b o o k r e v i e w s

The books reviewed in this section explore feminist politics in a global frame. We aim not just to include writings in feminist international relations, but also to feature multi-disciplinary scholarship pertaining to global gender relations. The section is usually made up of a combination of several distinct elements: Rethinking the Canon, Feminist Classics/Many Voices, review essays and book reviews. 'Rethinking the Canon' gives space for an individual to reflect on one text that they feel ought to be essential reading for feminists working on global issues, but which is likely to be marginalized by existing disciplinary boundaries: authors are invited to bring the text to our attention and to explain why it is essential reading. 'Feminist Classics/Many Voices', by contrast, includes several short appraisals of a book already widely considered a classic for feminists working on global issues. Reviewers draw on their distinct disciplinary, geographical and personal locations to offer diverse readings of the classic text. Review essays survey several texts on a single theme, aiming either to explore a recent debate that has generated a range of new publications or to survey the best of the literature covering a more established area of research. The book reviews provide brief introductions to, and evaluations of, as broad a range of new publications as space allows. Anyone with suggestions for texts to be reviewed, or requests to contribute to the section, is encouraged to contact the Reviews Editor, Juanita Elias, Juanita.elias@adelaide.edu.au, School of Politics and History, Napier Building, The University of Adelaide, SA 5005, Australia.

REVIEW ESSAY

Breaking Binaries: Writings on the International Sex Trade

Denise Brennan. *What's Love Got to Do With It? Transnational Desire and Sex Tourism in the Dominican Republic*. Durham, NC & London: Duke University Press, 2004. ISBN 0–8223–3297–3.

Kamala Kempadoo and Jo Doezema (eds). *Global Sex Workers: Rights, Resistance, and Redefinition*. London: Routledge, 1999. ISBN 0–415–91829–4.

Julia O'Connell Davidson. *Children in the Global Sex Trade*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005. ISBN 0–7456–2989–8.

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Joyce Outshoorn (ed.). *The Politics of Prostitution: Women's Movements, Democratic States and the Globalization of Sex Commerce*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. ISBN 0–5215–40690.

Prostitution has long been coined the 'oldest profession in the world'. While few dispute this claim, many seek to see the sex industry abolished. Indeed, while prostitution might be the oldest profession it is certainly the most controversial. Writings on the global sex trade are as diverse as the industry itself. Texts vary from personal accounts and autobiographies to essays and theory, to policy and case studies. Ranging from historical and cross-cultural to contemporary and local, the abundant volumes represent an ever-increasing discourse on transnational prostitution. This review essay presents four such books, two edited collections and two single-authored monographs, published between 1999 and 2005. All four texts focus on international prostitution over the past thirty years but each spotlights different geographic locations and different sectors of the industry. In this essay, I will specifically focus on how each of the texts moves beyond simplistic binaries and debates commonly found within other writings on the sex trade.

First, Kamala Kempadoo and Jo Doezema's ground-breaking collection, *Global Sex Workers: Rights, Resistance, and Redefinition* shows how sex workers and sex worker organizations around the world have mobilized, resisted and struggled for their human rights. Second, Joyce Outshoorn's *The Politics of Prostitution: Women's Movements, Democratic States and the Globalization of Sex Commerce*, gives an overview of the recent history of changes to prostitution policy in Western Europe, North America and Australia and analyses the effects that women's movements have had on policy changes. Third, Denise Brennan's *What's Love Got to Do With It? Transnational Desire and Sex Tourism in the Dominican Republic*, represents a significant ethnographic case study of Caribbean sex tourism and introduces the lives and loves, hopes and dreams, of women who look to the sex trade as a way out of their current situations. Last, Julia O'Connell Davidson's controversial, *Children in the Global Sex Trade*, considers the role that children play in the transnational sex industry and critiques dominant constructions of childhood, innocence, dependency and vulnerability.

Writings on sex work almost unanimously engage in debates about sex worker agency and often contain notions of the 'prostitute as victim'. The four texts in question critique the 'prostitute as victim' discourse and go beyond popular understandings and assumptions. Within mainstream sex industry debates there are generally two positions that most academics and theorists occupy: the forced/voluntary position and the abolitionist stance. The forced/voluntary position argues that the sex trade needs to be considered in terms of coercion and consent. Here, prostitutes are understood to be independent adults capable of deciding whether or not to engage in sex work. For example, in the Netherlands, where this model guides the legal system, the 'voluntary prostitute' who enters the industry free of coercion can expect

health and safety requirements, fair wages, minimum labour standards and more, provided he or she is a legal adult over 18 years of age. Conversely, when coercion or force is involved (debt bondage, trafficking, extortion, manipulation), the sex worker is protected under the law and the perpetrator is punished. From this perspective, it is generally argued that all trafficking (which sometimes includes voluntary migration) should be combated vigorously and anyone under 18 years of age needs to be protected from entering the industry.

The second common position, one that many women's movements and feminist organizations have adopted, is typically called the abolitionist stance. Adopted as state policy in Sweden, this perspective maintains that all prostitution represents the violent sexual oppression of women and that prostitutes are reduced to bought and sold objects for men's possession. Indeed, all pimps are exploiters and all women and youth involved in the sex trade are exploited. In general terms, both the forced/voluntary and the abolitionist positions agree on one thing, that youth and children should not be involved in the sex trade. Kempadoo and Doezema, Outshoorn, Brennan and O'Connell Davidson, each in their own way, transcend these two overarching debates and go beyond simplistic binaries and arguments.

