’s comments involve a series of hierarchical antagonisms: the Filipina maid vs the foreign woman, as well as the implied Chinese female employer vs the foreign female employee, if we take her comments in the context of the Erwiana case. In both cases, these hierarchies suggest the nature of the gendered relationships that are at the heart of private life in Hong Kong households which hire foreign workers. These gendered relationships become a combative domain in which class inequality is rendered an attribute of ethnic difference. Moreover, with the idea that the government should somehow intervene in people’s marriages that Ip uses to explain the complaints she received, there is also a slippage between private and public worlds and the forms of exploitation and discipline related to each. Effectively, the figure of the foreign domestic helper functions as a breach between the private and the public whereby policies made in the public domain have an impact on the most intimate of relationships. The representation of sex as seduction in the private domain through the implied economic relationship of prostitution also problematizes the gendered labour of the ethnic minority as dishonourable, even to a criminal extent. In turn, this may feed into popular perceptions and stereotypes about foreign domestic workers that “enable” some employers to take regulation and discipline to the extreme of abuse. Also notable is the utilisation of this incident in political manoeuvring, both in domestic politics in Hong Kong as well as international relations between Hong Kong and the Philippines. This has fascinating parallels to the earlier case of the Manila bus shooting of Hong Kong tourists in 2010 and the impact upon government policy toward foreign domestic helpers, employer-employee relations, and perceptions of Filipina helpers (Lam, Siu, and But 2013).

In Ip’s comments, “foreignness”—foreign maids, foreign women, foreign men—becomes a medium through which to express anxieties about marital relations, private and public exploitation, and the circulation of different forms of gendered labour in Hong Kong. As such, the exposure of domestic strife in the lives of foreign people becomes a substitute for exploring tensions in the lives of Hong Kong people. In two examples of short fiction that centre on the figure of the foreign domestic helper, we can also see how this “intimate stranger” provides a substitutive body that allows examination of private domestic relationships and other’s subjectivity to be projected upon her. In both stories, as in the Ip episode, the ethnicity and socio-economic status of the domestic worker allow her gender and sexuality to become commodities that are exploited by her employers.

In a short story titled “Leng Lui is for Pretty Lady” (2009) by Malaysian-born author Elaine Chiew, we are introduced to Alina, the Filipina maid of the Kong family in Hong Kong. From the start of the story, we see the metonymic techniques that we are already familiar with from Maria, the advertisements, and even the Ip episode. Alina reflects:

Everyone says I’m lucky; lucky because Mrs Kong likes to give me her old clothing, dresses she hasn’t worn since the 1980s and her old underwear. Most of them don’t really fit me, the bras have strings trailing from the torn lace and the dresses are too formal for scrubbing the kitchen floor or clambering up on top of counters cleaning shelves. (2009, 9)

While Mrs Kong’s castoffs have the potential to create a double in her hired help, a self-satisfying image that reflects the ma’am’s charitable impulses towards the maid, what the old clothing actually does is to foreground the lack of fit between the socio-economic status of the two women. Alina’s friend has picked up Cantonese slang and calls her “leng lui” or “pretty lady.” Alina is aware of the economic potential inherent in good looks yet chastises her friends who “cruise for gringos with white skin like sharks [...] who will whisk them away to America or London” (2009, 10). Later,
It is important (2009, 15). When Mr Kong and I hesitated, a Chinese porcelain doll. While Alina says, and – (2009, 14). However, there are also darkly as her sexuality becomes a value-laden commodity in the Kong household.

At home with the Kongs, Alina becomes the receptacle of the secrets of domestic life: Mrs Kong drinks White Russians in the afternoon while Mr Kong hides his toenail clippings in a plant-pot. More seriously, Alina discovers that Mrs Kong is fooling around with the young man from the neighbourhood Chinese medicine shop, while Mr Kong, detached from his family, has developed a bizarre attachment to a turnip which he whispers to and even kisses. Her friend suggests to her that knowledge is power: “nothing bad happen to you now, you lucky because you know their secrets” (2009, 14). However, Alina’s intimacy with the private life of her employers does not in fact give her power because of her socio-economic status. When Mrs Kong absconds on a holiday with her lover, Alina finds herself, by necessity of her role as domestic worker, becoming a substitute for the missing wife and mother, as she says, “I do what I can for the Kongs, who all look amputated as if missing an integral limb and can only hobble from place to place” (2009, 15).

Finally, Mr Kong insists that Alina eat with the family, symbolically taking Mrs Kong’s place and in a surrealist comic turn he reveals that the turnip has stood in for his helper, performing an extreme metonymic function, as he has practised his romantic overtures covertly: “Yes, my darling, that turnip is you” (2009, 17). When Mr Kong attempts to kiss Alina, she fights back and at the same moment Mrs Kong returns. The debacle is then translated from the private to the public domain as Alina is sent to jail for the night and is made to realise that whether she likes it or not, she cannot escape the metonymy of pretty amah/mistress/prostitute:

She [Mrs Kong] doesn’t look at me when she tells PC Chan I’ve been plotting to be Mr Kong’s mistress ever since I took up employment with them.

