

Introduction

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The past decade has seen an internationalization of cultural studies scholarship and an emerging interest in interdisciplinary approaches to the study of globalization. Recent developments on the world stage, such as the global economic crisis, political violence, urban terror, militarization, and migrant flows, all reveal the complex interplay between economic, cultural, and political processes. Although issues of gender and sexuality are woven into these exigencies, the manner in which they come into public view demands critical attention. *Circuits of Visibility* is an attempt to create an intellectual space in order to engage with the gendered politics of visibility in the context of globalization.

Gendered Subjects and Global Visibility

Visibility, writes Foucault, is a trap. It assures the automatic functioning of power whose force lies “in a certain concerted distribution of bodies, surfaces, lights, gazes; in an arrangement whose internal mechanisms produce the relation in which individuals are caught up.”¹ Following that logic, the gendered subject of globalization, far from being self-evident or transparent as often assumed, has to be situated within shifting formations of power. There is scholarly consensus that gendered categories being reproduced under transnational conditions need more nuanced research attention.² Global flows of media technologies, migration, and the unfettered mobility of capital rework old logics of domination in new global forms. The subject of sexuality and cultural politics gets caught in the global crossfire, and the issues are no longer contained within national borders and local domains.³ The uneven formations of global cultures and their implications are a point of political and intellectual concern to scholars and activists alike.⁴

The essays in *Circuits of Visibility* track the ways in which gendered subjects are produced and defined in transnationally networked, media-saturated environments. Driving this production is the flow of capital, with its complex global infrastructure of commodities, resources, and bodies. Media technologies, systems of representation, and information networks constitute the circuitry that transport modalities of power, producing what Grewal and Kaplan term “scattered hegemonies.”⁵ Hence, transnational media environments serve as a crucial site from which to examine gendered constructions and contradictions that underwrite globalization. Globalization represents a complex disjunctive order

that is clearly not captured by the popular rhetoric of easy fusion and smooth cultural transitions; rather, it is marked by jagged contours which can no longer be captured in terms of simple binaries that characterize center-periphery models.⁶ Taking this shift as a point of departure, the essays in this collection engage with debates about gender and sexuality as they are reconfigured in various parts of the globe.

The rhetoric of securitization and the neoliberal marketplace are key registers through which gendered subjectivities are currently being defined, disciplined, and deployed across spatial and temporal boundaries. Since sexuality has historically played a central role in the ways in which dominant Western views on cultural differences are coded, sexual politics continues to be highly racialized in globality. In the context of global economic fluctuations and mobility, resorting to simple reductive binaries has become a paradigmatic mode of response to describe difference. These evocations, when layered within other political and economic assemblages and scripts, have material implications. As Joan Scott reminds us, the “ruses of essentialism, in whatever guises they come, ultimately perpetuate inequalities and militate against change.”⁷

How does the problematic of gender surface and morph within the space of transnational public cultures? Inderpal Grewal advances a persuasive argument for thinking about “the heterogeneous and multiple transnational connectivities that produced various meanings of the term global.”⁸ She cautions that a theory of connectivity should be historicized and include incompleteness, exclusions, and unevenness. To produce a gendered understanding of globality is to show how these absences and invisibilities are produced and sustained through mediated reiterations that cross borders and communities. In that spirit, by way of introducing the issues, let me offer a few examples drawn to highlight how particular types of gendered visibility are normalized within the asymmetries of transnational linkages.

The Afghan woman, whose body provided the moral justification for the war on terror, stands out as the most enduring and iconic image of gendered oppression. Her abject body surfaces only to consolidate cultural differences in terms of a civilizational clash and set the stage for pastoral power of Western benevolence. Visually captured and circulated by the media, the gesture of rescue and foregrounding of Afghan women as victims reinforces the superiority of the West. By default, the West is seen as the haven of democracy, secularism, and an enlightened citizenry fortified with agency and choice. In Europe, recent political controversies have once again made the Islamic veil signify the split between Western modernity and the Islamic world. The wearing of the Islamic veil, in most of its forms, has been conflated with oppression, patriarchal control, and subordinate status of Muslim women. The subject of gender is predictably drawn into public

view and grafted onto other social and political agendas. The rhetoric about veiling today is being recuperated in the context of widespread resistance to Muslim migration. Defending a total ban on the veil, French prime minister Nicolas Sarkozy declared that the veil is an attack on French ideas of how to live together: "Citizenship has to be lived with an uncovered face."⁹ A similar statement sparked national debate about the very possibility of a multicultural society in Britain in 2006 when Jack Straw, a British Labor Party politician, stated that the *niqab* was a "visible statement of separation and of difference."¹⁰ The veiled body of the Muslim woman is singled out as the one that refuses integrations with the national community through a sartorial barrier. What stands out in these examples is how questions of modernity and tradition are inserted into public culture and managed in terms of symbolic meaning and material practices.¹¹ Transnational communities and the presence of deterritorialized cultures unsettle dominant definitions of publics and citizenship. The veil sets the Muslim woman apart as incapable of participating in a communicable modernity, thereby perpetuating the view of the West as the end point—the destination for the rest of the world, which, as Dipesh Chakrabarty notes, is delegated to the waiting rooms of history, lacking contemporaneity with the West.¹²

