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Transnational

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CHAPTER 48

TRANSNATIONAL

LAURA BRIGGS

The scholarship of transnational feminisms is organized by arguments about even its most basic terms and ethical orientation. Some scholars write that it is an exciting, positive intervention that replaces a hackneyed and unsustainable notion of international female sameness as "global sisterhood" (i.e., Morgan 1984), restores socialist feminism to its rightful place in feminist thought, re-centers US Third World feminism and internationalist solidarity for decolonization, and draws attention to the often brilliant activism of feminists in the global South focused on issues like food justice and water (Mohanty 1984; Grewal and Kaplan 1994; Kaplan and Grewal 1994; Basu 1995; Das Gupta 2006; Swarr and Nagar 2010; Blackwell 2014). Others mistrust it on opposite grounds: it is liberal, Western, white, and through nongovernmental organization (NGOs), private foundations, and even explicit alliance, linked to international organizations (IGOs) such as the World Bank, to globalizing capital, and imperial militaries (Spivak 1996; Alvarez 2000; Fernandes 2013). These two positions, although sometimes opposed to each other, might also both be true: global capitalism and imperial ambition could be the conditions of possibility for transnational feminisms, from below or even alongside (Naples 2002).

Genealogies

Transnational feminism has had this dual character from the first, simultaneously a pessimistic account of the state of gender and globalization, especially in the wake of intensifying forms of gendered disenfranchisement associated with World Bank and International Monetary Fund's (IMF) neoliberal state austerity plans—structural adjustment programs (SAPs)—in the 1980s and 1990s, and a hopeful account of new possibilities for thought and action in their aftermath. Massive state disinvestment in food subsidies, healthcare, and education spread through the Third World as a result of SAPs in the eighties, resulting in the intensification of both resistance and (gendered)

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migration patterns. Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan introduced the term "transnational feminism" in 1994 as an alternative to "global" feminism in the introduction to their edited collection, *Scattered Hegemonies: Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices* (1994). They argued for attention to the heterogeneity of what globalization produces, not just a hegemonic West versus the rest or a Disneyfication of the world. They noted the ways that both "global sisterhood" and much of feminist theory preclude engagement with those outside "the West," either because its imagination ended at the borders of the United States, Australia, and Western Europe, or because it homogenized what it found there. They argued for attention to new activisms, ideas, and forms of cultural production throughout the Third World, particularly but not exclusively in relation to gender and capitalism.

Others took up the term, which was traveling with *globalization* through international business circles, and seemed to resonate, too, with feminists' desire for something that took the experiences of migration seriously—the political possibilities and forms of repression resident in the places migrants left and how that interacted with what they found in new homes. In *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures* (1997), Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Mohanty wrote that they found themselves situated awkwardly as immigrant feminists constructed as "women of color" in the integral yet vexed relation of the Black freedom movement to US feminism. Finding themselves only partially hailed by this US-based feminist conversation about race, gender, and class, they turned to activism related to gender and sexuality in India and the Caribbean, drawing on rich traditions for thinking about political economy and the state and turning their attention to heterosexualization and women's work.

Other early optimistic accounts of the possibilities of transnational feminisms followed quickly, include the launching of the journal *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism* in 2000 (see Basu 2000). Key articles by Sonia Alvarez (2000) marked the rapid growth of transnational feminist organizing in Latin America in the 1980s and 1990s in international feminist *encuentros* (encounters) organized around identities (such as the Black identity movement) or issues (e.g., the Latin American and Caribbean Network against Violence against Women). Yet Alvarez also sounded some alarms about the increasing bureaucratization of the feminist movement through its relationships with IGOs and NGOs and the United Nations (UN), particularly through the process of regional meetings designed to influence policy, the UN's 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women. Amrita Basu wrote in the same issue about the rapid growth of transnational feminist organizing in other regions. Other work through the nineties kept the focus on the "transnational" as encompassing not just questions of self-conscious political organizing, but also issues of representation and desire (especially via ways of thinking poststructualism and cultural studies), the accelerating rhythms of migration and globalizing labor and consumer markets (Grewal, Gupta, and Ong 1999; Moallem 1999; Puri 1999). In feminist theory, echoing the ambivalent tone on the relationship of capital and feminist activism, Gayatri Spivak (1996) conceptualized the "transnational" as a world in which states cannot escape the effects of neoliberalism, while Suzanne Bergeron (2001) argued against a "globalocentric" vision of

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the effects of globalizing capital as too totalizing and obscuring cleavages, resistances, and activism.