All these pretty amahs behave like prostitutes,” he says, and his eyes on me are cold and murderous. When they lead me away, I turn to him and say, “It’s just like the movies. I’m in the movies now. (2009, 17-18)

In the jail scene, Chiew’s story juxtaposes layers of stereotype in order to show how they lead to the jarring consequence of Alina’s reality—a night in the caged, cold, cement cell. The next morning, however, Mrs Kong returns to collect Alina:

In her car, Mrs Kong says, ‘Sdever won’t eat when I feed him. Ling Ling behave like wild monkey.’ Finally, Mrs Kong looks at me, her face with make-up looking like a Chinese porcelain doll. It’s what I see in her eyes that suddenly looms up close like a shadow on my heart – a wildness, a grasping – and I realise she’s so lost without me. I am the jigsaw piece hooking her family together. It’s now I begin to understand. (2009, 18)

At the moment when she is claimed as a substitute by her female employer, an appropriation that is prompted by her male employer’s sexual needs that are displaced onto his wife’s double, Mrs Kong herself appears as a representation to Alina—a Chinese porcelain doll. While Alina finally gains full awareness of her place in the family, through a painfully won insight into her employer’s conjoined fears and needs, the story suggests through the juxtaposition of gendered and ethnicized stereotype, that both women are similarly trapped due to their positioning in the domestic household.

It is revealing of the pervasiveness of metonymic processes in representations of the ethnic and gendered other in Hong Kong that Chiew’s story can be compared to a story on an online erotica site where bloggers can freely post their creative work. In the story “Housemaid” a young Chinese male comes home one day to find the flat empty, or so he thinks. The young man lives with his father as his parents have divorced. The only other occupant of their flat is Tina, the Filipina maid. Tina, he says, “is no different from the other domestic helpers in Hong Kong, who are all thin and yet work very diligently.” Tina does have one difference though: she seldom smiles. This is a source of annoyance for the boy’s father, Tina’s employer, who hired what he believed was a smiling maid, another stereotype, from her application photo. The young man understands her unhappiness though: she is only a year or two older than him and far away from family and home. We can infer that he too experiences some of the loneliness of his broken family’s hired help. In the kitchen at home, the young man hears a sound coming from the maid’s quarters and peering closer he discovers: “a woman’s body lying on Tina’s bed [...] she moaned, and I was sure that was Tina’s voice.” It is important to note here how Tina’s body and voice are presented as somehow separable from her. The young man spies on Tina pleasuring herself on her bed and is so overcome with desire that he goes to his room to do the same for himself. Suddenly, he senses a presence next to him, Tina of course, who proceeds to take his virginity. The power dynamics in this erotic fantasy are revealing: the young man recognises that Tina is giving him a “precious moment” yet she is also described as “smiling, just like a predator looking at its prey.” There are also darkly comic moments in which Tina’s doubled gender role as
both sexual partner and domestic worker fuse. During the act, he refers to her anatomy using food imagery: “I stared at her dumplings and the berries on it. Tina knew me, so she climbed up and fed them to my mouth” and after the sexual act, “she was so thoughtful to even wash the bedcover for me.” Tina does not fail to provide her services in every sense of the word. Even when Tina is literally and figuratively “on top” in relation to the sexual act, she is still a figure of service, she “feeds” and washes and thereby retains her place in the labour hierarchy. At the end of the story, Tina declares “Congratulations. Finally, you are a man now” and the young man reflects that he has also given something of value to her for finally he sees her smile. This story is one of several examples of online erotica centring on the figure of the FDH but it stands out for the ways in which it presents how both maid and man are compensated for their loneliness through their discovery and sharing of illicit sexuality. As the young man is not the employer of the helper as such, his socioeconomic power, his age and sexual inexperience allow Tina to have a certain power, although it is partially expressed in negative terms of predatory behaviour not that far removed from Regina Ip’s portrayal of foreign domestic workers as sexual predators.