In the context of American exceptionalism and the war against terror, the regulation of sexualities has lately mobilized an assemblage of discourses once again linking nationalism, heteronormativity, whiteness, and citizenship. The transnational production of sexualized bodies works in concert with power and technology, as seen in the digital circulation of the torture images from Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. The Abu Ghraib photographs publicizing the inhumane treatment meted out to Iraqi prisoners shocked the world. The image of Private Lynndie England holding a leash attached to the neck of a crawling, naked Iraqi prisoner digitally flashed across the world, evoking outrage about American brutality and arrogance and the dehumanization of Muslim men. The pictures of England and the detainees, according to Allen Feldman, represent a visual circuitry of gender reversal. Iraqi prisoners are emasculated and stripped of their sexual power by the white woman soldier, who in her pose of dominance serves as the emblematic figure of these rites of gender inversion.¹³ The Abu Ghraib scandal, with its complex figurations of race, sexuality, and gender, has to be situated against the framework of U.S. nationalism. Here sexuality, as Jasbir Puar writes, is not a situation out of control, but rather "it constitutes a systemic, intrinsic, and pivotal module of power relations."¹⁴

With the transnational circulation of media images, the hegemony of the West is reproduced in the global imaginary as the site of progressive sexual politics and cosmopolitan modernity. As Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan write, "the United States and Europe are figured as modern and thus as the sites of

progressive social movements, while other parts of the world are presumed to be traditional, especially in regard to sexuality.”¹⁵ It is this assumption, for example, that drives the problematic immigration tests which measure the assimilability of would-be immigrants by gauging their response to supposedly progressive Dutch values about sexuality.¹⁶ Ironically what signifies a liberal worldview associated with the West is deployed as an instrument of “shock and awe” for potential immigrants. Sexuality, mobility, and scripts of modernity are deeply intertwined in the production of the transnational subject.

Popular discussions, according to Ara Wilson, conflate Western, modern, and globalization as the source of sexual modernity, particularly nonnormative sexuality, reproducing what she calls “a general framework of an import-export calculus.”¹⁷ For example, on July 2009, when the New Delhi High Court decriminalized homosexuality in India, many in the media termed the victory “India’s Stonewall.”¹⁸ The developmental narrative with the West as the site of sexual liberation stays intact in these scripts.¹⁹ The hegemony of the West and its sexual modernity has been an important form of control since the colonial civilizing mission; today, its presence and power is pervasive due to the global media flows.

Sexual cultures of postcolonial societies continue to have a tangled and contested relationship to Western modernity and its public manifestations in the world of consumption. In January 2009, a group of activists in India belonging to a Hindu right-wing organization physically attacked women in a bar in the town of Mangalore, stating that the women were indulging in activities that went against the grain of Indian culture. India’s media went full throttle, covering the event with sensational titles such as “Talibanisation of India.” The clips of the women being brutally beaten and dragged were replayed over and over again in the media. There was heated debate about the moral policing and “domestic terrorism” that was being directed against women. A very successfully managed campaign lashed back at the conservative Hindu group, rallying support through the Internet.²⁰ The political organizing and retaliation by urban youth was made possible through social networking technologies. The blogosphere created a vibrant space for a new form of feminist debate using the language and tactics of the marketplace.

The incident forced a repetition of the familiar discourse of protection. The attackers justified their violence as necessary response to restrain women from their anti-Indian activity of being in a bar. The men claimed that they were suspicious of young women who were independent and “Westernized,” thereby reviving a civilizational discourse in which *moral* and *local* are conflated and are held in opposition to *degenerate* and *global*. An Indian politician affiliated with the Hindu right-wing party (BJP) commented on the incident and what he perceived as global contamination of Indian values: “India cannot remain India if

it becomes America.”²¹ America, as transnational imaginary, was contaminating authentic expressions of sexuality through a penetration of new consumption practices and desires.²²

The politics and performance of sexuality, as demonstrated by these various examples, are situated within the complex histories and economies of the local, the structures of global capitalism, and transnational media flows. The move to study globalization through a gendered optics and from different material sites is particularly relevant in the context of conspicuous consumption. Packaging market-driven interests as social values, neoliberalism reshuffles the meaning of public responsibility and citizenship into the language of private choices and entitlements. This neoliberal ethic in its transnational travels is rapidly reshaping social formations and cultural practices, with gendered consequences.²³ However, global consumer culture, in its commodification of difference, actively erases historical memory in the production of newer forms of power. Using textual and ethnographic data from various global sites, the essays in *Circuits of Visibility* discuss how gender and sexuality are constituted, come into public visibility, and in the process get entangled within transnational configurations of power.