Despite the growing momentum around the transnational, however, postcolonial feminist thought was far more influential in this period. Although questions of gender and feminism came late to postcolonial studies, and largely through the question of women and nationalism (Chatterjee 1990, 1993), the work of postcolonial and subaltern studies entered the consciousness of most US scholars through feminist intervention: in particular, the edited collection by Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Spivak and, *Selected Subaltern Studies* (1988). Arising as a critique initially of the Marxist-nationalist scholarship in Indian history, postcolonial studies resonated with the skepticism toward Marxist accounts in the United States and specifically among the feminist left in the aftermath of the fall of the Berlin Wall (Chakrabarty 2002; Prakash 1994). At the same time, postcolonial studies always understood its object of study as the *subaltern*, and provided a compelling way of reworking its Marxist inheritance. Postcolonial studies provided a fascinating method and toolbox for investigations of the imperial past of the globalizing present in its effort to re-center processes of colonialism and law, its understanding of the archive as always a record of the "prose of counterinsurgency," and its concern with the construction of the modernity/tradition divide (Guha 1999). Gayatri Spivak's arresting interventions in US feminist thought owed a great deal to her engagements with subaltern and postcolonial studies, from her influential argument that "the subaltern cannot speak," to her attention to the productive power of text to a critical distance from Marxism that still expressed itself as an analysis of culture and activisms that never strayed far from an investigation of transnational capitalism and neoliberalism (Spivak 1985, 1988a, 1988b, 1998, 1999).

Deeply indebted to postcolonial studies, "transnational feminisms" did not solidify as the name of an intellectual field in gender and sexuality studies right away—with lines to hire on and its own conferences—and perhaps never would have except for the utility of allying with corporate globalization. In 2001, when four scholars whom we would inescapably link with the field—Amrita Basu, Inderpal Grewal, Caren Kaplan, and Liisa Malkki—edited a special issue of *Signs* containing many articles about the resurgent importance of internationalist socialist feminism, they called the field "gender and globalization." In the 1990s, women's historians and other gender studies scholars toiled in a field called gender and empire, with roots in the Third World decolonization activism of the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s (e.g., Guy 1988; Findlay 1999; McClintock 1995; Hunt 1999; Burton 2003; Levine 2003). The words *transnational feminism* did not appear in books like *Reproducing Empire* (Briggs 2002) or *The Revolutionary Imagination in the Americas and the Age of Development* (Saldaña-Portillo 2003); rather, these texts marked the processes they considered in the United States, Latin America, and the Caribbean with a lexicon that situated development, modernization, and globalization as part of a broader process of colonialism and its relationship to the postcolonial. Influential feminist critics such as Ann Stoler and Amy Kaplan understood their work in relation to empire and its aftermath (Stoler 1992; Cooper and Stoler 1997; Kaplan 1993). When Chandra Mohanty published *Feminism without Borders* (2003), she did not use the term

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transnational, either. That book includes a crucial set of meditations on the failures of the intellectual and activist project of "global sisterhood," whereby a homogenous group called Third World women are just like US women only more so, oppressed by things called "religion" or a universal patriarchy.

