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Meridians 2:1

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conference: Banu Subramaniam's essay on the rhetoric of biological invasions; Sharon Hom's piece on the interconnections among biography, identity, place and globalization; and Lisa Suhair Majaj's reflections on writing and return, in her case, to Palestine. All of these essays hint at the significance of linking the domestic with the transnational by contesting both of these categories, thus demonstrating the ways in which each informs the other. It is also the case that these categories become much more meaningful when they are engaged as themes whose boundaries are, at the very least, open to query, rather than as issues that simply frame a topic. For example, Subramaniam interrogates the "national rhetoric surrounding alien and exotic plants and animals" and shows how this rhetoric both shifts and is simultaneously shaped by the "xenophobia rampant in contemporary anxieties about a changing world." Lisa Suhair Majaj, a self-defined Palestinian American, also engages with the national, discussing it as "home" when meditating on how "the issue of return has been persistently pushed to the border where it lingers: unheard but not unvoiced." Sharon Hom discusses "feminism as an encounter" that often remains parochial and blinkered despite, and at times because of, its desire to go global.

The challenge to categorical thinking, often implicit in much of the work published in *Meridians* to date, may also be seen in the discussions that link intellectual and political work. Pumla Dineo Gqola's piece analyzes the often tense discussions between the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) and black women in South Africa by showing that "the space for the politicization of Blackwomen's experiences fell outside the language" of the BCM. Cheryl Wall further develops her earlier path-breaking ideas to look at the Harlem Renaissance with a fresh eye and reminds readers that "even as black feminist heresies become histories, black feminist scholars must be tolerant of the heresies they in turn provoke," another instance of the intimate connections between the domains of the political and the intellectual. This connection between the political and the intellectual may also be seen in the powerful report by Meredith Tax on Woman's WORLD, an organization that exists to challenge the simple fact that women writing honestly is considered a threat to a number of differing but linked constituencies. The connections are

also explicitly present in Caren Kaplan's question "How do some kinds of contemporary feminist practices produce new orientalisms in the context of cosmopolitanism and globalization?" This question echoes Sharon Hom's linkages, although Kaplan addresses those linkages differently: by unraveling the tensions between cosmopolitanism, nationalism and colonialism in the emergence of new feminist subjects. "Sisters Behind Bars," by Opal Palmer Adisa, which is on the incarceration of women who speak their minds in regard to the troubles in the North of Ireland, also attests to the perceived threat of some women's words as well as to the link between the intellectual and the political. The Roundtable on Peace foregrounds new arguments about peace and security through the animated discussion of seven women who enthusiastically engaged with each other about these issues at the request of the journal.

Representation is, of necessity, a critical arena which is, and will continue to be, discussed in *Meridians*. C. A. Griffith's and H. L. T. Quan's review of three documentary films that are a "direct and vital response to the romanticization of globalization" lays out a series of provocative arguments about the nature of documentary film-making and the relationship of women of color/Third World women film-makers to this medium. This is a discussion that I hope will be continued in *Meridians* and, perhaps, will also move into examining and questioning the boundaries between documentary and fictional narratives in film. In their essay, Laura Gillman and Stacey M. Floyd-Thomas look at fictional accounts of five women, and suggest that *mestizaje* "is a critical apparatus for a differential social movement." They also draw on representational devices to argue that "race" boundaries are themselves permeable and, therefore, require new politics and intellectual frames. Kevin Quashie's intriguing proposals about girlfriend selfhood—"the struggle of girlfriend selfhood is to achieve radical self-possession"—suggests to me that many readers will return to their Toni Morrison and Alice Walker novels with a fresh eye. Poetry is inevitably an intermingling of nurture, argument, and controversy and the poems in this issue of *Meridians* are precisely that. Reetika Vazirani uses mythology to make her point while Odilia Rivera's work flows from one topic to another, punctuating the essays and allowing readers to further nuance their own arguments.

Suniti Namjoshi's poem, submitted on the eve of Anna Mani's death, asks readers to examine not only the often silenced achievements of women who were pioneers many decades before, but also forms a link with the previous issue of *Meridians* which contained an essay about Anna Mani and her determination to remain in science.

This issue of *Meridians* contains pieces that interrogate the meanings of feminisms, the languages of science and discourse, the role of the state in the subordination of women, the links between the political and the intellectual, the shifting, crumbling, and redefining of boundaries, and the negotiation of representation as desire—all questioned through the lens of “race”/ethnicity/nation as well as racism. Reading the submissions sent to the journal, and being able to publish work that covers a wide range of topics, it is evident to me that *Meridians* is clearly fulfilling a need, both within the academy as well as outside of it. It remains my hope that future issues of the journal will create even more space to pursue the interrogations mentioned above and that, therefore, the journal will consolidate its position for being a place where the complicated puzzles of feminism, race, and transnationalism are engaged.