The literature on globalization, according to Saskia Sassen, needs to address “gendered instantiations” of the moment in order to render visible what is now evicted from the account.²⁴ The objective of this collection is to gain a more nuanced understanding and active consideration of global transformations and their impact on gendered subjectivities and sexual politics. Globalization and transnational flows have received extensive academic attention across disciplines. As Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Mohanty write, “There is an ongoing theoretical challenge to uncover the cultural, political, and economic interplay between the very categories of the global and the local.”²⁵ This challenge to decenter categories takes on new dimensions with changes in the global social and political landscape. Scholars have undertaken this critical task by addressing how new modes of power inscribe sexuality and gender within assemblages spanning domains such as nationalism, citizenship, governmentality, public-sphere formations, and flows of labor and capital.²⁶ Motivated by feminist concerns and postcolonial critique, *Circuits of Visibility* attempts to provide deep and textured contextualization of gender and sexual politics.

Mediated Cultures

In the global context, questions of culture, subjectivity, and everyday life have to be situated against the ubiquitous presence and proliferation of communication technologies and their ability to transcend time and space. Increasingly embedded in the circuits of social life, media forms collide with established cultural

practices, forcing reconfigurations of categories such as private/public, tradition/modernity, and global/local. The pervasiveness of these processes and the level of media saturation necessitate a critical defamiliarization of media presence in everyday life and culture. As W. J. T. Mitchell and Mark B. N. Hansen write, media can no longer be dismissed as neutral or transparent, subordinate or merely supplemental to the information they carry. Instead they “broker the giving of space and time within which concrete experience becomes possible.”²⁷ The cultures and practices developed around media forms provide an analytical space from which to examine how the global is performed, reproduced, and contested within the material specificities of everyday life. Local moments, as Saskia Sassen argues, are found to be at the center of the global, rather than being the nonglobal.²⁸ Taking a broad perspective on media and media forms, the essays in *Circuits of Visibility* direct focused attention to the ways in which gender and sexuality are constituted and regulated via transnational media flows and networks.

The pathways of media that crisscross national boundaries create a virtual sensorium that permeates the local and cultural life of communities. As Brian Larkin argues, the meaning attached to technologies and “the social uses to which they are put are not an inevitable consequence but something worked out over time and in the context of considerable cultural debate.”²⁹ These cultural transformations are located within the instabilities of transnational political and economic linkages. The approach of the essays in this book shares the perspective of media anthropology and interdisciplinary media scholarship, which situate media as social practice.³⁰ This enables a reading of the constitution of everyday life, the workings of power, and the production of individual and collective identities.

The essays engage with global dynamics of media in order to render visible the selective promotion of gendered identities within new cultural, political, and economic configurations. According to Arjun Appadurai, because of the multiplicity of forms and the speed in which they move through daily life routines, electronic media provide resources for self-imagining as an everyday project.

Thus the biographies of ordinary people are constructions (or fabrications) in which the imagination plays an important role. Nor is this role a simple matter of escape (holding steady the conventions that govern the rest of social life), for in the grinding of gears between unfolding lives and their imagined counterparts a variety of imagined communities . . . is formed, communities that generate new kinds of politics, new kinds of collective expression, and new needs for social discipline and surveillance on the part of elites.³¹

Further, this work of the imagination, Appadurai argues, cannot be assumed to be wholly emancipatory or entirely disciplined but stands as a space of contestation where individuals work the global into their own practices of the modern.³² This

process is steeped within the historical and political trajectories of the nation and is most visible in the spaces of consumption and popular culture where narratives of desire, gender, and commodity overlap in particular formations.

The circulation of media images and commodities draws the global consumer into the circuits of the global cultural economy and its distinct ideological imprints. Consumers in the Global South flex this commodity space in order to create new responses to the scripts of Western modernity. In Kathmandu, for example, Mark Liechty notes that people use fashion as a means both to identify with other fashionable people locally and to forge imaginative links with the global culture of urban modernity.³³ Here is an illustrative response from one of Liechty's respondents: "According to our religion . . . , it's written that women shouldn't be prostitutes, dancers, and all this. But just for society I have to wear *makeup*, lip stick, eye makeup, fancy clothes, . . . or else they'll say, Eh! What a hillbilly . . . she is !"³⁴ Fashion stands in as a marker of global cosmopolitanism, although it is perceived as frivolous in the local context. It is interesting that the respondent in Liechty's ethnography supports her claim about cultural authenticity not only by citing the textual authority of religion but also by referring to a rural/urban divide which in turn serves as a proxy for local/cosmopolitan.