Whatever might have happened in feminist scholarship with these cross-cutting trends—to say nothing of the not-quite-acknowledged desire to ignore altogether what happens outside the United States, something that has been resident in feminism and other US social movements since the rise of McCarthyism and the death of Popular Front internationalism—funding changed it all. *Transnational* and *global* became the names of fundable positions at universities. In the 1990s, the Social Science Research Council and others urged universities to produce more global knowledge and faculties, and less bounded area studies (Cumings 2002; Briggs, Way, McCormick 2008). Business schools and general education curricula alike responded to the demands of global corporations for a workforce educated in the transnational. Resourceful and entrepreneurial, Women's studies departments asked for new lines in transnational feminism. For better or for worse, that cemented it: the transnational was here to stay. The claim that transnational feminism is global capitalism's fellow traveler was proven correct, again, as women's studies took up the university's implicit and explicit alliances with globalizing corporations and their labor force. It is significant to note that transnational feminism was incorporated in the work of feminist studies as a marginal subject, however. In the United States, as the Women's Studies programs of the nineties moved toward adding gender and sexuality to their names, questions of race and the transnational were perhaps even more explicitly *not* named as the field's objects of study.

Capitalism, State Feminism, and Protest

Is transnational feminism, then, primarily the handmaiden of global capitalism, displacing "empire" and the (post)colonial in feminism? It is certainly a more anodyne term, one without the political force of the other two. In a set of provocations that deserved more response than it got, Hester Eisenstein (2005) argued that feminism is dangerously useful to global capital; feminism provides the crucial set of terms without which micro-credit loans, the feminization of labor in export-processing zones, or even, ending welfare "as we know it" in the United States, could not take place. By providing a language for gender-based liberation, she suggests, it is quite useful to those who want to produce women as a cheap labor force or a market for credit products, which is to say, the project of creating more debtors for finance capital out of impoverished women in the global South (Joseph 2002). Likewise, the United States or Western Europe could not go to war to save women or protect victimized gay folks without feminism (Puar 2007). Feminists, particularly in the United States, *have* articulated the idea that women's autonomy is

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enhanced by waged labor, and thereby have also played a role in the destruction of the notion of a family wage, which makes employers responsible for social reproduction. It seems persuasive to suggest that this line of argument has played a role in what Patricia Fernández-Kelly has called the global assembly line—the feminized work force responsible for manufacturing globally—however much this was not an outcome that feminists imagined or sought (Nash and Fernández-Kelly 1983; Fernández-Kelly 1984). Following Eisenstein, we could also note the indirect implication of the transnational migration of feminism in what Rhacel Parreñas and others have tirelessly chronicled as the globalization of child care, housework, and even sexual intimacy. They describe how some women in an archipelago of places across the formerly colonizing nations have entered the formal labor force, as others, from the formerly colonized world, have become responsible for their caring labor—creating a care-work gap in their home countries and families that leaves children to some degree to fend for themselves (Parreñas 2001, 2005, 2011). As Anna Sampaio notes, the effects of globalization have been very uneven, producing poverty as well as wealth, leaving half the world's population living on less than US$2 a day, with the effects of neoliberalism being particularly disproportionately felt by women (Sampaio 2004; World Bank 2000).

At the same time, we could point to the ways feminism has been a real force of critique of the effects of globalizing capital on women's and poor folks' lives, from the scholars just noted who have articulated these very problems to the transnational linkages produced through international encounters. Manisha Desai (2002) argues that we can see the ways transnational feminist activism around child care, domestic violence, food sovereignty, ecological devastation, and reproductive and sexual autonomy has been born in a matrix of analysis concerned with colonialism, racism, and neoliberalism. She locates its emergence in the grassroots activist organizations from diverse parts of the globe that met at the Mexico City conference of 1975. Or better, perhaps, we might situate those 1970s encounters, as Maylei Blackwell and Judy Wu suggest, in the 1971 meeting in Vancouver at which Third World women activists met to discuss the United States war in Indochina (Blackwell 2014; Wu 2013). The UN-sponsored international women's decade of 1975–1985 provided one intensifying set of meetings for these encounters, as did the other autonomous spaces activists pioneered—tribunals, caucuses, and *encuentros* (Alvarez 2003). It's no accident that the *internacionales*, indigenous, and other groups who have supported *Zapatismo*, the anti-World Trade Organization (WTO) movement, Occupy, and the World Social Forum have brimmed with feminists. Feminist networks were one of several capillaries through which a very Latin American, indigenous, and socialist analysis of neoliberalism and global capital, and more importantly, a set of techniques for leaderless organizing and the production of free, autonomous spaces spread through Europe and the United States (Conway 2007; Alvarez 1998, 2000, 2003; Briggs 2008).

