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Like a Family but Not Quite: Cinematic Politics of Intimacy in Documenting Foreign Domestic Laborers

This research first conducts a review of two representative works in the recent attempts of understanding sympathetically foreign domestic laborers in Taiwan, including *Hospital 8 East Wing*, issued by the labor organization Taiwan International Workers Association (TIWA), and *Nyonya's Taste of Life*, aired on the Public TV Channel to promote multicultural integration of foreign spouses. It turns out that in both films, even though whose productions have been motivated by quite strikingly different concerns, the visual presentation is more or less dominated by the trope of being like a family. In the case of *Nyonya's Taste of Life*, we observe that the visual form of inviting audience's identification intensely corresponds to the moments when the characters in the film are working like a real family member. That is, the implicit but persisting measure used to gauge the job performances of foreign domestic/care laborers is how much self-sacrifice they could make and how much they take the welfare of the family as their top concern. In order to get away from the sway of this dominant routine of visual representation, we counter pose such a dominant presentation with a critical analysis of the domestic work/care work in the form of being like a family but not quite and use another docudrama *We Don't Have a Future* together to explore what is at stake when we attempt to seek alternative ways of visual representation of migrant workers.