It was in 1993 that the now internationally known Kamala Kempadoo first learned of sex workers organizing in the Majority World.[1] Kempadoo heard that prostitutes in Suriname were organizing so she travelled there to find out more. What came of this preliminary exploratory trip was the beginning of a new wave in documenting the international prostitutes' rights movement. *Global Sex Workers* represents one of the earliest texts written collaboratively by sex workers and academics. The edited anthology exposes the global exploitation and oppression (through colonialism, capitalism and racism) of prostitutes and other sex workers in their country of origin and at work in migratory contexts. The collection presents essays, interviews, reports and research from parts of Asia, Africa, the Americas, Australia, the Caribbean and Europe. The myriad pieces work to challenge western knowledge and misunderstandings regarding the lives, families and work of men and women involved in the international sex trade. The diversity of the collection makes for a compellingly eclectic mix of styles. From personal narrative to academic study, this text provides insight into the various contexts of sex work in disparate regions around the world.

The term 'sex work' is strategically and politically used throughout the text in an effort to emphasize that prostitution requires physical labour and is a viable form of work. Sex work, as a political concept, first appeared in the mid-1970s through the prostitutes' rights movement in the US. Since then it has been taken up internationally within the larger struggle for sex worker rights. Sex work, as Kempadoo and Doezema argue, should not be understood as an identity marker or some sort of psychological characteristic but instead 'as an income-generating activity or form of labor for women and men' (p. 3). The sex workers and allies that have contributed to this text stress the labour

aspect of the sex industry. In this way, *Global Sex Workers* is in solidarity with and supports a larger political movement of sexual labourers worldwide. The political shift in terminology from prostitute to sex worker respects individuals' social, cultural, economic and human rights. The linguistic shift also recognizes the various forms of sexual labour that are generally outside the boundaries of what is typically defined as prostitution.

Kempadoo and Doezema argue that defining all sex industry workers (strippers, phone sex operators, escorts, etc.) as sex workers helps to build coalitions and broader social movements that struggle against the devaluation of (primarily) female labour and economic exploitation. While the term sex worker has progressive implications for a larger movement, this re-conceptualization of prostitution as a political position relies on sex workers defining themselves as such. As Denise Brennan explicates in *What's Love Got to Do With It?*, not all sex workers categorize themselves with the same terminology. Some women who exchange sex for money do not define themselves as prostitutes nor do they align themselves with a politically charged sex worker movement.

Global Sex Workers is written from the position that sex workers are agents of change and are capable of independent decision making. The text is premised on the understanding that even in situations where sex workers (men, women, trans-identified and youth) are harmed through their involvement in the industry, 'it is the respectful recognition of subjectivity and personal agency that creates continuity in this collection' (p. 8). Sex worker contributors and allies position themselves as actors, agents and subjects who make choices and take action based on the options available to them. The collection clearly challenges the notion of 'prostitute/sex worker as victim'. Within much of the contemporary and historical feminist movement, sex worker agency has been overlooked and disregarded. And yet, women's agency is imperative to feminist accounts of social justice and social change. *Global Sex Workers* actively confronts and challenges these limited views of the sex industry and the people involved. Kempadoo and Doezema's collection examines how such important factors as gender and sexism, race and racism, class and imperialism are structured through colonialism and globalization and how these factors play out in the global sex trade.

Where *Global Sex Workers* represents voices and experiences from predominantly Majority World contexts, Joyce Outshoorn's formidable text, *The Politics of Prostitution: Women's Movements, Democratic States and the Globalization of Sex Commerce*, strategically focuses on western democratic and relatively affluent countries. Within the international arena, there are as many policies on prostitution as there are countries with prostitutes. In *The Politics of Prostitution*, political scientists, sociologists, criminologists and feminist academics from twelve democratic states have come together to interrogate the relationship between government, women's movements and prostitution policy. The text systematically reviews twelve international governments' policies surrounding the sex trade. The countries in question are Australia, Austria, Britain, Canada, Finland, France, Israel, Italy, the

Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the United States. By focusing on public policies surrounding prostitution since the 1970s, this text seeks to discover whether the State can be made more democratic, and possibly even feminist, through the lobbying and involvement of women's movements and women's policy agencies. The impetus behind the creation of such an important collection arose out of the 1995 meetings of a group of feminist academics who founded the Research Network on Gender Politics and the State (RNGS). The group set out to develop a common framework with which they could analyse the impact of the women's movement and 'state feminism' on democratic governments.

The sixteen contributors in *The Politics of Prostitution* come from academic backgrounds and represent various universities internationally. The heavily formulaic structure of the text makes it ripe with important factual information but not necessarily friendly for a non-academic audience. The background sources used by the contributors are primarily government documents, policy reports, various news briefings and other secondary texts. That said, *The Politics of Prostitution* is an important contribution to the field of women's policy analysis. Each chapter clearly demonstrates how the diverse demands and priorities of women's policy agencies have contributed (or have not contributed) to a variety of government policies and policy changes. For example: Swedish and Finnish feminists have pushed for the unique system of criminalizing only the client and not the sex worker; Dutch women have advocated the legalization of brothels; in Australia, the women's movement has supported full decriminalization.