At the same time, something more insidious was afoot in feminist activism in the aftermath of the UN world conferences on women's process—symbolized by the appearance of US first lady Hillary Clinton and secretary of state Madeleine Albright at the 1995 Beijing conference. State feminism, historically linked to the former Soviet states, at least

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for a moment took center stage in the IGO world and never really left, as the subsequent imperial wars to "save Afghan women" from the Taliban (see Abu-Lughod 2002)—and, more confusingly, later saving Iraqi women from a secular dictatorship installed by the United States. Meanwhile, although the NGO delegates in 1995 were located twenty miles away, outside the choking smog of Beijing, their role, too, was rapidly being institutionalized and bureaucratized as a form of transnational governance. Feminists have articulated a powerful critique of NGOs and IGOs as sites of oppressive transnational governmentality, what some came to refer to as the troubling "NGO-ification of feminism" (Lang 1997; McLaughlin 2004; Squires 2008).

The Nation as Analytic: Securitization, Borders, Surveillance, Incarceration

Some feminist scholars have suggested that the "transnational" obscures the work of the nation, that it is a bit of naiveté that needs to be destroyed about how the hard-edged work of security and imperial war machines work. They are responding to formulations that emerged particularly in anthropology in the 1990s, such as that of Nina Glick Schiller and colleagues, in which transnationalism was defined "as the process by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement" (Schiller et al. 1992). There was also Arjun Appadurai's account of "flows," "ethnoscapes," "ideoscapes," and "mediascapes," which sought to account for diasporic imaginaries and the cultural work of migration and media in deterritorialized ways that made it seem as if borders did not matter, thereby, some argued, flattening out the inequalities of globalization (Appadurai 1991, 1996). By extension, for some theorists it has come to mean something like the receding importance of the nation as a social and even political form. The trouble is that while this relativizing account of the transnational may characterize the situation of global elites, capital, and multinational corporations, it is very inadequate to describe the context in which working-class, impoverished, and racially minoritized people find themselves constrained by national borders and the violence of imperialism and political economic forces. Indeed, Aihwa Ong (1999), with characteristic brilliance, took seriously the invitation within the question of transnationality to engage in a riveting ethnography of Chinese elites' globalized lives that vividly demonstrated the class specificity of who could easily cross borders.

Transnationalism, however, need not require a turning away from feminists' historical concern with subalternization. In fact, with a slight turn of the paradigm's kaleidoscope, we could say that attending to the transnational offers an analytic, an optic on the nation with a great deal of explanatory power about the articulation of the imperial and the national. For example, the tightening of citizenship requirements and the militarization of borders that took place after September 11, 2001 in response to attacks by al Qaeda against the World Trade Center towers and US Pentagon represented (1) the

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acceptance by large numbers of nations that this was a military and not a criminal matter; (2) the widespread assumption that increasing harassment of noncitizens and the use of militaries to patrol borders would prevent similar such incidents in the future; and (3) the replication of US securitization measures across an extraordinary variety of landscapes. The tightening of borders that ensued, from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe, Germany to Turkey, Mexico to Argentina, was partly mimetic and partly coerced, as border securitization became both a condition of continued US foreign aid and a set of technologies sold by global contractors. It is, in other words, a technology that produces the nation for the benefit of transnational security companies, among other things.