Cinema works with the consumer market in mobilizing alternative versions of modernity in various parts of the Global South and among immigrant groups.³⁵ In India, the Bollywood industry has had a dramatic influence on the fashion industry and in the creation of a new Indo-Western aesthetic in contemporary women's fashions in which Western functionality, or what is locally called "modern," meets ethnic design and traditional norms of feminine decorum and modesty. These mediated pathways of consumer discourse make available alluring global subject positions which are flexed and made pliable enough to accommodate local ideologies of gendered bodily comportment, thereby creating an interactive form of modernity.³⁶

These adaptations and overlay are not always so smooth; they are more often the sites of violent contestations, especially when the sexualized body becomes the flash point and the surface on which other anxieties about globalization and modernity are contested. The situation of women working in the export-processing zones of Mexico and China or even the call centers of India are illustrative of how the global labor market reorganizes social worlds, with violent consequences.³⁷ The manner in which questions of gender and sexuality gain publicity is a commentary on how social worlds are produced and regulated. As Arvind Rajagopal writes, relations between individuals tend to be mediated more and more through markets and media, increasing the distance between individuals even as, in imagination, they grow closer.³⁸

The essays in *Circuits of Visibility* engage with media imaginaries and the manner in which they are inserted into the complex scripting and orchestration of gendered meanings and subject positions in globality. The essays in this book all speak to the fact that social relations are constituted in highly mediated environments which are no longer bound within the insularity of nations. The presence of media and technology, in all the various sites examined in *Circuits of Visibility*, enables the exploration of complex transnational circuits that connect capital to the routines of everyday life. The prodigious discourse generated through the labyrinth of communication systems, technologies, and platforms does not necessarily translate into the creation of a democratic transnational public sphere. The media are part of the global machinery that discounts history in its populist emphasis on the present and the future. It is also the presence of media technologies that is assumed to deliver societies into the threshold of a hegemonic Euro-American modernity. At this juncture when technology holds sway, it is important, as David Morley reminds us, "to pay attention to the particularities of the media, without reifying their status and thus isolating them from the dynamics of the economic, social and political contexts in which they operate."³⁹

Tracking Transnational Circuits

The essays in *Circuits of Visibility* collectively advance a discussion about sexual politics, mediated environments, and cultures of globality. They do so by mapping how forms of visibility and invisibility, with reference to the gendered body, are produced and sustained across borders, markets, and communities. In addition to a general inattention to issues of gender, accounts of globalization have been critiqued for the assumption that mapping the facticity of economic linkages and population flows is sufficient to account for current cultural forms and subjective interiorities.⁴⁰ The study of the mediated and transnational production of gender and sexuality requires deep contextualization. The intellectual challenge is to rethink categories such as nation, tradition, modernity, culture, and gender in mobile and pliable terms rather than as territorial and fixed. To do so, critical practice has to work against familiar models of cultural critique that rest on essentialized dichotomies, universalism, and an unquestioned Eurocentrism. Postcolonial feminist scholars have long argued for the need to highlight the politics of transnational linkages and problematize the lines cutting across center and periphery.⁴¹ The sign of the transnational is used here, in both its descriptive and heuristic sense, to capture the layering of social, political, economic, and mediated processes that exceed conventional boundaries. The transnational provides an analytical framework to open the terrain of media cultures, gender, and everyday life in dynamic interrelationality. The transnational as an optic and approach

“creates a space to imagine options for social transformation that are obscured when borders, boundaries and the structures, processes and actors within them are taken as given.”⁴² The contributions engage with the strategic processes and follow the mediated circuits through which gendered categories travel.

A variety of questions animates the discussion raised in this collection of essays: What forms of publicity do gender politics take in a transnational world? How does the pervasive presence of an ethos of consumerism and the hypermobility of capital flows influence various sites of cultural production? In the wake of neoliberal transformations, what types of hybrid and gendered performances follow or are expected to come into being? How are newer forms of racialized tensions, nativism, and violence worked into global scripts of sexuality? How have debates on the private/public distinctions been mediated and mobilized globally? How has the history and genealogy of knowledge production impacted the framing of these debates? What are the terms of admittance into the transnational public sphere, both in terms of discourse and materiality of experience? How do media forms and technologies reframe, merge, and morph the debates on gender in transnational registers?