Each chapter follows a specific structure beginning with a brief introduction to the historical, political and social context of the country's prostitution policies. Chapter introductions are followed by an outline of the country's three most important prostitution policy debates of the past thirty-five years. The chapters proceed – going through each of the three debates in turn – with a discussion of how the issue became of public concern, how and whether the debate was 'gendered', the impact of the women's movement on the debate in question, the activities of women's policy agencies and the overall policy environment in the country at the time. Each chapter then concludes with an analysis of the relative degree of success or failure of the women's policy agencies in affecting change at the policy level.

The various sections in *The Politics of Prostitution* present relevant sex work-related policy information as well as a concise history of policy change in the respective country. The most striking section of the text is Outshoorn's concluding piece and her astute empirical examination of the twelve preceding chapters. She sets out to discover whether women's policy agencies have been effective in advancing women's movements' goals and 'why some governments and their women's policy agencies are more responsive to women's movement demands than others' (p. 2). Through her in-depth analysis she comes to the conclusion that women's movements have been most successful in influencing policy change when they have actively 'gendered'

the debates (or brought the role of gender in the debate to the forefront) as well as when women's policy agencies have been insiders to the process. Outshoorn concludes that the most effective women's policy agencies are 'more likely to be of the cross-sectional type, allowing for intervention in other departments and policy arenas, to have prostitution included in their policy orientation and to have feminist leadership' (p. 291). Her findings have great implications for international policy agencies and women's organizations working to effect policy change. The text is worth a close read for those interested in activism, policy development and feminist influence on the State and prostitution laws.

While Kempadoo and Doezema's ground-breaking text provides an overview and introduction to many international examples of how political, economic, social and cultural factors affect the international sex trade and Outshoorn delves deep in to the process of policy formation on a state level, Denise Brennan reveals the effects of globalization and sex tourism in the daily lives of the sex workers themselves. *What's Love Got to Do With It?: Transnational Desire and Sex Tourism in the Dominican Republic* is an impressive ethnographic study and important contribution to research on Latin America. The study is based in Sosua, a northern costal city in the Dominican Republic, which Brennan visited over a decade. In this particular city, the sex tourism industry has been a thriving sector of the community and both sex workers and clients have migrated to be a part of it. The women, mainly Haitians and Dominican migrants from other parts of the country, engage in prostitution with European men, primarily Germans, who vacation on the island. Most of the women are hoping for more than just money in exchange for sex and few consider themselves to be prostitutes. Some are looking for longer-term stable relationships with tourists, many are seeking exit visas to leave the island and live in Europe and others want to find love. Brennan considers sex, love and desire in a transnational context and explicates the myriad ways that sex workers, with limited financial resources, struggle to better their living conditions and life chances.

Similar to *Global Sex Workers*, Brennan's study of women working in the Dominican Republic's sex trade undermines popularly held views of 'prostitute as victim'. In *What's Love Got to Do With It?*, Brennan explicates how tourism, sex tourism in particular, plays out on a day-to-day basis. It is obvious that Brennan cares deeply for the women in her study, many of whom she befriends through her repeated visits. Impressively, she uses her published text, based in part on her doctoral dissertation work, to further the goals of local sex worker organizations. All of the royalties from the book are donated to a Dominican AIDS outreach and education NGO (CEPROSH) and to a Dominican sex worker union (MODEMU).

What's Love Got to Do With It?, written in plain language and a narrative style, lacks academic jargon and is accessible for a diverse audience. The book examines and compares some of the various ways and means that draw both sex workers and tourists to Sosua and the experiences that they have upon their arrival. Brennan roots the text in individual sex workers'

stories by highlighting their lived experiences. The main factor that draws individuals together is the sex tourism industry. Brennan uncovers the many conflicting ways that Sosuan women and foreign men 'imagine' their Dominican surroundings, pre- and post-arrival. Sex workers see Sosua as a stepping-stone for migration off the island – primarily through relationships with foreign tourists. Foreign tourists envision Sosua to be a tropical paradise where sexually available dark-skinned women are waiting for them. Interestingly, regardless of the various fantasies that sex workers and foreign tourists have of Sosua before arrival, it is only the tourists who have their dreams met as they are the ones who find what they are looking for – sun, sand and sex.

The sex industry in Sosua, as Brennan argues, is almost entirely free of coercion from pimps or other men in the sex workers' lives. Many of the women, most of whom have children, willingly enter the trade in the hopes that it will lead to relationships with foreign men, exit visas and increased economic prosperity. Indeed, there is a considerable amount of independence and control over the trade by the women themselves. Dominican and Haitian women, therefore, are not understood as 'victims' of 'trafficking' but instead are introduced to the industry by mothers, sisters and female friends. Similar to Kempadoo and Doezema, Brennan argues against the 'prostitute as victim' discourse and acknowledges the agency of the sex workers and their struggles for upward mobility. By spending so much time, over so many years, with Sosuan sex workers and sex tourists, Brennan presents an alternative to the abolitionist understanding of sex work and puts forward a more nuanced analysis of the lives of female sex workers. *What's Love Got to Do With It?*, therefore, works to break down simplistic binary ways of thinking about the global sex industry to reveal an extremely complicated transnational industry.