Furthermore, other crucial technologies of the nation at this political conjuncture—surveillance, policing, prisons, biometric technologies at customs, torture—are equally transnational, circulating at the conferences of those that produce the technologies, carried from one country to another by the transnational corporations that install and sometimes implement these techniques, passed deliberately or accidentally from one nation's intelligence agency to the next. Feminist scholars such as Gina Dent, Angela Davis (2001), and Julia Sudbury (2004) have explored the globalization of prisons for women, examining the transnationalization of techniques like super max; others have written about the transnational circulation of sexualized torture (Briggs 2014; Lazreg 2008); scholars such as Zoe Hammer (2004) have also explored how the militarization of the United States–Mexico border has been rendering it profitable for transnational private prison corporations. It is not that the "transnational" is some soft and fuzzy version of the nation; it is a site of theorizing how violence is done in the name of the nation.

Numerous substantive areas of feminist scholarship have broadened and deepened our understanding of the transnational. In these next sections, I explore some of these, albeit more briefly than they deserve.

Queer and Sexuality Studies

From the outset, transnational feminist scholarship has engaged queer and sexuality studies, particularly through Jacqui Alexander's work on the ways the economic and legal relations of the Caribbean rely on enforced heterosexuality at the same time that they incorporate gay tourist dollars (1994, 2005; see also Kaplan and Grewal 2001; Kempadoo 1999). Echoing the ambivalent voice of transnational feminism, the "transnational" is simultaneously characterized as a space within which to consider exploitative relations of economic inequality, racial formation, and imperial wars, and to explore the production of new terrains of resistance and desire. To the extent that sexuality and queer studies were and are subfields of feminism, this scholarship was already part of the transnational turn in feminism, and began explicitly to engage it. To the extent that feminism and sexuality studies have had separate careers, queer studies has responded to the consolidation of transnational feminism as a distinct subfield (alongside subfields in

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other disciplines like transnational history, sociology, and so forth), with engagement, although in the United States and Canada, not a great deal. Likewise, work on globalization has productively engaged queer theory (Gibson-Graham 1999).

Some of the most exciting work in queer studies has been migration scholarship, where feminist scholars like Eithne Luibhéid (2002), Chandan Reddy (2011), Nayan Shah (2011), and Martin Manalansan (2003) have engaged the violence of states in their regulation and exclusion of homosexuals and the complexities of migration in the context of the imperial role of a United States that proclaims itself liberatory (see also Luibhéid 2008). Others have pointed out how the regulation of homosexuality and sex panics produce the space of neoliberal contraction of the state (Duggan 2004), or, conversely, how regimes of state support for homosexuality have underwritten neoliberal governance (Hoad 2007; Patton 2002). Jasbir Puar's (2007) intervention, asking us to think about "homonationalism" and how the (gay, married, normalized) homosexual subject has been deployed as part of a claim about the Middle East's (backward, terrorist, homophobic) difference, echoes the insight about the uses of "saving Muslim women" for US wars (and, before that, for British imperialism). Indeed, the theorization of "homonationalism" (and, in relation to Israel and the proclamation of a singular "safe" space for GLBT people in the Middle East, the related notion of "pinkwashing"—the call for progressives in Europe and the United States to see Israel in terms of gay freedom rather than military occupation of Palestinian territories) seems to have opened up extensive new horizons for queer activism and theorizing.

Feminist Disability Studies

Feminist disability studies has likewise expanded how we see the transnational. It has found these same moves to be productive: looking at transnational organizing and activism as producing useful solidarities and outcomes, such as the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and also a space of injury, a geopolitics and political economy that produces impairment. Taking up questions of rape, castration, and torture in war, for example, or the pesticide gas leak from the Union Carbide plant that killed an estimated 8,000 people and injured hundreds of thousands, or the estimated one million people in Vietnam disabled by dioxin exposure by the US military's use of Agent Orange in the United States' war in Indochina, scholars of transnational feminist disability studies have asked whether it is possible to bring together a progressive politics of disability (as simply part of the range of what it is to be human) with a politics of reparations for the bodily harms of colonialism, war, and transnational capitalism that does consider disability as loss or even tragedy (Soldatic and Grech 2014). Others have considered disability in a postcolonial frame, thinking through the relations of postcolonial states to their colonial legacies in terms of politics of heredity, health, and disability (Parekh 2007). Still others have raised the inclusion question: What are the

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inclusions and exclusions with respect to the politics of, and people with disability in UN and other intergovernmental and NGO spaces, transnational feminists organizing, or intercountry treaties? (Arenas Conejo 2011).