The essays in this book engage with these questions and more from multiple global locations and theoretical perspectives. The four-part structure of the book is determined by the central problematics that emerge from the essays around the subjects of visibility, ideology, capital, and technology. The essays track the circulation of bodies, aesthetics, media forms, and technologies across national borders and map the ways in which dominant power structures frame sexual identities and practices.

Part 1, “Configuring Visibilities,” presents chapters about the travel of visual practices of modernity, the creation of a neoliberal aesthetic, the transnational hegemony of whiteness, and the mediated circulation and global reproduction of ethnic categories. These essays all deal with the processes and intricate routes through which issues regarding gender come into visibility. Since the global circulation of media and the technologies of social networking have exploded the notion of a singular public, it is far more productive to find ways to engage with the public sphere as a field of discursive connections.⁴³ Within these multiple ways of imagining social worlds, certain discourses gain public attention with particular ideological inflections, relegating other issues to the largely invisible confines of the private domain. Tracking such configurations poses a methodological challenge and necessitates a multisited approach in order to highlight the interconnections between levels of discourse and the cultural practices of everyday life.

Susan Ossman asks how certain regimes of gendered visibility dictate the publicizing of the nation and its leadership. Through an examination of the

visual cultures of royal display in Morocco, Ossman advances a larger argument about the consolidation or reinforcement of gendered forms of power. The introduction of Princess Salma in representations and portraiture of the royal family is interpreted by Ossman as transnational management of a visual grammar of the nation. As sartorial choices stand in as indices of modernity, managing visibility and calibrating appearances assume dynamic transnational dimensions in the Arab world.

Stripping history of controversy is the way of the neoliberal marketplace. It is also the same logic that drives the publicity for a Balkan singer with a complicated affiliation to the violence of her nation's past. Through a close reading of singer Ceca's highly sexualized performance and research with her fans, authors Zala Volčič and Karmen Erjavec show how the Balkan diva leverages her iconic national status in redefining herself as a borderless celebrity. The global media machinery ensures that the malleability of celebrity presence trumps Ceca's nationalist politics.

Angharad Valdivia focuses on how the transnational flow of media reproduces types of racial normativity. An examination of received forms of hybridity enables Valdivia to engage with power structures that define the gendered face of Latinidad, as deployed by popular culture. Revisiting popular sites of mediated cultural production and the global travel of form, artifacts, and actors enables Valdivia to question the limits of cultural categories as revealed through the scalar collision of the national and the transnational.

Radhika Parameswaran provides a critical treatment of whiteness against a transnational web of visual technologies as they permeate the fabric of everyday life in India. Blending textual analysis and ethnography, Parameswaran shows how whiteness, evoked within the national space of India through various media technologies, impacts the performance and lived experience of gender. The politics of the "fluctuating epidermis" is premised on the complex transnational histories of whiteness and colonialism.

Part 2, "Contesting Ideologies," follows with a multisited discussion on gendered regimes of normativity that underlie the production of transnational spaces. In a world connected by media technologies, new lines of power shape social norms, social interactions, and ways of being in the world. Global ideoscapes collide with local cultures and traditions, placing gendered bodies right at the center of the crossfire. Normative scripts of nationalism, intact with exclusionary forms of admittance and regulation of populations, constitute the basis for the policing of gendered bodies. When projected on the transnational screen, the structures of Western modernity and sexual hegemony are inscribed over non-Western bodies, thereby consolidating new forms of domination.

Islam and sexuality have been assigned a visible place in public debate as media spectacles, mainly through the yoking of disparate issues and players. Examining Islamic practices of self-making that are distinct from the Western liberal scripts reveals alternate social imaginaries and the new mediated, public face of Islam. Nabil Echchaibi in his essay captures modes of projecting Islam into public visibility through alternative formulations of mediated masculinity. The transnational circulation and reach of new media technologies enable Muslim televangelists to articulate an Islamic modernity in cosmopolitan terms. Echchaibi engages with how this project of religious revivalism recasts the gendered debate within Islam in a new global paradigm.

Globalization has precipitated the suturing of issues where various forms of disciplinary power coalesce. Nowhere is this better seen than in the immigration system, where surveilling techniques place immigrants within a wide centralized network of power. Felicity Schaeffer-Grabiel discusses global media outreach against sex trafficking. In this context, metaphors of slavery are used to foment gendered panics and then inevitably slide into debates on boundaries and exclusions. Media forms create what Schaeffer-Grabiel calls a “culture of repetition,” in which Western nations have to be quarantined from the cross-border contamination of expendable gendered bodies.