By way of a conclusion, I present a final example which powerfully conveys the complex set of metonymic configurations at work in cultural representations and perceptions of the FDH and helps us to see how metonymy urges us to make insightful connections that are vital in any diverse society. *Five Tonnes of Homes and Other Understories* is a mixed-media installation exhibited by Indonesia-born Australia-based artist Tintin Wulia at Art Basel (2016) in Hong Kong. The work is part of a larger project titled *Trade/ Trace/ Transit* which investigates “a close-knit socio-economical network of cardboard stakeholders, comprising multinational groups in the Central district” (Figures 9 and 10) (*Encounters*). Approaching the installation, spectators become participants, able to move under huge hanging compacted bales of cardboard arranged in a spiral. They may walk within an open circle of these cubes, seeing both the large-scale swathe of space claimed by the made objects as well as the detail imprinted on the surfaces of the boxes. Wulia spent a year tracking the transit of cardboard through Hong Kong, thereby linking two familiar sights in public space that underpin the city’s economy. The first is of the elderly collectors who push huge trolleys laden with cardboard to recycling sites for paltry profit and the second is of the domestic workers who create cardboard refuges on rest days when they occupy walkways, underpasses and other public space. For a Hong Kong resident, *Five Tonnes of Homes* presents images that are both familiar and invisible—their shock factor or their capacity to make us think is often lost through the repetition of everyday sight. It is only when art couples them together that the implicit themes of belonging, alienation, gender, and labour cohere and gain resonance from their mirroring or doubling in the lives of the two
demographics. Described as “embodying the lived experience flourishing in accidental corners of a ravenous global economy” (Encounters), Wulia’s artwork indeed presents the “understories” and unexpected connections within Hong Kong, drawing together transnational representation (i.e. an Indonesian-Australian artist portraying Chinese/Filipino lived experience), global wealth and industry (i.e. the art fair and the cardboard trade), and the contingent claims of the working poor and the migrant worker on Hong Kong space.

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转喻：外籍家庭佣工的文化表象与香港的多样性话语

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摘要：外籍家庭佣工占香港少数族裔将近一半的人口，因此多样性讨论对这个后殖民时代的国际化大都市是不可或缺的。在亚洲，多样性的话语肇始于复杂的历史、政治和文化因素的交汇点，包括殖民主义、后殖民性、传统和前殖民风俗与价值、宗教和精神信仰，以及源自西方有关权利与公民权的自由民主话语。“多样性”被香港政府认为是这片地域的属性和核心价值之一，虽然这个概念已经被仔细地审视和界定过。本文通过分析一系列对外籍家庭佣工的不同文化表象，包括电视节目、广告、短篇小说、网络情色小说、社交媒体以及多媒体艺术作品，来检视多样性的话语。总而言之，通过这些表象方式，我们可以看到塑造私人和公共话语与观念的文化想象。利用包含认知语言学和后殖民研究的方法，本文聚焦转喻（metonymic）手法，比如替身（doubling）和角色替代（substitution），由此来说明外籍家庭佣工的表征揭示了主导文化的焦虑、恐惧和欲望。本文显示外籍家庭佣工变成盘旋在占香港多数的华人社会中，连接族群、性别、性向和阶级等问题中的一个重要角色。

关键词：少数族裔，性别，香港，移民工人，文化多元主义

自从 1980 年代政府签发最早的短期签证和工作合同以满足家庭佣工增长的需求以来，香港家庭佣工外籍家庭佣工（以下简称外佣）数量一直在稳定成长。最近一次在 2011 年的人口普查发现，超过 220,000 的本地家庭，也就是说整个香港将近 60% 的家庭，雇有少数族裔外佣。值得注意的是，有超过一位或多位少数族裔的香港家庭的 72% 中有一位外佣（HK Gov., 2011: 11）。在 98% 的个例中，外佣为女性（HK Gov., 2011: 20）。她们主要来自菲律宾和印尼，少量来自泰国、缅甸、孟加拉、尼泊尔、巴基斯坦和斯里兰卡。在 2013 年，香港有大约 320,000 名外佣，构成了香港总人口的约 3%，略低于香港少数族裔总人口的一半（SCMP Topics）。因此很明显，任何关于香港多样性的讨论必须考虑这个既有属于多样性一部分，其内又极具多样性的群体。

在亚洲，多样性的话语肇始于复杂的历史、政治和文化因素的交汇点。针对亚洲的文化多元主义，Will Kymlicka 和何包钢认识到需要同步去“认识管理多样性”的前殖民和殖民传统，它们在后殖民的独立和全球化条

件下的重新诠释，它们与西方自由主义的文化多元化主义的模式，与上升中的人权和少数族裔权利的国际规范的关系，以及它们的长期远景。”（Kymlicka and He, 2005: 2）。最理想地，他们强调要“注意地方传统、族裔传说、地区实践和宗教教义”来平衡普世人权手段和源自西方的话语（Kymlicka and He, 2005: 2）。此外，为了深化理解并应用亚洲的多样性，一些分析家提出“地方社群主义”（vernacular communitarianism）的概念（Chua, 2003: 175），把它与西方自由民主政治系统里的个体主义和竞争作对照。相对于常被用来掩盖威权主义的组织和控制的国家社群主义，“地方社群主义”指代人们对他们地方社区的义务，包括宗教的、族群的和语言的。

