
3-1-2009

Meridians 9:2

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Recommended Citation

Giddings, Paula J., "Meridians 9:2" (2009). *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism*. 21.
<https://scholarworks.smith.edu/meridians/21>

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PAULA J. GIDDINGS

Introduction

Social constructions shaped by art and/or various forms of violence are themes in this issue of *Meridians*.

Drawing from artists' narratives and transnational feminist scholarship, "A Real Feminine Journey': Locating Indigenous Feminisms in the Arts" by Nancy Marie Mithlo asks if indigenous feminism can exist within the parameters of traditional communal paradigms that undermine individualistic or gendered identities. In the essay, the author demonstrates how indigenous communities become gendered communities as a result of colonialism.

"Chinese Women Presenting Domestic Violence: The Beijing Conference, International Donor Agencies, and the Making of a Chinese Women's NGO" by Lu Zhang looks at the formation of the first women's NGO in China organized exclusively to combat domestic violence in that country. The "Domestic Violence in China: Research, Intervention, and Prevention Project" (DV Project) of the China Law Society was launched in the wake of the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, China, in 1995. Through explicating the origins and development of the DV Project, the author argues that the "global" and the "local" in the field of transnational feminism should be treated more attentively as an interactive nexus rather than as largely independent entities.

Penal Code 498A, the only criminal law in India that specifically encompasses domestic violence, is under attack by a growing, patriarchal backlash. In "Legal Frankensteins and Monstrous Women: Judicial Narratives of the 'Family in Crisis,'" Sharmila Lodhia looks at how the

[*Meridians: feminism, race, transnationalism* 2009, vol. 9, no. 2, pp. v–vi]
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prohibition against marital cruelty has been undermined not only by elements in the society at large, but most disturbingly by judicial decision-making itself. Lodhia argues that the troubling trend reflects how Indian patriarchies are being recast in law through the construction of gendered subjects who threaten the stability of the Indian family.

Using the internationally acclaimed film *Khamosh Pani* as a text, Shahnaz Khan analyzes how the 1947 Partition of British India into India and Pakistan is remembered cinematically by Bollywood, the dominant cultural institution in the region. In her essay “Floating on Silent Waters” Khan further interrogates how the film frames continuing violence between Hindus and Muslims and speculates how it may influence the social constructions of Muslims in South Asia and elsewhere.

“Never Innocent: Feminist Trouble with Sex Offender Registries and Protection in a Prison Nation” by Erica Meiners links the prison abolition discourse to escalating sex offender registries, which are the state’s response to sexual violence against women and children. Meiners provides a brief and queer history of sex offender registries; investigates how race, class, and gender complicate who has access to the protected categories of childhood and motherhood; and utilizes a feminist framework to challenge the nation’s reliance on incarceration.

Poets Tara Betts (“All That White,” “Zora Neale Hurston,” “Marian Anderson’s Voice Carries”) and Veronica Golos (“Two. Because Poems Are”) render provocative visions and alternate states of mind.