Common conceptions of the sex industry define prostitution as the clear-cut exchange of sex for money. Brennan's *What's Love Got to Do With It?* clearly complicates this understanding as does Julia O'Connell Davidson's *Children in the Global Sex Trade*. O'Connell Davidson outlines just a few of the various sex-based interactions that can range from straightforward exchanges of money for sexual acts to short-term full access relationships where both sexual and non-sexual tasks (cleaning, washing, translation, shopping) are performed for housing, food and other necessities. Within this context, sex workers can be any age, gender or race. Most commonly, sex tourists seek the sexual services of women but there is also a thriving industry involving child prostitution, especially in relation to the exchange of sex for material items and shelter. O'Connell Davidson rejects conventional assumptions of the passivity and submissiveness of individuals, including children, involved in the sex trade and argues that all binaries, including those that differentiate between adults and children, need to be disputed. Her text considers the differentiation of adult/child to be a purely conceptual difference whereby state bodies and international organizations arbitrarily decide what age will mark the passing from one to the other. She further suggests that debates on child prostitution are rarely complicated, troubled or analysed in any significant

way and that too often these debates are unsophisticated and do little to represent the lived realities of youth and children involved in the industry.

Children in the Global Sex Trade challenges the 'prostitute as victim' discourse and critiques the one-dimensional understanding of 'child as victim' and 'childhood innocence'. There is a hierarchy of oppression in relation to children, O'Connell Davidson explains, and the perception is that children need to be 'saved' more than adults, especially from prostitution (often defined as the worst form of exploitation). Further, popular concern over children's health and well-being should not be prioritized or privileged over adults' as we should question our over-investment in individuals less than 18 years of age. O'Connell Davidson queries the sudden and relatively recent urge among western feminists, policy makers and politicians to protect children. Indeed, children's potential exploitation or subjugation is no different from adults' exploitation and subjugation. Throughout the text the reader is presented with instances where children and adults work together in the same deplorable conditions, working the same strolls, seeing the same clients and making the same decisions. If it is the case that brothels, massage parlours, red light areas and escort services employ both adult and child workers, O'Connell Davidson wonders why is it that the media and others are so much more concerned about the children? While O'Connell Davidson challenges current popular understandings of sex trade youth and children, she is simultaneously aware of the harsh realities that many of them face in the sex industry. She is aware that children typically make up the least paid and most marginalized sex workers in the most abusive labour conditions. And yet, even in the most exploitative situations, children are working alongside adults. She asks us to question the overwhelming focus on the well-being of children that simultaneously disregards adults.

Children in the Global Sex Trade critiques the assumption that sexual exploitation in particular is much more terrible than other forms of exploitation, for example dire poverty, lack of access to education or sweatshop labour. The author writes, 'I have no wish to contribute to the discourse that constructs [the commercial sexual exploitation of children] as "the rape of innocent" or "innocence destroyed", thereby implying that it is "innocence", rather than human beings, that needs safeguarding' (p. 2). She works to convince her audience of the necessity of complicating our understanding of the global sex trade particularly as it affects children. In fact, O'Connell Davidson illustrates that many child prostitutes strategically assess their lived situations and actively choose to trade or sell sex. This choice can be one of survival or can be based on limited options, but these factors do not cancel out that it is still a conscious choice of 'least-worst' options. Indeed, she argues against the assumption that adults have the intellectual capacity to make informed decisions about their lives but that children do not. She questions whether a middle-aged drug-addicted adult is in any better position to negotiate their working conditions than a drug-free youth. Age does not represent such a

clear demarcation of self-confidence, self-control or self-assertion. *Children in the Global Sex Trade* articulately presents a strong case for the reconfiguration of the 'prostitute as victim' and 'innocent child' discourses and argues that some youth and children, as well as some adults, can and do make practical and well thought-out decisions to sell sex.

The four texts in question, in various ways, outline and explicate the lives of Minority and Majority World sex workers in their struggles for human rights. Sex workers, of all ages, genders and races, are dealing with the circumstances surrounding them and making their decisions accordingly; global inequalities such as sexism, racism and classism are complicating these decisions. An underlying understanding of the four texts presented is that many sex workers freely decide to enter the trade and that prostitutes are not 'helpless victims'. These texts challenge the assumptions and false binaries present in debates on the sex trade. They present critiques of the abolitionist stance towards the sex industry and show that sex work is a legitimate form of labour. Where Outshoorn and O'Connell Davidson rely on the expertise of their own research and the research of other internationally recognized academics and theorists, Kempadoo and Doezema and Brennan use the words and stories of sex workers and listen to what they are saying about their own working conditions and daily lives. Kempadoo and Doezema present the writings of sex workers and academics together in their outstanding text, *Global Sex Workers*, and argue against the simplistic notion that all sex workers are victims. In *The Politics of Prostitution*, Outshoorn's policy analysis of Minority World countries provides for a relevant and current investigation of the ways that women's movements affect policy formation and adaptation. Brennan uses her own in-depth research and interviews in *What's Love Got to Do With It?* to examine how sex tourism and migration, resulting in part from transnational inequalities, are connected and how they unequally affect individuals' daily lives. And finally, O'Connell Davidson's *Children in the Global Sex Trade* debunks popularly held mythologies of the lack of childhood agency and sexualized choices. All four texts go beyond common understandings and perceptions to argue that a move away from binaries is imperative. These four vital contributions to the growing discourse on the global sex trade are an absolute must read.

