Lai, Ming Yan, Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

Small Dragon Dancer, or, Tale of a Migrant Domestic Worker's Transnational Morphing

A live-in caregiver and domestic helper at work, and a dancing queen, published writer and poet, dramatist, migrant activist, and mother whenever she can, Tarini Sorrita epitomizes a dynamic and complex intersectional negotiation of identities that is common to migrant domestic workers in Hong Kong. Her accounts of her experiences in Hong Kong – published in a volume of essays and stories entitled "Small Dragon Dancer," publicized in newspaper articles, and recorded in in-depth interviews – show a sophisticated spinning and weaving of everyday encounters with economic constraints, social dynamics, and cultural differences into a multi-layered, dynamic, situational identity traversing the uneven cross-roads of nation, race, religion, class, gender, and sexuality. Through an analysis of her accounts, this paper will explore how transnational migration to Hong Kong enables some disadvantaged women to construct a resourceful and empowered identity out of heavily circumscribed and unequal conditions of feminized labor migration to a "global city" of neo-liberal capitalism.