Women of Color Feminism

The relation of women of color feminism to the transnational is more complex. On the one hand, it has been so integral to the development of transnational feminism that it is hard to separate them sufficiently to put them in conversation. Aihwa Ong (2006) locates the distinction between the two as one of emphasis and history; for her, "transnational" names an emergent, post-1965-immigration-reform axis of difference, a narrative that is not the civil rights one within which US academic protest has long articulated itself but one which centers "new immigrants" and the new forms of globalization and its resistance. Yet others have suggested that US ethnic studies (and hence women of color feminism) are concerned with the "domestic" to the exclusion of the rest of the world, aligning ethnic studies with multiculturalism (Shohat 2001; Kaplan and Grewal 2002). As Sandy Soto (2005) points out, this locates women of color feminisms as part of what is subsumed and overcome by a celebratory "transnational" feminism, which hardly seems fair, given the powerful engagements with decolonization and related politics by women of color feminism.

Maylei Blackwell offers a compelling genealogy that locates women of color feminism at the center of transnational feminism. She argues that intellectually and in activist terms, it was Third World feminism—expressed as solidarity with Third World decolonization movements—and then women of color feminism that gave rise to transnational feminism. Before, outside, and alongside the UN and associated meetings, there were those self-consciously articulating a feminist politics in relation to Third World decolonization, who jumped scales when pathways forward were blocked at the regional and national levels (Blackwell 2006, 2014). There are traces of this specific genealogy in Chicana feminisms, for example, beginning with Gloria Anzaldua's *borderlands/nepantla* epistemology, which argues for the literal Southwest and the metaphorical in-betweenness of both border violence and Chican@ identity as neither here nor there, United States nor Mexico, akin to what later Chicana feminist theorists call the liminal "Third Space" of politics, spirituality, and nationality (Pérez 1999; Blackwell 2010; Guidotti-Hernández 2011; Lugones 2010; Licona 2012). Likewise, we could point to the critical importance of Toni Cade Bambara's writing about Vietnam in her short stories (1977), or Caribbean feminist Audre Lorde (1984) and her work on, for example, Cuba and the Africa-Soviet Union nexus, or the central concerns of influential Puerto Rican feminists, such as Helen Rodriguez Trias, with birth control and sterilization politics, echoing moves from the island (Morales 1996; Nelson 2001; Rodríguez-Trias 1978), or—while not really a women of color feminism—the

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centrality of decolonization and sovereignty to Native feminism (e.g., Shanley 1984), which we turn to next.