Emily Van der Meulen
York University, Toronto, Canada

Note

1 The term 'Majority World' is used in place of 'the Third World' or 'the Developing World' in an effort to draw attention to global inequalities that have resulted from colonization and are being exacerbated through globalization. Indeed, the majority of the world's population lives in impoverished regions where there is

little access to the luxuries that are taken for granted by the minority of the world's population.

REVIEWS

M. I. Franklin. *Postcolonial Politics, the Internet, and Everyday Life: Pacific Traversals Online*. London: Routledge, 2004. ISBN 0–415–33940–5.

Increasingly affecting scholarly and popular imaginaries of the global is the notion that new information and communications technologies (ICTs), most particularly the Internet, are profoundly and everywhere changing the world in which we live. Whether by dint of the global inequalities mapped and entrenched with the digital divide or in forecasts (variously celebrated and decried) of global homogenization, even time and space seem no longer to be as they were heretofore imagined. But beyond the stark opposition of problem and panacea, what other futures might be enabled by global ICTs? In this fascinating and important book, M. I. Franklin reveals that they are already present. In the main, this is, as Franklin puts it, a 'tale of two Internets' (p. 1): one, perhaps more familiar, rendered in the business plans and marketing schemes of (trans)national telecommunications firms; the other extant in the on-line practices of postcolonial and diasporic Tongan and Samoan communities in hypertext-threaded discussion forums. Besides offering an insightful critical engagement with the interplay of sex/gender, race/ethnicity and class in dominant constructions of ICTs and their (global) social meanings, then, this is also a tale of their interplay in the everyday lives of forum participants on- and off-line. And it is much more than that too, making important contributions to theory and method in critical constructivist International Relations (IR) and International Political Economy (IPE) more broadly.

Persuasively dispensing with the 'polemic about postmodernism' (p. 58) that would reduce it to a solipsism incompatible with an emancipatory politics, Franklin highlights important affinities of the work of Michel de Certeau (still too little known even in critical IR/IPE) with postcolonial and feminist scholarship. Accordingly, the move from subject–object to subject–subject relationships is exemplified in Franklin's own efforts to make present the voices of on-line interlocutors. Describing herself as an 'accidental ethnographer' (p. 212), she eschews ethnography's most lamentable pretension: speaking *for* Others. Instead, forum participants are treated as authoritative in their own right, not as mere repositories of 'raw' data awaiting scholarly 'processing' into legitimate knowledge. This is backed up by the care taken in formal attribution and, perhaps foremost among the academic conventions by which voices are author-ized, the full and equal place accorded forum participants' on-line texts in the

bibliography. Demanded by recognition of their genuine 'literary status' (p. 71), this also sits very well with the theoretical, methodological and ethical commitments laid out in the early chapters and developed throughout the book. Though, as Franklin is careful to remind us, editorial interventions (her own in this instance) will always fix certain limits on polyphony, the sense we get of these on-line communities is nevertheless much more than the monological reportage of a single author.

The *intra*cultural dimension of what we find in these texts, foregrounding diaspora in complex on-line struggles around, for example, 'authentic' Tongan or Samoan identities, is a salutary corrective to proliferating liberal-inspired notions of global civil society's facilitation/foreordination by ICTs, as much as to overly deterministic auguries of incipient, insipid and inevitable homogenization. What comes into relief through these on-line discussions includes erasures as well as survivances, but is best captured by the emphasis of recent postcolonial theory on hybridity. In the ensuing struggles around identity practices shot through and enmeshed with gendered, raced and classed power relations, we get a different sense of the Internet not as a thing, or even a collection of things, so much as the aggregate of these multifariously textured and textualized practices in 'inhabited' (p. 167) spaces.

Meanwhile, an online controversy over some forum participants' use of 'gangsta' slang in their forum postings marks intersecting resistances that are revealing not only of on-line power relations but of the rich complexities and deep ambivalences of everyday life practised in indeterminate, shifting and/or multiple sites and moments both on- and off-line. The fluid and ever-contingent practice of identity is thus found in the interstitial spaces of *relationships*, not bounded by self-contained subjects. The forums themselves are, among other things, virtual sites of active and open-ended (re)negotiation of Tonganness, Samoanness and the imbricated power relations of gender, race and class.

Navigating hypertext, as Franklin observes, means following authorial moves that may shift 'backwards and forwards, in and out, up, down, and sideways all the time' (p. 207). This book takes on such a vast range of simultaneously disparate and yet eminently proximate sites and subjects that an analogously 'hypertextual' reading strategy is strongly recommended – that is to say, besides a straight cover-to-cover reading, the text rewards engagements less disciplined by linearity, revisiting 'earlier' themes/threads in light of 'later' interlocutions. Reflecting on her own contribution, Franklin expresses the hope 'to have made the initial opening in terms of other ways in which ICTs can be thought about, designed, and eventually used, by examining the practice of everyday life online' (p. 232). She has succeeded in doing this and more.

J. Marshall Beier
McMaster University, Canada

Inderpal Grewal. *Transnational America: Feminisms, Diasporas, Neoliberalisms*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005. ISBN 0–8223–3544–1.