Julie Thomas turns our attention to the media space of the Petit Palais museum in Paris and its remaking of immigrant women as producers and consumers of commodified nationalism. Thomas examines the institutional role of the museum in circulating national culture and the penetrative power of its civilizing mission in France. This essay takes us through the Petit Palais to demonstrate that to be modern is to act like the West.⁴⁴ Like the garments featured in the exhibition, behavior for immigrant women, writes Thomas, must be “customized” and “reinvented” in order to be deemed assimilable.

Extending the gendered implications of the project of modernity and the narrative of humanitarianism, Spring-Serenity Duvall turns the focus to celebrities and their place in the neoliberal framework and dispensation of care. This essay demonstrates the coming together of the marketplace, media spectacularization of celebrity, and images of motherhood. Angelina Jolie as the postfeminist mouthpiece and savior of the Global South mobilizes a new politics of transnational care that is carefully grounded within the frames of U.S. exceptionalism. The travel of celebrities from the West and their projection of care continue a familiar West-rest/North-South script. These dichotomies are reinforced and replayed by the media in the exotic visual coverage of Jolie in distressed global regions.

Part 3, “Capital Trails,” transports the discussion to the ways in which gender and the subject of sexuality are deployed through media technologies in the construction of commodities and labor. Mainstream accounts of globalization,

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as noted earlier, often proceed on purely economic and gender-neutral terms. By bringing in mediated influences and opening up the space of analysis, the essays in this section situate the meanings of gendered labor against a broad canvas of intersecting forces. Aihwa Ong states that economic rationalities of globalization and the cultural dynamics that shape human and political response have to be brought together in the same analytical frame.⁴⁵ Economic lines of power have historically been deeply entrenched within the materialities of race and gender divisions. In globality, the media exacerbate the tensions within these intersections.

Minoo Moallem offers an exploration of the world of connoisseur books and their historical investments in the circulatory value of the Persian carpet. Moallem tracks the transnational connections between the history of commodities, modes of economic exchange, mediated knowledge, and women's labor in carpet production. Distancing the carpet from the gendered and embodied experience surrounding its production, this system of expert knowledge is embedded in a scopic economy that displays total mastery of the Other and the "not-so-civilized" cultures of the East.

The saga of modernity takes aggressive new turns in India with the emergence of economic liberalization and technologized work environments. My chapter examines how the neoliberal economy seeps into everyday practices of local lives, enabled by the support of local infrastructures. The rape of a call-center employee in Bangalore opens up a discussion of the discursive grammars through which the gendered body is made visible in the articulation of global modernities. I engage with the asymmetries that underwrite the creation of a transnationally positioned yet locally bound and malleable labor force.

The subject of mobility is central to the next two essays, which map migration within the pathways of global capital. Through a blending of ethnography and textual readings, Wanning Sun notes that the circuit of transnational capital is inhabited not only by power elites but also by invisible laboring bodies. Here we see the coming together of the dynamics and flexibility of global mobility cast against the limitations of translocal movements. The figure of the Chinese migrant domestic worker serves to frame Sun's argument that class and gender intersect to produce specific conditions of subjection in China's globalized capitalist market.

In globality, both state and corporate actors are vested in the creation of a citizenry oriented to the consumption of global products. Jan Maghinay Padios shows through careful ethnographically informed examination how the overseas Filipino community is transformed into a transnational migrant market. A global media machinery both creates and sustains a transnational imaginary within which the affective structures of immigrant lives are played out. Gendered roles

and images of motherhood are leveraged in the neoliberal campaign to rearticulate citizenship in terms of consumption.

Part 4, “Technologies of Control,” explores how the intimacies of capitalism, governmentality, and new technologies establish the terms on which sexuality is foregrounded. Through a range of subjects—human rights, queer subjectivities, cultural citizenship, and diasporic politics—the authors follow an assemblage of regulatory practices instituted and transported through mediated channels and mechanisms. The ubiquity of new media technologies and their power to morph between platforms are often equated to their transparency and liberatory potential. Deconstructing these claims through a close reading of the technologized frames that define sociality, these essays probe the lines of power within the economies of visual and digital media.

While new technologies enable the rapid global circulation of information and images of human rights violations, Sujata Moorti shows how visual documentation of civil crises in the Global South reinscribe a digital colonialism. In her analysis of the teachers’ strike in Oaxaca and the protests in Myanmar, she argues that the Internet and cell-phone footage from citizens-turned-journalists have transformed the narration of human rights from national and local registers into spectacles for transnational consumption. In the process, paradoxically, the Internet recenters the West and reproduces geopolitical asymmetries of race and gender.

The production of public queer cultures as sites of media consumption is the subject of Audrey Yue’s essay. Sexuality is used strategically in Singapore to promote consumption and further the state’s image as a global media hub. While homosexuality is illegal and actively policed, it is incorporated into the cultural and mediated life of the city, following the market-driven dictates of the neoliberal economy. Yue examines what consumption practices, especially for lesbians, reveal about claims to citizenship and participation in transnational networks.