Native Feminism and Settler Colonialism

Some of the most interesting work coming out in feminist scholarship today is by Native feminists, and questions of the transnational are no exception. For Native and indigenous feminist scholars, *transnational* at once articulates the current state of the question—think how many Native nations cross current national borders, with people on both sides—but also poses a problem: if decolonizing politics grounded in resistance to settler colonialism frees us from thinking of the nation as a given, why should we care about nations at all, "trans" or otherwise (Smith 2008; Byrd 2011; Goeman 2009; Hall 2008, 2009; Arvin, Tuck, and Morill 2013)? Doesn't any "transnational" feminism reify the nation all over again and reiterate the unspoken and hence ungrievable legacy of settler colonialism? At the same time, analysis of a gendered politics of settler colonialism has precisely led to an analysis that links Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the United States, as well as Spain and France in the Americas, Asia and the Pacific Islands more broadly—a cartography of American Indians or Native Americans in the United States, Aboriginals in Australia and New Zealand, First Nations in Canada, and indigenous peoples in Latin America, that is certainly "trans"-something (Kauanui 2008; Simpson 2008; Jacobs 2014; Aikau and Spencer 2007; Ouellette 2002). Conversations between Native feminisms and women of color feminism continue to complicate and deepen the strand of transnational feminism born in conversation between Third World and Fourth World feminisms (Ramírez 2008; Oullette 2002). On a different note, too, feminists and others have called attention to the way Indian wars and the frontier continue to haunt and populate other imperial ventures—calling enemy territory in Vietnam "Indian Country" during the US war in Indochina, for example, or conversely, considering the disproportionate representation of Native people in the US military (Erdrich 1993; Silko 1977; Denetdale 2008). Thinking through tribal nations has led others to think of relations among diverse indigenous peoples as intrinsically transnational.

Furthermore, while the UN has sometimes been a useful location from which to raise issues related to indigenous peoples (as for example the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, or the International Decades of the World's Indigenous Peoples), through its "women" decades and conferences, it routed the concerns of indigenous peoples through their national delegations—which is to say, it made the relations of settler colonialism central to its formulation of "women's" concerns. Blackwell (2006) has argued that indigenous women in Latin America responded to this demand that they incorporate themselves

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with mestiza or Ladina women by generating the current massive wave of trans–Latin America indigenous feminist organizing.

Who Can Do the Work of Transnational Feminism?

One of the ways scholars and activists have tried to resolve the issue of whether transnational feminism too much aligned with the interests of global capital or imperial states to have any critical power is by asking the question: Who can do transnational feminism? Can local grassroots activists outside metropolitan centers be transnational feminists, strengthening their local organizations and their fights through international alliance, or do these alliances primarily benefit international funding agencies, NGOs, and the World Bank? Is it a framework that can serve scholars from outside the United States, Western Europe, and similar places, producing more international publics for their intellectual production, or is it just another career-builder for global academic elites with research budgets in euros or dollars that allow travel to multiple research sites and a strong passport that gives them freedom of movement?

Michelle Murphy's (2012) brilliant analysis of a feminist problem space in reproductive justice politics—cervical cancer—provides an appropriately ambivalent reply that seems worth exploring at length for the ways it is paradigmatic of how transnational feminism is currently configured. Scholarship and activism on reproductive politics has arguably been more transnational than in most substantive areas in feminism, as the political fight for birth control was twinned with population control in the post–World War II period. Even before that, Margaret Sanger's activism was supremely international. More recently, Shellee Colen's 1995 paper on "stratified reproduction"—on the relationship of structural adjustment in the West Indies to childrearing in New York (by West Indian women whose own children stay in the islands)—has proven an enduring paradigm for how we understand transnational relations of reproduction. Feminist anthropology has also persistently grappled with reproduction and kinship in a transnational frame (Gordon 1976; Ramírez de Arellano and Seipp 1983; Colen 1995; Inhorn 1994; Press and Browner 1997; Strathern 1992; Browner and Sargent 2011).

Murphy begins with the Pap smear, a laboratory technology for examining vaginal and cervical cells under the microscope, usually collected by a gynecologist or physician at an annual pelvic exam, to allow the early detection of cancerous cells. Self-administered Pap smears and cervical awareness were a centerpiece of the US and Canadian women's health movements in the 1970s, as feminists taught each other how to use a speculum to look at their cervices. Across Western Europe and the United States in the seventy years since the development of the laboratory test, the Pap smear has reduced mortality from cervical cancer by 90 percent, while having very little effect on cancer rates among medically underserved populations in Latin America, Africa,

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and Asia. Even in the United States, Canada, and Western Europe, however, the test largely reaches a whiter and wealthier population of women, and cervical cancer has become a disease of poor people and people of color in the North and South. This fact has entwined cervical cancer both in technologies of control and in progressive efforts at empowerment. On the one hand, the Black Women's Health Project went from door to door, spreading information in Black communities in and around Atlanta about cervical cancer and the Pap smear. On the other, the call for more Paps in communities of color turned into mandatory gynecological exams and Pap smears in prisons, often at admission, a practice we know sometimes amounts to little more than medicalized rape. It was essentially a strategy for reintroducing the mandatory vaginal cavity search.

