

In “Global Care Chains and Emotional Surplus Labor,” Arlie Russell Hochschild offers anecdotes from nanny Vicky Diaz to situate individual bonds between migrant caregivers and their charges within global care chains--“a series of personal links between people across the globe based on the paid or unpaid work of caring” (Hochschild 2000, 131). Though these relationships are conceived as well-intentioned agreements between first world families seeking personalized care and third world employees searching for secure work, Hochschild notes that this perception erases the displacement of emotional surplus labour. While the employer assumes they are remunerating a naturally loving individual to dote on their child, they fail to recognize that in order to perform this role, caregivers “often divert towards their young charges feelings that were originally directed towards their own young” (135).

Moreover, Hochschild introduces lenses of gender, nation and class to contextualize the international passage of care responsibilities. As women in the first world opt for careers which “are still organized for men with families who are free of family responsibilities” (141), they must find someone to take over the domestic labour traditionally expected of them, a role often falling to migrant women who are financially incentivized to perform the work. However, as described by Hochschild, this transfer of care responsibility is not a one-time trade off, but depends on networks of women to fill the chain’s links. Essentially, “poorer women raise children for wealthier women while still poorer – or older or more rural – women raise their children” (136), perpetuating a cycle in which access to emancipation from domesticity is tied directly to one’s position within the race/class hierarchy.

As a solution to the diversion of emotional labour, Hochschild suggests that it might be advantageous “to alter migration policies so as to encourage migrating nannies to bring their

children” (143). While this solution does rectify the yearning of care workers for “the idea of the person they would be if only they were back home” (133), in the sense that parents would maintain ready access to their children as beneficiaries of affective labour, how does it address the passing of care through networks of women? Hochschild explains that in order to participate fully within patriarchal conceptions of work, “each woman becomes a provider and hires a wife” (137), an individual meant to shoulder domestic responsibility. In the case of care workers acting as family breadwinner by providing around the clock, individualized care for their employers, they are unable to take the same hands on approach with their own offspring, therefore meaning they must hire their own “wife” from further down the chain. Therefore, while Hochschild’s answer would alleviate the sadness of the nanny who “simply continues to long intensely for her own child” (138), how does it address the perpetuation of displaced emotional labour resulting from women seeking extra-domestic work?

#### Works Cited

Hochschild, Arlie Russell. 2000. “Global Care Chains and Emotional Surplus Value.” In Will Hutton and Anthony Giddens, ed. *On the Edge: Living With Global Capitalism*. London: Vintage, 130-146.