Daniel A. Bell 和 Nicola Piper 正是在他们与外佣相关的，香港的多样性及权利的讨论中使用了这个区隔。他们认为与其只关注权利的自由民主概念，在分析移民工人与其雇主的预期时，更重要的是考察人们意识中根深蒂固的儒家伦理。探讨 “最好个例” 情形时，Bell 和 Piper 认为评估外佣情况时应转向对两者之间相互的关心和关怀的关注，而非仅仅注重法制上对公民和尊重等价值观更完善的定义。这样的转向依赖于一种灵活的儒家价值观的家庭观念，即家庭伦理关系或许可以延伸到包括非家庭成员（Bell and Piper, 2003: 216, 218）。指出在家庭背景的雇主与雇员的关系是发生在家内的，Bell 和 Piper 承认“如果关注点是为了要改善外佣的福利，家内相处的不成文规则，就算不是更关键，也是与法律保护下的权利同样重要”，（Bell and Piper, 2003: 201）。

这些变化的时点考虑到进来，“多样性”在香港意味着什么？1997 年从英国统治下回归之后，作为香港被划为中国特别行政区过程的一部分，香港自喻为“亚洲的国际都市”，以表明它的后殖民和中国的全球城市定位。“多样性”是香港政府定义的核心价值和重要特征之一，它是这样写的：“多元主义与宽容，香港有丰富的文化与传统，以及与动植物丰富的乡村景致相映的现代城市景观”（BrandHK）。由此可见，香港多样的概念似乎是将文化多元主义，文化遗产和生物多样性均衡地联系起来。香港的品牌战略使多样性这三方面利益联系在一起是很少让人困惑的，也引发了多样性在香港认同、文化和政治中的意义和重要性的问题。虽然这个概念并没有被仔细地审视和界定过，多样性为魅力时常引发大众的想象。比如，2017 年 3 月，一名巴基斯坦籍警官因为能够用乌尔都语交流，成功阻止一名男子自杀，而被封为英雄，一夜之间成为社交媒体的焦点。这位警官 Ifzal Zaffar（范业成）是香港“宝石计划” 11 位毕业生之一，据说法语粤语，英语，旁遮普，普通话和乌尔都语。该

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项目于2013年启动，旨在香港的少数族裔中吸收更多的警告。（Blundy, 2017）


本文试图揭示透过外佣关于香港的多样性话语的发现。我会展示一整套关于外佣的文化表象，包括电视节目和广告、一个短篇文学、互联网情色小说、关于社交媒体的新闻报道，以及一例多媒体艺术作品。总的来说，这些个例组成了文化想象的节点，也就是，塑造私人和公共话语与观念的相互交织的文化表象之深度结构。我的重点是外佣文化表象上转喻手法的反复出现。简单来说，我用转喻（metonymy）来指表征手法和意识形态过程：在其中，身份的一个元素或者整个族裔被用来指代另外一个元素或者整个族裔。比如，像上面课本提到的，菲律宾女性用来指代佣人，反之亦然。就此而言，我认为外佣的表征比较少是关于某个特定人，或者关于某个特定的少数族裔，而更多的是关于焦虑，害怕，和主导性文化的需求。这些就组成了本文要检视的，他者构建中替代的/借位的/隐藏的对象。所以，我的分析会展示外佣是如何成为连接的族裔、性别、性向和阶级等问题围绕中的重要人群。我认为在外佣的表征和这些表征策略对香港多样性的话语的涵义中，揭示的都是香港主要族群华人关于性别，性向和中产阶级家庭生活的问题和焦虑。

图1：《Living in Hong Kong》，教育出版社教材《New General Studies P3》第六课。

一个叫做“情书的故事”里，玛利亚向雇主透露她要去见一位华人男性男友。但是她对那个男生撒谎，假装自己是一位太太（有钱的已婚妇女），而且用了她女性雇主的名字作自己的笔名。她请求女雇主交换角色，这样她的谎言不会被揭穿。之后，玛利亚的男雇主和朋友一起回到家里，发现她的笔友写的情书，因此某种程度上不可避免地认为这封信是写给她妻子的。当她问玛利亚他的妻子是不是有婚外情时，她对他的问题误解导致他确认了这件事是真的。当他妻子回家的时候，他们因此愤怒地大吵一架。