Around the globe, connections exist where before there were none. A multiplicity of actors partake in wide-ranging exchanges. This much is accepted by Inderpal Grewal in her book *Transnational America: Feminisms, Diasporas, Neoliberalisms*. What is contested is that the flow is somehow free, even and multidirectional. Grewal challenges the conception that linkages have connected the world indiscriminately. She claims that while some national borders may have been transcended, those of powerful states have been strengthened.

This is a nuanced critique of the idea that globalization simply frees up global relations so that Asian takeaway food is available in the western world and Tanzanians can watch Fijian rugby on pay-TV. Grewal relates such increased levels of connectedness to the opening up of regional economies under neoliberalism and the increased concentration of power in particular pockets, namely America. The transnational connections created are understood by Grewal to enable discourses of neoliberalism to find their way into the everyday lives of captive audiences in postcolonial settings, spreading the conflation of consumerism with freedom and citizenship worldwide. This is how the American dream finds its way into the Indian subcontinent. And what is particularly interesting here is how gender, race and colonial histories feature within these processes.

Grewal identifies, in each chapter of her book, the way in which hegemonic discourses of 'transnational America' get relocated within postcolonial spaces. In the first chapter, Grewal looks at the transnational connectivities that make what she terms 'cosmopolitan' identities (conventionally reserved for western 'world citizens') available to certain diasporas and non-western subjects. Under Grewal's definition, being cosmopolitan has to do with existing between nations and, from there, articulating liberal ideals of internationalism and universalism (pp. 37–8). Three novels, written in English in the USA by immigrants from India, are located within the production of this cosmopolitanism. Each of the authors is thought by Grewal to be unreflexive of their particular positioning and how it leads them to ultimately privilege western forms of knowledge.

The second chapter considers the role of transnational networks in the establishment of a market for Mattel's Barbie in India. Despite the company's confidence in the toy's universal appeal, it was necessary to first create in India the gendered child consumer. Grewal explains that the eventual success of the product relied upon the presence of transnational media in India and connections with Indian immigrants in the United States. However, the Americanness of the doll still needed to be negotiated by offering an Indian range.

Chapters 3 and 4 turn to consider the issue of human rights. Grewal focuses on the highly universalistic coverage of the women's human rights discourse coming out of the USA. She draws attention to this discourse's deep

investment in liberal democracy, and its notable disinterest in economic rights. She points out how familiarity with human rights discourse has become a test on which western funding to non-western feminist NGOs is contingent and how such processes further marginalize the status of economic issues in debates on women's human rights. Grewal then moves to examine the use of human rights discourse as a mechanism for regulating the intake of refugees into the United States. She pays particular attention to the creation of the gendered refugee subject and how that has affected Sikh women claiming refugee status in the USA. According to Grewal, there is pressure to conform to representations of non-western women as oppressed by pathological traditional cultures.

The final chapter looks at American nationalism following the attack on the Twin Towers in 2001. Grewal is interested in how the spectre of the male Muslim other is constructed as a threat to the American way of life. She comments on the transnational experience of American nationalism that occurred when many beyond the United States' borders shared the nation's grief.

Transnational America offers a sophisticated analysis of the complex and varied mechanisms that shore up the global economic system. Grewal's choice of topic alone is welcome. It is refreshing to encounter such a highly developed appreciation of the critical role of discourse. Grewal handles her subject matter with subtlety and precision. While her conclusions are sometimes radical, there is always a comprehensive qualification at hand specifying and contextualizing her position. This is part of her point: there are always exceptions, contradictions, instabilities and spaces for movement. The book remains grounded in observational detail throughout. The combined effect is exciting, because the challenges Grewal mounts against the status quo, and the way it is thought about, are convincing.

The flaws in the book lie mainly in its presentation. Grewal often seems to assume that you have read what you are reading before you began. Cosmopolitanism, multiculturalism and the postcolonial are not adequately defined. The protracted nature of many sentences compromises their clarity. There are also occasional inconsistencies within Grewal's arguments. In chapter 3, Grewal argues that feminists in the USA are fixated on 'exotic' Third World women's rights abuses such as genital mutilation. Simultaneously, she states that US feminism is only interested in women's rights abuses that American women share with women around the globe such as domestic violence. I found these two positions to be somewhat at odds with one another. On the whole, however, Grewal's arguments hold up well. Problems in the text are predominantly stylistic and can be surmounted with perseverance. Ultimately, Grewal's compelling thesis on the pervasive nature of America's transnational neoliberal regime presents itself forcefully.

Zoe Gordon
University of Adelaide, Australia

Michael S. Kimmel and Rebecca F. Plante (eds). *Sexualities: Identities, Behaviours, and Society*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. ISBN 0–19–515760–5.

The editors of this anthology about sexualities define their audience from the beginning and readers need to keep this in mind. The book is aimed at undergraduates doing a social science course and concerns itself primarily with the contemporary USA. However, as the title indicates the content is wide-ranging, beginning with Freud and his essay 'Femininity' (p. 4), and ending with Richard Parker's (2001) review of HIV/AIDS research and its contribution to social science methodologies. Many of the contributions provide points of connection to other social and cultural contexts, and/or report on 'insider' views of sexual practices, which provide readers with perspectives that challenge normative constructions of acceptable sexuality. Others serve as a reminder of the limitations of health behaviour change models that recommend 'rational' interventions on individuals and groups that are seen to be engaging in risky sexual practices, largely ignoring or bracketing out differences and desires. Richard Parker's review in this collection outlines succinctly the limitations of behavioural interventions based on the provision of information and individual psychology.