Saskia Witteborn’s chapter looks at diasporic imaginaries and cultural politics as defined outside the boundaries of nation. The focus of this chapter is on the persona of Rebiya Kadeer, who spearheads a political agenda for the Uyghur diasporic community. Using the tropes of motherhood and nature, Kadeer scripts a global media presence for the cause. A transnational politics of visibility for the Uyghurs is predicated on the deployment of conventional gender scripts which stand in for tradition and history. Communication technologies, in this case, become the site and conduit for reconstruction of lost localities and cultures.

Noor Al-Qasimi turns her focus to the questions of governmentality and the regulation of queer subjectivities in cyberspace. For the “post-oil” generation in the United Arab Emirates, the use of social networking websites has led to the creation of a transnational pan-Gulfian queer imaginary that unsettles notions of

sovereignty and territoriality. Cyberspace, argues Al-Qasimi, provides a political space for transgressive expression. However, the question remains to what extent it displaces the governance of gender that is embedded within the framework of the state's preoccupation with its global image and the preservation of an authentic, regional cultural identity.

The essays in their diversity reveal that the politics of sexuality is never a discrete area of practice. Traveling through various global sites, the questions raised address crosscutting issues that exceed conventional boundaries of the nation. The essays resist linear characterizations and attempt the critical work of bringing issues into productive crisis.⁴⁶ *Circuits of Visibility* initiates a collective conversation and political critique about the mediated global terrain on which sexuality is defined, performed, regulated, made visible, and experienced.

NOTES

1. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 200, 202.

2. For more on this subject, see Amrita Basu, Inderpal Grewal, and Lisa Malki, eds., "Globalization and Gender," special issue, *Signs* 26, no. 4 (Summer 2001).

3. See Yukiko Hanawa, "Circuits of Desire: Introduction," *Positions* 2, no. 1 (1994): v–xi; Jasbir Puar, "Global Circuits: Transnational Sexualities and Trinidad," *Signs* 26, no. 4 (Summer 2001): 1039–1065; Jigna Desai, "Homo on the Range: Mobile and Global Sexualities," *Social Text* 20, no. 4 (Winter 2002): 65–89; Anjali Arondekar, "Border/Line Sex," *Interventions* 7, no. 2 (2005): 236–250.

4. Many of these ideas were first formulated in Radha S. Hegde, "Transnational Feminist Media Studies," in Wolfgang Donsbach, ed., *International Encyclopedia of Communication* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008), 1794–1799; Radha S. Hegde, "Globalizing Gender Studies in Communication," in Julia Wood and Bonnie Dow eds., *Handbook on Gender Studies in Communication* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2006), 433–449.

5. Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan, eds., *Scattered Hegemonies: Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practice* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994).

6. Appadurai argues that globalization constitutes "a complex overlapping, disjunctive order that cannot any longer be understood in terms of existing center-periphery models." See Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 32.

7. Joan Wallach Scott, "Feminist Reverberations," *Differences* 13 (2002): 8.

8. Inderpal Grewal, *Transnational America: Feminisms, Diasporas, Neoliberalisms* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 22–24.

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12. Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); Joan Wallach Scott, *Politics of the Veil* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007).
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14. Jasbir Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), 113.
15. Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan, "Global Identities: Theorizing Transnational Studies of Sexuality," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 7, no. 4 (2001): 663–679.
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18. Mansi Poddar, "India Decriminalizes Gay Sex," *Huffington Post* (July 2, 2009), http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/07/02/india-decriminalizes-gay_n_224656.html (accessed May 19, 2010).
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21. AlJazeeraEnglish, "Indian Extremists Want to Limit Women's Freedom," *YouTube* (February 14, 2009), <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yTNPZGWPqIY&NR=1> (accessed June 17, 2008).
22. Grewal, *Transnational America*.
23. Angela McRobbie, *The Aftermath of Feminism: Gender, Culture and Social Change* (London: Sage, 2009).
24. Saskia Sassen, *Globalization and Its Discontents* (New York: New Press, 1998).
25. M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Introduction: Genealogies, Legacies, Movements," in M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty, eds., *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures* (London: Routledge, 1997), xi.
26. It is beyond the scope of this introduction to review the growing body of literature on gender and sexuality and globalization. I draw attention to some select contributions which have been significant in retheorizing gender and sexuality from a transnational framework: Alexander and Mohanty, *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures*; Grewal and Kaplan, *Scattered Hegemonies*; Ella Shohat, ed., *Talking Visions: Multicultural Feminism in a Transnational Age* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001); Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, *Multiculturalism, Postcoloniality and Transnational Media* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2003); Anne McClintock, Aamir Mufti, and Ella Shohat, eds., *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation, and Postcolonial Perspectives* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997); Caren Kaplan,