在这个电视小品里，决定玛利亚的表征的刻板印象是喜剧的来源，包括她的心不在焉和笨手笨脚，以及她的生硬粤语口音和对粤语的误解—以此制造语言障碍用来强调她的文化差异，后者是通过作为她的菲裔视觉的标志—黑色脸孔或者是黑皮肤—来表现的（图3）。在几个场景爆发出笑声：在她的黑妆涂到华人求婚者的脸上的时候；当玛利亚在角色替换中使唤她的“太太”的时候；当玛利亚的谎话被识破，必须解释为什么她“兄弟”是“白人”，她却是“黑人”的时候；还有丈夫打老婆—揍，老婆扇巴掌回击的粗野扭打时候。“情书”这一集的笑点依靠的是配音和字幕的转喻手法，就像我们在角色交换和搞错身份的戏份看到的。用黑色脸孔本身是基于一种拙劣的种族模仿形式的转喻。在对玛利亚的表现上，比如，通过观众认识到女仆的角色实际上是由华女演员扮演菲律宾女性制造出来的。黑色脸孔到玛利亚的华人的脸颊时，黑色脸孔逗弄，娱乐和吓人的能力得到体现—这个时刻既是逗人的，又是让人不舒服的。它是一种越界的快感的标记，也是一种羞辱性的五化的标记—当肌肤贴肌肤，短裤暗示这样的亲密是有问题的。

黑色脸孔作为剧场实践在十九世纪美国风行一时的黑脸走唱秀中发展起来的。为了表现“黑人”，白人演员会用烧过的软木，油彩或鞋擦来涂黑皮肤，还要穿戴毛茸茸的假发和饰烂的衣服，来具体化种族和阶级的刻板印象（图4）。像Susan Gubar在《种族变化》（Racechanges）一书中说的，根据她对美国文化中黑色脸孔的研究，化妆舞会实际上与真正的非洲裔美国人毫无关系，反而它“说明了白人的心理。这种心理是通过一系列基于黑人他者的相对身份认同来演进的。‘黑人’
是白人想象中给白人构建的普遍商品”（1997：xv）。这个黑脸作为商品的分析揭示更多关于主导性的想象本身，而非这种主导性想象所想表现又在被将的少数族裔。这一点对于理解香港流行电视节目里表现技巧的运用很有帮助。

这个分析促使我们去思考各种在表征外侧的转喻手法（如上面例子里的黑色脸孔，角色反转，弄错的身份）是若何，没有揭示外侧的身份认同，却反而揭示了关于包括性别角色，社会经济地位，有纪律的和多产的劳动力的形成等议题上主导文化的焦虑，恐惧与取求。在“情书”这个个例里，族群刻板印象造成的令人不适的笑声是为了转移性别化的焦虑—这种焦虑是与妇女在构建成功的中产阶级家庭中潜在的不稳定角色有关。还有，通过表征作为一场闹剧的家庭暴力和性跨越的危险，这个短剧试图舒缓1980年代晚期香港转型中的社会经济和政治背景下的关于性别角色的焦虑。


女性在私人和公共生活中的角色，受到女性受高等教育的持续增加，与全球女性运动连系，和对外佣工作条件更大的关注等因素的影响，继续演化和转变。然而同时令人吃惊和值得深思的是，转喻仍然继续严重地塑造后殖民和全球时代香港外佣的文化表象。为了理解这种残留思路，我们可以从分析三个商品的电视广告：牛乳、保险和作为产品本身更好的作用。2012年一个发起的广告的广告扩大了外佣身上的母性焦虑—既存在于家内也存在其之外，也关乎公共场合。在这个广告里着便装，卷发，皮肤黝黑的丰满女仆使用了一种比“玛利亚”更驯服的黑脸形象。这个广告还利用了劳动力的性别分工，其中可以看到家务从母亲换位到了女仆。因为小孩对女仆表现出了毫不掩饰的情感，母亲忧虑她的角色会被取代，她的存在会被工薪给过。广告的核心就是当“就是好喝”的牛乳的吸引力瓦解了母亲和女仆的不安，让孝心和母性回归到正确所有者。
相似地，丰隆银行 2014 年一则保险广告是以黑色脸孔、卷发、一丝不苟的制服、同样的粗笨向“玛利亚”致敬（图 6）。在这则广告中，同一个男演员亦扮演仆人并扮演雇主，以此构成进一步的形象。值得注意的是，因为遭到投诉，这则广告被重新制作，用女演员来化解原广告里的种族和性别上的偏见（图 7）。有意思的是，当黑色脸孔被从广告里移除，与之相应的笨拙表现和单纯仆人角色的生动描述文化差异也被拿掉了。

图 6：原丰隆银行 2014 年广告。

图 7：编辑过的丰隆银行 2014 年广告。

最后要分析的一个广告是海外雇员中心在 2014 年做的，它完全没有使用黑色脸孔。可是确实地说在普通和角色替换来进行的转喻游戏，并且把它带到了新境界（图 8）。当清晨的阳光照耀到标志性的香港天际线，一组穿制服的女佣被醒目地安置在每一条行人道，这使得这些是休息日外佣聚集的地方。肉眼可见，这里复制了多少有共同特点的人群——一排的女佣。这则广告中，替身或复制一个职业化的女佣。当他们是香港劳工制服时，女佣的多面性（如群体，语言和年龄的差异）被“熨”出来了，以凸显一条串让观众放心的理想品质：热情、勤奋、细心和全心全意。值得注意的是，我们先前在“玛利亚”里看到的转喻手法明显出现在每一广告里，被重复和改编。因此，我们可以看到香港多样的关键成分，即群体，群体和阶层。总的来说，这些广告打开了重要空间：通过黑色脸孔探讨族群问题，通过替身和女性角色的职责和角色的替换来探讨性别问题，通过制服的共同标记，家庭劳动的分工，和女仆的职业化来探讨阶层问题。