When reading the introductory chapter on 'Classical Inquiries' (pp. 3–38) (which includes contributions from Kinsey and Masters and Johnson), I was reminded of the legacy these researchers have left us with, in both the language we use and the way we think about our sexuality. These (predominantly male) sex researchers have also provided fruitful areas for critique for a range of writers for their (and their adherents') tendency to generalize from small data sets and/or specific cultural and historical locations to the population at large, and for their stereotyping and/or silencing of women's agency and sexual desires. Apposite to this, the editors remind us that what is considered normal at any point in time is 'a political decision, as cultures decide which behaviours to include and which to exclude from the menu of regulated sexual activities' (p. xiii).

In their introduction, Michael Kimmel and Rebecca Plante assert that gender and not sexual orientation 'is the dividing line along which sexual expression, desire, and experience are organized' arguing that, for example, lesbians have more in common with straight women than they do with gay men in terms of their sexual 'expression, cognition, and representation' (p. xiv). While this latter argument is certainly open to question, and appears to fly in the face of their assertion elsewhere that 'there is no singular model for how people have sex' (p. xii), the importance of gender in relation to these three nominated fields is a consistent theme in this anthology.

Chapter 7 in this anthology deals with sex as a global commodity and the following chapter on pornography (including Internet pornography) continues this theme. These two chapters exemplify the need for an examination of the complex political and economic factors that drive and fuel sexploitation and

the need to focus on a structural analysis rather than concentrate on individual pathology. Reading these two chapters against the final chapter in this anthology, which deals with the parlous state of sexuality education in the USA, highlights the highly ambiguous and contradictory relationship that many Americans have with sex.

Gail Dines and Robert Jensen urge a focus on the 'politics of production' (p. 371) in their contribution 'Pornography and Media'. They detail financial connections between mainstream companies (Australian ex-patriot Rupert Murdoch is mentioned here) and pornography, emphasizing that the latter is not a marginalized industry but 'a major player in the development of sophisticated, multibillion-dollar new media technologies' (p. 373). This sits alongside the enormous influence that the Right has had on the form school-based sex education now takes in the USA. Judith Levine's contribution employs an historical analysis of sex education in the USA and details the rise and rise of the religious Right in terms of its influence on curriculum. This influence prompted a director of SEICUS (the Sexualilty Information and Education Council of the USA) to proclaim in 1997 that there are no sex educators in America, only abstinence educators (p. 438). While the debates covered in this book are more relevant to the American context, they clearly also raise issues that are of relevance to other parts of the world. Of course, those of us in Australia who would like to think we have a more liberal approach need only refer to recent parliamentary debates around the supply and regulation of the abortion pill RU486 and the Australian Minister for Health Tony Abbott's often declared anti-abortion stance, as well as our very uneven uptake of any form of school-based sexuality education that does not focus on reproductive heterosexuality.

Lyn Harrison
Deakin University, Australia

Louise A. Chappell. *Gendering Government: Feminist Engagement with the State in Australia and Canada*. Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press, 2002. ISBN 0774809663.

This is an important, challenging and timely volume for a number of reasons. I wish to highlight two: first, for its focus on the State, and, second, for its analysis of feminism and new institutionalism. The book provides theoretical, empirical and methodological insights for these debates. It bypasses the usual normative discussion concerning whether or not feminisms should engage with the State and, instead, considers what effect political institutions have on shaping feminist claims. In doing this, Louise Chappell analyses the differences between feminist activism in Australia and Canada from an institutional perspective. Chappell skilfully combines bottom–up and

top–down approaches to the issue and, despite the focus on political institutions, looks at the issues from both angles. In addition to the questions that deal with the State and institutions, Chappell addresses issues from descriptive and substantive representation and state feminism, to federalism and New Public Management (NPM).

The key contribution of the book is to focus on a *range* of political institutions across states: the parliament, political parties, courts and the judiciary, bureaucracy and federal structures. Chappell studies these institutions both individually *and* in combination with each other. She identifies arenas where feminists face the most positive political opportunity structures and explores the extent of feminist influence on these. In terms of theory, Chappell draws on neo-institutionalism and conducts fairly orthodox comparative analysis giving an account of the differences and similarities in the political institutions of the two countries.

The project results in interesting findings that thoroughly differentiate the State and the political opportunity structures in the two countries. In Australia, feminists have adopted two central strategies: 'bureaucratic entrism' (pp. 27–8) – often referred to as a femocrat strategy (an insider strategy), and lobbying the Government (an outsider strategy). In Canada, feminists have worked through the legal and constitutional realms of the State as well as lobbying.

The individual chapters analyse the electoral system, bureaucratic structures, constitutional and legal realms and federalism. In the electoral, party and parliamentary arenas, feminist gains have been slow in both countries and the realm does not constitute the most positive political opportunity structure in either. Electoral success has been limited if measured both in terms of descriptive and substantive representation. Political parties and the institutions of the parliaments remain especially resistant to feminist concerns despite the increases in the number of women in the parliaments. I enjoyed, for example, the analysis of the strong masculine culture of the parliaments as a normative barrier for many women.

