

surveillant scopophilia to illuminate practices of looking enabled by biometric technologies, she critically analyzes narrative elements of science fiction films where technology functions as a tool to control suspect and threatening bodies. Magnet asserts that such films naturalize surveillance technology, thus serving as a convincing argument for real-life uncritical adoption of biometrics by both consumers and policy makers.

Contrary to the advertisements that offer prospects of colour-blind and gender-neutral identification systems that circumvent human biases, biometrics are becoming a part of the problem when they intrude into the lives of vulnerable populations whose bodies are being measured, mapped, digitized, policed, classified, pushed into inadequately narrow categories of identity or erased altogether from the public discourse. Magnet's informative work clearly shows dangers inherent in deterministic visions of simple technological fixes to multifaceted social problems such as racial profiling, discrimination, crime, and poverty. In addition, her argument makes evident a disconcerting gap between advancements in feminist theory that posit gender and race as relational, situated and complex processes, and contemporary scientific practices that still rely on biological categories of identity.

Thoroughly researched and conceptually interesting, *When Biometrics Fail* will be a valuable addition to a wide range of undergraduate and graduate courses on public policy, human rights, social justice, and feminist studies of technology.

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FATNESS AND THE MATERNAL BODY: WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES OF CORPOREALITY AND THE SHAPING OF SOCIAL POLICY

Maya Unnithan-Kumar and Soraya Tremayne, Eds.
New York & Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2011

REVIEWED BY LAUREN SHEPHERD

Fatness and the Maternal Body: Women's Experiences of Corporeality and the Shaping of Social Policy is a collection of articles which demonstrate the significance of "fatness" through different cultures. It is the result of a series of workshops and seminars facilitated by the Fertility and Reproduction Studies Group (FRSG) at the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology hosted by the University of Oxford in 2006. This collection focuses on cultural socialization and perspectives of "fatness," and their links to reproduction, health risk, obesity, and status. The articles explore data from the United Kingdom, Africa, and India, presenting the differing cultural standards placed on "fatness" of the female body (pre and post-natal), and the direct relationship to obesity, health, social and political status, and wealth. This compilation explores what it means to be "overweight" (socially, culturally, and medically). The editors take care to note that there is unfortunately no discussion of male "fatness", and its effects on reproductive health in this collection, it being a highly under-researched area.

The perspectives of "fatness" that are presented are culturally and socially linked to their country of origin. In the United Kingdom, for

example, the articles depict mothers who are clinically overweight or obese who prefer terminology such as "big boned", and relate their size to genetics. The associated social stigma discussed is that they do not recognize healthy nutrition, are from lower income housing, and will have unhealthy "fat" babies because of their poor dietary routines. The risks of diabetes and low birth weight babies are outlined in these articles also. The overarching medical assessment is that something must be initiated to stop the perpetuation of the obesity cycle. The problem raised is that there is no generic answer as to when an interruption of said cycle serves the patient/public best. As one of the study subjects from Chapter 2 asserts, overweight bodies, through pregnancy, are replaced by a "thriving, glowing and healthy body [which] was meant to eat, allowed to eat." The reader views this subject who recognizes that she shouldn't perhaps eat as much as she does, or as poorly, but is relishing pregnancy because food is no longer negative.

This perspective contrasts that of the African tribes studied for the workshop/seminar series. The subjects in these studies were generally of force-fed generations, albeit some subjects were the last of this lineage. In this cultural environment the size of the woman is not only seen as beautiful and desirable, but is also a measure of a family's wealth and status in the community. The ability to "fatten" one's daughter necessitates, in the cases presented, the acquisition of livestock as well as slaves/workers; a sizable woman necessarily cannot participate in much physical activity in the running of their homes. Despite this lack of physical activity, the woman is still a very prominent figure in the social nature of the community, as is her "fattening" at a young age, which facilitates her transition into womanhood.

To bring the information full circle, the subjects studied from India present what is articulated as the “dual burden”: the population faces both severe malnutrition and over-abundance/obesity. For undisclosed reasons, the general populace of mothers in these studies believe that Western food is healthier and will provide a better life for their children. In their desire to set their children on the healthy path, they desire foods that are proliferating obesity in the Western world, *i.e. fast food*. The urbanization of the country, or perhaps as suggested in some of the articles, the Westernization of the country, and the move away from more traditional cuisine, is causing obesity and malnutrition, both of which are linked through the articles to mothers, reproduction, and child-rearing.

Each of the articles places itself in the liminal space between social/cultural construct and medical fact so as to present, as best possible, the overall picture. The order constructed by the editors of the articles allows the reader to see the bigger picture, and recognize that understanding the concept of “fatness” globally is potentially the only way to combat its negative qualities and praise the positives. The figures and charts are unfortunately not as easily manageable for the reader who is not familiar with the material, but sufficient explanations of those were provided throughout the articles. The articles are well thought out and provide intimate insight into each culture, making them accessible to multiple disciplines.

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BIG PORN INC: EXPOSING THE HARMS OF THE GLOBAL PORNOGRAPHY INDUSTRY

Melinda Tankard Reist and Abigail Bray, Eds.
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REVIEWED BY VANESSA REIMER

In their introduction to this collection the editors clearly state their goal to document the “proliferation and normalization of pornography, the way it has become a global industry and ideology, and how it is shaping our world and the harm this causes.” The text largely features contributions by academics and activists from Australia, the U.S., and the UK, with notable perspectives from Japan, India, and South Africa.

This collection aims to debunk the myths that have allowed pornography to become increasingly mainstream across the globe as it simultaneously becomes more violent and degrading towards women, children, and other vulnerable groups. These myths include the “libertarian conceits that pornography is simply about pleasure, self-empowerment and freedom of choice” in an otherwise sexually repressed culture, as well as the argument that producers of pornography exercise their guaranteed right to “free expression.” The text contends that these myths have been largely accepted and even embraced by Western feminists and “the Left” more generally, which tend to be weary of pornography critics who are stereotyped and dismissed as being anti-sex, closed-minded, socially conservative, and religious.

Throughout the text's five sections the contributors work to challenge

and re-frame mainstream discourses that shape the pornography industry. In “Part 1: Pornography Cultures” pornography is contextualized as an ideology which constructs men's sexual pleasure and masculinity as being contingent on the domination and degradation of women and other “feminized others” such as gay men, racialized groups, children, and animals. Next, in “Part 2: Pornography Industries,” pornography is framed as a multi-billion dollar industry that is rooted in the exploitation of vulnerable populations for the sole interest of generating enormous profits for those who control it. Here it is also argued that, while academics and activists from the Left justly critique the ideologies and practices of corporate global restructuring, they tend to accept the liberatory myths of “Big Porn Inc.,” and thereby fail to problematize it alongside other exploitative industries such as “Big Food” and “Big Pharma.”

In “Part 3: Harming Children” it is argued that mainstream pornography normalizes the sexual objectification of children through Pseudo Child Pornography, as well as through generating and reproducing the exploding global demand for child pornography. It further explores how the industry grooms adolescent boys into consumers of a manufactured, inorganic, and non-erotic brand of sexuality that only pornography and other sex industries can provide. Next, in “Part 4: Pornography and the State,” the contributors problematize the legal rights claimed by the pornography industry by denouncing “free expression” that is not in fact “fair expression,” in addition to exploring how pornography has been taken up and challenged through various international legislation. The text concludes with “Part 5: Resisting Big Porn Inc.,” which explores the efforts of international activists and