在她的香港移民工人研究中，Nicole Constable (2007) 就指出过与我的讨论的职业化、纪律、性别和性向之间的重要联系。她借此（1995）对“制服的身体”和“隐秘的纪律”的理论化讨论涉及到职业化的纪律与自律问题。隐秘的纪律是一种现代形式，比如奴隶制和吸烟。隐秘的纪律注重身体和身体实践，包含不间断的和一致的追逐，以此来制造“驯服的身体”。与移民工人相关，Constable 指出在职责单位内和由雇佣机构发布的，非雇主强加的，与工作有关的管理条件里面的隐秘纪律。比如如果被建议少点个性，佣人或许会更倾向于在雇主家里留短发，少涂口红和少穿暴露服饰。许多个案，不管是被建议的还是自发的，纪律与性别和性向的构建和认知有关，就像上面的例子暗示的。

我现在来更完整地分析外籍佣人的形象在探讨香港性别和性向上如何起作用的。我会通过 2015 年新闻和社交媒体关于佣人涉及性骚扰的报道，一篇与性相关的家政短篇故事，一个聚焦外籍的网络畅销小说，来追踪一条涉及替身和性别性向角色替换的线索。在每一个个案，私人的和公共的性向和性别的纪律都强烈地触及到文化与族群的表征。

2015 年四月，叶刘淑仪，香港行政会议成员，新民党主席，和立法会议员，因为有关外佣的评论引起不小的争议。在《明报》（2015 年 4 月 17 日）的一篇文章，同时也在她的脸书主页和博客里，叶刘提到她在 1998 年至 2003 年间做保安局长兼任收到的投诉。她的脸书帖子用了很生动的问句式标题：“许多菲佣外国男性提供性服务？”文章里，她透露在港“外国女性”向上她投诉政府“允许菲佣来勾引她们的丈夫”。叶刘批评国际媒体淡化“大量菲佣成为外国男性的性资源”，却同时渲染雇主的过
犯和外佣的受害人身份。叶刘的评论正值被虐待的印尼女工艾维特・苏利斯坦宁斯的案子被报道。她的雇主罗荣在 2015 年 2 月被判入狱 6 年 (Lau, 2015)。叶刘的评论遭到一些组织的抗议：菲律宾驻港领事馆反对“文字使用不当”表达了关切；亚洲移工工人协会在新民党总部前集会，要求她道歉。协调会发言人比利亚努埃瓦 (Evan Villanueva) 敦促菲律宾政府把叶刘列入“不受欢迎人物”黑名单：公民党立法会议员毛孟静在一封给平等机会委员会的信里指责叶刘歧视，要求调查；香港亚洲家务工工会联会干事邓小华说，叶刘的评论显示为了选上下任特首可以不择手段 (ejinsight.com, 2015)。作为回应，叶刘自辩解释，声称：“为什么我需要道歉？[……] 我确实收到这样关于外佣的投诉，我只是陈述事实” (Lam, 2015.)。不过她也试图澄清她说：“我从来没有在文章里[直接]说‘勾引’谁。”这篇文章的目的是要对那些非佣表示关注，并提出她们是否被剥削的问题” (Tsang, 2015)。

明确的把“整个少数族裔社会经济团体与，最好的情况是可操控的女性特质，最坏是卖淫，联系在一起毫无疑问是引起公共抗议的理由。然后这里有其他值得注意的因素在起作用。叶刘的评论里包含了一系列的等级对立：菲律宾女性对应外国女性，以及暗指的华人男性雇主对应外国男性雇主。如果我们把她的评论放在尼维阿那架的两个案子里，这些等级的指示都暗示了处在佣工身份的香港家庭私人生活的社会地位的性别化关系的本质。这些性别关系变成了一个斗争的领域，在其阶级不平等成为族群差异的一个特征。另外，因为政府应该以某种方式干涉人们的婚姻这种想法—叶刘即用它来解释她受到的投诉，这里也存在私人和公共世界之间的异动，与各自相关的剥削与纪律之间的异动。当在公共领域制定的政策对最私密的关系有冲突，外佣的形象就很快地成为公开之间的裂痕所在。通过叶刘暗示的经济关系，性作为勾引在私人领域的表征也质疑其少数族裔劳工不光彩的行为，甚至某种程度的罪行。反过来，这迎合了大众的认知和刻板印象：外佣“使得”某些雇主把管理和纪律用到了过度的程度。还值得注意的是这件事件在政治操作上的利用，既有存在香港内部政治也存在香港和菲律宾的国际关系上。这个事件有个很有意思的先例，那就是 2010 年马尼拉大巴枪击香港游客事件，以及它带来对外佣政策，雇主雇员关系和对非佣的认知的冲击 (Lam, Siu, and But, 2013)。