Bureaucratic structures, in turn, have been more favourable to feminists in Australia than in Canada. Here Chappell makes a number of contributions to the literature on state feminism. Some of the interesting findings include that sometimes the links between the women's policy agencies and women's movements can be harmful as in the case of the Australian abortion debate.

The book's focus on constitutional and legal realms and federalism is a real contribution to feminist debates on gender and politics, which have often focused on parliaments and political parties only. The constitutional realm has provided feminists in Canada with new spaces, while the political opportunity structures have been negative for feminists in Australia. By contrast, federalism has provided more openings for feminists in Australia than in Canada for a number of structural and institutional reasons.

The book makes a compelling case for drawing upon new institutionalism to create insights into feminist debates about the State and politics. I would have liked a more thorough exploration of the limitations of this approach. What

are the challenges in seeing the State mainly in terms of its institutions? I was left wondering about the bypassing of Rosemary Pringle and Sophie Watson's (1992) notion of the State as a discursive, differentiated process that has otherwise been extremely influential in feminist state theory (Kantola 2006). The role of ideas comes in only in a discussion of feminist theories about the State as 'ideologies' or 'ideological explanations'. Yet, ideology as a notion is very strong and unified and does not capture the idea of competing and contradictory discourses, silenced and marginal ones. In sum, the book is an inspiring read. I got a lot out of it and would recommend it both to scholars of gender and politics and to students for its accessibility.

Johanna Kantola
University of Helsinki, Finland

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Suzanne Bergeron. *Fragments of Development: Nation, Gender and the Space of Modernity*. Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 2004. ISBN 0–472–11403–4.

This is a welcome and challenging text that I wish I had read when, many years ago, I was a student in Development Studies. Bergeron is a scholar working as an insider influencing her own discipline, Development Economics, by bringing insights from the outside and drawing upon some of the best post-colonial and feminist scholarship, especially in feminist political economy. The book can, therefore, challenge the stereotype of a Third World that needs to be saved by First World experts and the patriarchal assumption that presents women as mere passive victims.

Within the boundaries of development economics, Bergeron starts from the position that discourses are important because language is constitutive of meaning. But discourses do not only 'matter', there are some that are more powerful than others and this requires investigation. In the case of the discipline of economics, this is the discourse of 'neo-classical' economics, which presents the world as neutral, objective and value-free. While this discourse has been heavily contested by scholars, Bergeron goes further and argues that there are also criticisms to be made of those who opposed the neo-classical school, such as dependency theorists and certain feminists who replicated some of the knowledge structures found in conventional neo-classical narratives.

Bergeron's discursive analysis of development economics demonstrates how an 'imagined space' – that of the national economy – is privileged in numerous development narratives (such as modernization theory, dependency theory, structural adjustment and globalization). But Bergeron is not really concerned with how the economy is constituted though economic discourse *per se*, she is closer to what feminist economist Barker (2005: 2194) describes as 'an interpretative approach to feminist economics and feminist political economy', which 'would, at a minimum, entail a commitment to the notion that the material and the discursive are not radically separate'. Metaphors are not just descriptive but constitutive, and they have effects on what is considered to be 'development' in the discourse of academics and practitioners as well as in the policies of international agencies, non-governmental organizations and governments. Bergeron offers many reasons for theoretical failures and examples of how policies that derive from 'mistaken' imaginaries of development have impacted on development practice and consequently on people's lives.

Importantly, her analysis brings out the agency behind these constructions, showing us how different 'experts' (often claiming their expertise on the basis of scientific objective rational knowledge) are crucial in maintaining this imaginary with their economistic, androcentric, colonialist and neo-liberal discourses. They are the ones who are 'fixing' developing country economies as bounded, manageable spaces. The author points to how the discourse of development is operated by these 'experts', and at the same time, acts to delegitimate others.

The book manages to look at basic and, at the same time, fundamental questions of what, how, why and for whom economics is constructed and applied in both development theory and practice. And within this, attention is drawn to the role that economists have played in terms of how development knowledge is produced and consumed. The book is very convincing in making the argument that the dominance of mainstream development discourses leaves no space to imagine and articulate alternatives.

Part of the interesting discussion presented in the final chapter concerns how feminist arguments get marginalized and disarmed, and the book is clearly curious about issues of agency and resistance. However, I would have liked to have seen further discussion concerning the potential role that women fighting, resisting and organizing for change might play in constructing another kind of 'development' and what this might look like. How has resistance, in the forms of feminist theories and social movements that question the gendered, classed and racialized character of 'development', confronted the hegemony of mainstream development discourse, and with what results? Have any changes happened? If so, what kind of changes and who has benefited? An insight into some of the literature produced by international and grass-roots women's organizations all over the world, and the inclusion of more grass-roots ethnographic and empirical work, could have provided some answers.

I truly enjoyed reading this book, and found that it raised some important questions for me. Another 'development' is needed – one that makes a difference to the millions of poor women and men all around the world. Imagining how it should be is a very important first step, and feminist academics and activists in social movements can make a significant contribution.

Marina Prieto-Carrón
University of Bristol, UK

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