With the development of the HPV (human papillomavirus) vaccine and the reformulation of our understanding of cervical cancer as a vaccine-preventable sexually transmitted disease, the demand for coercive Pap smears did not recede, but the pharmaceutical company Merck lobbied hard to make the HPV vaccine mandatory for nine- to thirteen-year-old girls. That effort briefly succeeded in Texas, then failed in the face of organized pushback from the conservative Right. Merck ultimately succeeded only in requiring it for new immigrants seeking permanent status in the United States, aged eleven to twenty-six years. Both efforts—mandatory Pap smears in prison and required Gardasil for immigrant women and girls—have been the subject of organized resistance that has ultimately been (mostly) successful. But they offer a powerful picture of what happens when a gynecological condition is constructed as a disease of women of color.

This twinned legacy of progressive grassroots politics and corporate and state control followed cervical cancer into its career as a transnational feminist issue. The International Women's Health Coalition (IWHC), an NGO out of New York, with annual galas featuring Hollywood stars and politicians like Hillary Clinton and Kofi Anan and no links to grassroots women's health activism, became the funders and champions of a transnational feminist agenda around cervical cancer. At their international policy meeting in Bellagio, Italy, full of funders and UN folk, they decided to roll cervical cancer into a category of "reproductive tract infections," which linked HPV to other things, such as putting leaves in the vagina as a method of birth control and genital cutting. To give the organizers their due: this was essentially the campaign that they brought to the IGO Cairo Conference on Population and Development in 1994, in which they sponsored the "war room" that successfully organized to replace the neo-Malthusian language on population control in the proposed resolution with "reproductive health." The result has been a remarkable sea change in international development efforts and funding, with family-planning money flowing more generously and less coercively to nations around the globe. On the other hand, it's still development money—linked to the IMF and World Bank SAPs that have robbed local hospitals of the means to do their work and drastically impoverished many communities in the name of fiscal responsibility. The organized transnational feminist campaign was again allied with the forces of global capital and coercion.

At the same time, the IWHC also organized an autonomous meeting with the Women and Development Unit at the University of West Indies (WAND) that

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produced a much more interesting grassroots campaign. WAND, working together with the Latin American and Caribbean Women's Health Network, described cervical cancer as a problem of inequality. Neoliberalism and development, they argued, had produced the inability of women in the Caribbean to get access to appropriate cancer screening. The group's pamphlets also stressed inequality between women and men and sexual coercion as part of the problem, and called for research on vaginal microbicides against HPV that could be used without male partners' knowledge or consent, and without preventing wanted pregnancies. The campaign, called "Demystifying and Fighting Cervical Cancer," was led by the activist Andaiye, a Guyanese Marxist feminist, friend of Audre Lorde's, and the cofounder in the 1980s of Red Thread, which organized to value women's unwaged labor. Her group linked the high rates of cervical cancer among impoverished women in the Caribbean to state and corporate devaluing of human life, to pollution, and the continued absence of legislation to protect workers. This campaign, funded by IWHC through foundations, is also a face of transnational feminism—not only in its funding, but also in its literal copying of images of Pap smears from a Vancouver women's health pamphlet and the language of reproductive tract infections from IWHC. It is a fascinating and genuinely progressive campaign reassembled out of intellectual pieces from the US and Canadian women's health movements, from the international NGO sector, and Third World feminist and Marxist traditions.

So this, then, is the fundamentally ambivalent state of transnational feminism—whether as activism or analytic: it lives in a space produced by global capitalism and NGO-ification, while simultaneously producing real and profound resistances.

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