在叶刘的评论里，“外国性（foreignness）”与外佣，外国女性、外国男性—变成了表达关于香港家庭关系、私下和公开的剥削以及性别化劳动力不同形式的流动的焦点。这样，外国人生职场中的冲突的曝光变成了探讨香港人生活中冲突的替代物。在两例以外佣为中心的短篇小说中，我们可以看到“亲密的陌生人”是怎样提供一种替代物，使得我们可以探究私人家庭关系和投射到她[女佣]身上的他者的主体性。在两个故事里，像在叶刘事件一样，外佣的族群与社会经济地位的关系和他的性别和性向变成了雇主可以剥削的商品。

在一篇马来西亚出身的作者 Elaine Chiew 的短篇故事“Leng Lui is for Pretty Lady” (“美女叫靓女”) 里，作者介绍了一个香港家庭孔家的菲律宾女佣 Alina。故事的一开始，我们看到在玛利亚・牙米甚至叶刘淑仪那里我们已经熟悉的转喻手法。Alina 反思道：“每个人都说我幸运: 幸运是因为孔太太喜欢给我她的旧衣服，那些她 1980 年代以来就不穿的旧衣服。多数我都穿不上，破旧的蕾丝手提包都脱线了，鞋子又太正式，没办法穿去上班。所以到柜台上面清理架子 (2009: 9)。”


和孔家人在一起，Alina 变成家庭生活秘密的容器：孔太太下午喝白宿(鸡尾酒)的时候，孔先生把手指剪藏在花盆里。更严重的是，Alina 发现孔太太和一个附近中药铺的年轻男子鬼混。而游离在家庭之外的孔先生则发展出了很奇怪的对萝卜的癖好：他会对著萝卜喃喃自语，甚至亲吻它们。她的朋友对她说知道就是权力：“你现在什么事情也没发生，你幸运是因为你知道他们的秘密” (2009: 14)。但是因为 Alina 的社会经济地位，她对她雇主的私生活的了解事实上并没有给她带来权力。当孔太太在一个假日与情人开溜以后，Alina 发现她自己，因为家佣角色的需要，变成了缺席妻子和母亲的替代品。像她说的：“我给孔家做我能做的。他们看起来就像都截肢了，失去一个躯干，只能从一个地方跌到另外一个地方” (2009: 15)。最后，孔先生坚持 Alina 和家人一起吃饭，象征性地取代了孔太太的位置。然后在一个超现实的转折中，他意识到萝卜代表他的帮佣，起了一个极其转喻的功能，就像他公开地表达爱慕说的：“是的，亲爱的，那个萝卜就是你” (2009: 17)。当孔先生试图亲吻 Alina，她抗拒的时候孔太太回来了。当 Alina 被送去看守所过夜，风波从私人领域转到了公共领域。Alina 意识到不管她喜欢不喜欢，她没办法逃脱漂亮阿妈/情妇/妓女的转喻。她[孔太太]看也不看我地告诉姓陈的警察，我从被孔家雇佣开始就想做孔先生的情妇。

“所有这些漂亮的阿妈表现得就像妓女。”他眼神冷冷且恶毒地看着我说道。但他们把我带走的时候，我转向他说：“这就像一场戏，我现在就在这戏中。” (2009: 17-18)。

在监狱那个场景，Chiew 的故事列了几层的刻板印象来显示它们是如何引发 Alina 面对的现实—被锁在冰冷
的牢房的一夜——的冲突性后果。第二天早上，孔太太回来接Alina：

在牢里，孔太太说：‘我喂 Shever 东西，他不吃。Ling Ling 表现得像野兽’。最后，孔太太看着我。她化过妆的脸看起来就像中国瓷娃娃。我在她的眼睛里突然看到隐隐地、像道影子出现在我心里的一种野性，一种贪婪——我意识到没有我，她有失落。她就像拼图板把她家拼在一起。我现在开始理解了。

（2009: 18）

当 Alina 被女性雇主认定是替代物——由她的男雇主的性需要所推动、被置于他妻子的替身上的一种挪用（appropriation），孔太太自己对她则像是一种象征——中国瓷娃娃。经历痛苦所领悟到的，雇主对她既害怕又需要，使得 Alina 最终完全意识到她在孔家的位置。这个故事暗示，通过并列性别和族群刻板印象，两位女性都同样因为在家庭的定位被困住了。