Norma Alarcon, and Minoo Moallem, eds., *Between Woman and Nation: Nationalism, Transnational Feminisms, and the State* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999); Andrew Parker, Mary Russo, Doris Sommer, and Patricia Yaeger, eds., *Nationalism and Sexualities* (New York: London, 1992); Marianne DeKoven, ed., *Feminist Locations: Global and Local, Theory and Practice* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001); Sara Ahmed, Claudia Castañeda, Anne-Marie Fortier, and Mimi Sheller, eds., *Uprootings/Regroundings: Questions of Home and Migration* (Oxford, UK: Berg, 2003).

27. W. J. T. Mitchell and Mark B. N. Hansen, *Critical Terms for Media Studies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

28. Saskia Sassen, "Afterword: Knowledge Practices and Subject Making at the Edge," in Melissa Fisher and Greg Downey, eds., *Frontiers of Capital: Ethnographic Reflections on the New Economy* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 307.

29. Brian Larkin, *Signal and Noise: Media, Infrastructure, and Urban Culture in Nigeria* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), 3.

30. Faye D. Ginsburg, Lila Abu-Lughod, and Brian Larkin, introduction to Faye D. Ginsburg, Lila Abu-Lughod, and Brian Larkin, eds., *Media Worlds: Anthropology on New Terrain* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), 1–38; Kelly Askew and Richard R. Wilk, eds., *Anthropology of the Media* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002); Nick Couldry and Anna McCarthy, eds., *MediaSpace: Place, Scale and Culture in Media Age* (London: Routledge, 2004).

31. Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*, 54.

32. *Ibid.*, 4.

33. Mark Liechty, *Suitably Modern: Making Middle-Class Culture in a New Consumer Society* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003).

34. *Ibid.*, 137.

35. On this point, see the work of Brian Larkin *Signal, Noise: Media, Infrastructure, and Urban Culture in Nigeria* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008); and Dilip Gaonkar, *Alternative Modernities* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001).

36. For more on interactive modernity and public culture, see Arjun Appadurai and Carol Breckenridge, introduction to Carol Breckenridge, ed., *Consuming Modernity: Public Culture in Contemporary India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press 1996), 1–20.

37. On this issue, see Melissa Wright, *Disposable Women and Other Myths of Global Capitalism* (New York and London: Routledge, 2006); Melissa Wright, "The Private Parts of Public Value: The Regulation of Women Workers in China's Export-Processing Zones," in Joan W. Scott and Debra Keates, eds., *Going Public: Feminism and the Shifting Private Sphere* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 99–122; Kathleen Staudt, *Violence and Activism at the Border: Gender, Fear, and Everyday Life in Ciudad Juarez* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008).

38. Arvind Rajagopal, "Technologies of Perception and the Cultures of Globalization," *Social Text* 68 (Fall 2001): 1–9.

39. David Morley, *Media, Modernity and Technology: The Geography of the New* (London: Routledge, 2007), 1.

40. I draw this idea from Elizabeth A. Povinelli and George Chauncey, "Thinking Sexuality Transnationally," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 5, no. 4 (1999): 439–450; Sassen also makes a similar point in *Globalization and Its Discontents*.

41. Grewal and Kaplan, "Global Identities"; Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan, "Introduction: Transnational Feminist Practices and Questions of Postmodernity," in Grewal and Kaplan, *Scattered Hegemonies*, 1–33; Aihwa Ong, *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press 1999); Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Feminism across*

Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003); Caren Kaplan, "Transporting the Subject: Technologies of Mobility and Location in an Era of Globalization," in Ahmed et al., *Uprootings/Regroundings*, 207–223.

42. Peggy Levitt and Sanjeev Khagram, introduction to Peggy Levitt and Sanjeev Khagram, eds., *The Transnational Studies Reader: Intersections and Innovations* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 9.

43. Craig Calhoun, "Imagining Solidarity: Cosmopolitanism, Constitutional Patriotism, and the Public Sphere," *Public Culture* 14, no. 1 (Winter 2002): 147–171; Craig Calhoun, "Introduction: Habermas and the Public Sphere," in Craig Calhoun, ed., *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), 1–50.

44. Timothy Mitchell, "The Stage of Modernity," in Timothy Mitchell, ed., *Questions of Modernity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 1.

45. Ong, *Flexible Citizenship*, 5.

46. According to Gayatri Spivak, to bring something into productive crisis is a necessary part of the maintenance of a practical politics of the open end. See Gayatri Spivak, *Postcolonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 105.