

We Homes Chaps. Directed by Kesang Tseten. 2001. 50 minutes, color. Distributed by Filmmakers Library, 124 East 40th Street, New York, NY 10016, <http://www.filmmakers.com>.

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We Homes Chaps is Tibetan filmmaker Kesang Tseten's attempt to explore the memories and experiences of the primary "family" of his childhood: a post-colonial British boarding school called, Dr. Graham's Homes, in the northern Indian town of Kalimpong. The film opens with Tseten returning to the "Homes" in the year 2000 to celebrate the institution's hundredth anniversary and participate in a reunion with classmates he has not seen since his own high school graduation years before.

Tseten narrates the history of the boarding school over photographs of British colonial India and scenes of the lush tea plantations surrounding the school. In 1889 Dr. John Anderson Graham, a Christian missionary from Scotland, arrived in the Himalayan town of Kalimpong. There he encountered what he saw as an abandoned population: illegitimate children of British tea field planters and the Indian fieldworkers. In 1900 he founded the boarding school to serve as a home and school for the children he saw as bereft of any familial, cultural, or institutional support, rejected by both their fathers' and their mothers' societies. The Homes eventually became a distinguished school for children from privileged families, as well as displaced children from Nepal, Sikkim, Naga, Bhutan, Lushai, and Tibet.

Returning to the school for only the second time in 29 years, Tseten films his reunions with his classmates and quickly establishes for them and for the film's audience his motivation for making this film: unraveling his own contradictory feelings and memories of the central parental influence of his childhood, and making sense of the patchwork postcolonial childhood experience the Homes had provided. Tseten and his classmates repeatedly bring up the mixed feelings they experience towards the Homes: gratitude for the superior education and opportunities received; affection for their classmates; discomfort, in some cases, for not having conformed to the school population's Anglo-Indian beauty ideal; relief, as Tseten himself says, at having "survived it all"; and grief for their childhood selves

and the total loss of a sustained, intimate family unit while growing up. Tseten and his classmates casually drop heartbreaking details of their childhood Homes experiences throughout the film, preventing the viewer from forgetting the unbridgeable emotional and cultural gap between the children and their "parent" institution: Tseten's house "uncle" calling Tibetan children by their initials because he could not pronounce their names; the rows of beds in the dormitories, each one with an identical teddy sitting atop the pillow; stories of sitting through Christian church services and feeling "forced" to be a Christian; learning of the death of a father through an impersonal letter.

Oddly lacking from the film are the voices of the teachers, house "parents," and administrators who comprised the Homes school itself. Exceptions to this almost complete silence include a priest in a pulpit delivering a sermon during a church service with current students and adult alumni in attendance and brief interviews with two Indian teachers. On the whole, however, the presence of the actual people who govern the Homes school is depicted only through narratives of the now-adult students. Several of the alumni are filmed reading their school files, written by school administrators, in which such personal things as their character and potential personality traits are discussed. The effect is an odd animation of the figures of the Homes authorities by the alumni themselves.

The filmmaker's portrait of this boarding school and the alumni's experiences of it may have been broadened by giving Homes' administrators the opportunity to speak. However, Tseten accomplishes two goals by denying the school's representatives the chance to speak. He accentuates the impersonal nature of the school as experienced by the alumni as children, and effectively portrays the attempts by the alumni both to revisit their childhood selves and to understand the Homes world from which their adult selves emerged. In fact, the technique almost mimics a child's (ultimately futile) attempts to understand the logic and machinations of the larger world in whose hands his or her fate wholly, and terrifyingly, rests. Ultimately, the effectiveness of *We Homes Chaps* lies in the "we" of the film's title: director Kesang Tseten himself is a Homes alumnus, and incorporates himself into the narrative of the story. By reflexively turning his camera lens onto himself and his relationships with his classmates, Tseten delivers a portrait of post-colonial Himalayan boarding

school life in a way that no one but an insider and a participant could.

This film is significant for being one of the first made by a Tibetan filmmaker. Yet, the story is not only about a Tibetan refugee's struggle to maintain cultural and religious identity in diaspora. Rather, the film is significant for its portrayal of displaced people struggling to uncover and maintain authentic personal, cultural and religious identities separate from the postcolonial institution and world which raised them. The film would be useful for courses touching upon such subjects as colonialism, cultural displacement, maintaining cultural identity in diaspora, the refugee experience, family and adoption, and even childhood psychology. In addition, it provides a counterpoint to David MacDougall's series about another Indian boarding school, the Doon School.

Chain of Love. Directed by Marije Meerman. 2001. 50 minutes, color. Distributed by First Run/Icarus Films, 32 Court Street, 21st floor, Brooklyn, NY 10018-3396, <http://www.frif.com>.

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Chain of Love provides vivid glimpses and a valuable analysis of the contemporary globalization of domestic work. The film shifts between household scenes in the Netherlands, Italy, and the Philippines, where we observe the intimate connections between domestic workers, employers, and their children. While focused mainly on footage from Rome, the Hague, and Manila, the film is representative of an ever-widening global pattern of women migrant workers from the Philippines and other parts of Southeast Asia who leave home to seek work and economic opportunities abroad, mainly in parts of Western Europe, North America and East Asia and send remittances home to support their families (cf. *Servants of Globalization: Women, Migration, and Domestic Work*. Rhacel Salazar Parrenas, Stanford University Press, 2001 and *Maid to Order in Hong Kong*. Nicole Constable. Cornell University Press, 1997).

The film opens with a scene from an elegant middle-class home in The Hague, where we observe May, a young Filipina domestic worker, dressing a little girl, feeding children their breakfast, putting a toddler down for a nap, and doing a variety of household chores,

including cooking, washing, ironing, and emptying the dishwasher. Meanwhile, the film's narration begins (in Dutch with English subtitles): "Are you also one of those people with a busy job and family? Do you also have trouble looking after your home and children? Globalization is here to help you. A new commodity has been added to our global economy: Care and love." Next we hear from May's stylish Dutch employer, Marie Pauline, who tells us that having an *au pair* to look after her four daughters provides her with the freedom, flexibility, and peace of mind to go out to work as a consultant. Moreover, May is the breadwinner for her family in the Philippines and she costs Marie Pauline just over \$800 a month, a mere fraction of what Marie Pauline would have to pay for institutionalized daycare.

A central point of the film is what Rhacel Salazar Parrenas calls the "care chain in globalization." As Parrenas explains in the film, the most privileged women in Western Europe and other parts of the world who can afford to hire less privileged immigrant women from Third World countries to do the childcare and household work are at one end of the care chain. At the opposite end of the chain are the least privileged women in Third World countries who look after the children of absent migrant workers. Throughout the film, we encounter women who are situated along this chain. Melanie, for example, is a Filipina who works in Rome, while her young son remains behind in the Philippines in the care of her mother-in-law and a cousin named Michelle. Filipina domestic workers in Rome can earn around \$840 per month, far more than many professionals would earn in the Philippines. Typical of many overseas workers, Melanie remits a large portion of her salary to support her family. She also pays Michelle a monthly salary of \$35, half of which Michelle, in turn, gives to her own parents. Melanie resembles many overseas workers in the film who speak of missing their own children, and treating their European charges with loving care—as if they were their own. Correspondingly, we see Michelle in the Philippines tenderly caring for Melanie's son as she explains that she looks after him "as though he were my own." Like many other migrant women, Melanie cries as she thinks about her son; Michelle also sheds tears as she describes how her young charge missed his mother, especially when he was ill.

The film also points to links between the "chain of love" and the wider political economy and state interests. On the one hand, given Philippine un/underemployment and international debt, the government