Chiew 的故事揭示了转喻过程在表征香港的族群和性别他者上的普遍性，它由此可以拿来与一个能自由发布创意作品的博客作者，在线情色网站的故事作比较。在“菲律宾女佣”故事里，一个年轻的华人男性有天回家发现公寓没人，或者他这么觉得。父母离婚后，他和父亲生活在一起。公寓的唯一另外住户是菲佣 Tina。他说：‘Tina 和其他香港的佣人没什么差别，她们都很瘦，但是工作很勤奋。’但 Tina 有一点不同：她很少笑。这对 Tina 的雇主，男性的父亲，是困扰的来源。从她的申请照片来看，他认为她雇的是一个微笑的女佣——另外一种刻板印象。不过这个男雇主理解她的不快乐：她比他只大一、两岁就要远离家和家人。我们可以推断他在经历他破裂的家庭所雇佣的帮佣的孤独。在家里的厨房，男 屋听到声音从女佣的房间传出来，贴近一点他发现：“一个女的躺在 Tina 的床上[...]呻吟着。我肯定那是 Tina 的声音。”有必要指出在这里 Tina 的身体和声音被表现得有点可以和她分离开来。年轻的男雇主在床上愉悦自己的 Tina，他是完全被欲望征服，以致于他回房间做了相同的事。突然，他发现有东西贴近他，当然，那是 Tina。她就这样夺走了他的初夜。在那个情色想象中的权力互动是富有启示的：年轻的男雇主承认 Tina 给了他“宝贵的时刻”，但是他又被描述成“微笑着，就像捕食者看着她的猎物。”当然，这里也有黑色幽默，当 Tina 的作为性伴侣和佣人的性别角色交融时。他们在亲热的时候，他用食物想象来指她的身体：“我盯着她的饺子和上面的果子。Tina 懂了，所以她爬上来，用它们来喂我的嘴。”性爱结束后，“她是这么贴心，甚至替我洗了床单。”Tina 从未在提供她的服务上失职过——在“服务”的任何意义上。甚至当 Tina 事实上和比喻上处在这个性活动的“上部”，她仍然只是服务人员，她“喂食”和清洗，以此来保持她在劳动等级机构的位置。故事的结尾，Tina 宣称“恭喜”，你竟然终于是个男人了！”年轻的男雇主意识到他也把一些宝贵的东西给她了，因为他终于看到她笑了。这个故事只是几个以女佣为中心的网络色情文学之一，但它代表了这些文学表现女佣和男性是如何通过他们的发现来填补寂寞和分享不当的性趣的各种方式。因为男并不是女工的雇主，这样他的社会经济权力，他的年龄和缺乏性经验使得 Tina 可以享有某些权力——虽然这种权力部分地表现为贬义的捕食行为上，距离叶刘对外侧是性捕食者的描绘也并不是那么远。

作为结论，我想举最后一个例子，它非常有力地展示了一套复杂的，对外佣的文化表象和认知里所使用的转喻结构，有助于我们看到，转喻如何使我们认识多元社会至
关于重要的深刻联系。“五吨的家与其他下层植被”是一篇印尼出生的香港艺术家丁丁・乌丽娅（Tintin Wulia）在2016年的香港巴塞尔艺术展上展出的混合媒体作品。这个作品是更大的“贸易/追踪/运输”计划的一部分，该计划是考察“由多国集团人士组成的纸板利益相关的紧密社会经济网络”（9和10）（Encounters）。靠近这个装置，参观者变成了参与者，可以移动螺旋状排列的吊在天花板的巨型压缩纸板包。他们可以走在这些正方形纸包组成的开放圆圈，看到这些人造物件占据的大片空间以及印在纸板上的细节。乌丽娅花了一年来追踪纸板在香港的运输，借此把支撑香港经济的公共空间内两个熟悉的景象连接在一起。第一个是为了微薄收益，将装满纸板的大型推车推到回收站的老年人。第二个是用纸板做成休憩处的佣人们，她们在休息日的时候占据了人行道，地下通道和其它的公共空间。对香港居民来说，“五吨的家”代表了既熟悉又无形的两个形象—它们的冲击系数和让我们思索的能力经常在日常景观的重负中失落了。只有当艺术把它们组合在一起，归属、异化、性别、劳工等含蓄主题凝聚在一起，从两群人的生活中的重合和反照中产生共鸣。被认为“体现在饥饿的全球经济的不经意角落兴起的生动经验”（Encounters），乌丽娅的艺术作品确实代表了“下层植被”与香港内部意想不到的联系。这些联系把跨国表征（比如印尼-澳大利亚艺术家刻画中国人/菲律宾人的生动经验），全球财富与工业（比如艺术市场与纸板贸易），以及贫穷工人和移民工人关于香港空间的特定的索求绑在一起。

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