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Made in India: Decolonizations, Queer Sexualities, Trans/National Projects

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Viviane Namaste makes a significant contribution to changing how feminist activists, scholars, teachers, and students think and talk about transsexual lives and politics in Canada. Arguing that we must shift our analyses away from identity and towards questions about how imperialism and institutional frameworks structure and erase transsexual experiences, Namaste places the everyday at the centre of this inquiry. Her work in this volume is deliberately challenging and provocative, not simply because it goes against the grain of a great deal of feminist thinking about transsexuality that privileges identity, but because her insistence on considering national and linguistic imperialism in relation to feminism forces us to re-vision Canadian feminist history to evaluate the foundational and shaping role racism, nationalism, and imperialism plays/played in this history and organizing.

The variety of texts in this volume is eclectic and speaks to Namaste's extensive efforts to bridge the (sometimes real, sometimes imaginary) gap between activism and academia. This book contains interviews with leftist and trans academics, activists, and artists, a letter to nominate PASAN (Prisoners' HIV/AIDS Support Action Network) for the TFC Trans Planet Outstanding Organization Award, a chapter dedicated to women's studies teaching, the keynote address for the 2001 Sexin' Change conference in Toronto, and a chapter that uses two case studies about how imperialism is implicitly supported in contemporary struggles for the legal rights of transsexual people. All of these pieces address the tremendous foundational impact of transsexual prostitutes, prisoners, and drug addicts on transsexual politics and activism. Namaste seeks to undo the gentrification of transsexual activism and history and the institutional erasure of such key actors. These pieces highlight issues such as the restrictive imperative for transsexuals to understand their lives through an LGBQ framework, the refusal of the media (even the serious, "legitimate" media) to take transsexual stories on their own terms and demand that transsexuality be told only on an autobiographical basis, and how struggles for health insurance benefits tied to employment and human rights legislation actually work to further entrench anglo imperialism and deny the foundation of contemporary transsexual politics.

Namaste's chapter, written in collaboration with Georgia Sitara, on teaching the Kimberly Nixon case is especially demonstrative of how shifting the focus from identity to institutions and imperialism when talking about transsexuality moves us in more politically productive directions than the abstract and rather unanswerable question, "Who is/is not a 'woman?'" Namaste suggests that if we move beyond this, there are many possibilities for a rich analysis of this case, including the opportunity to problematize "women's experience" as a universal product of being sexed female at birth; thinking through the troublesome and disturbing feminist recourse to analogies between race and gender; and making links between feminist appeals to the law and the state and the general support of imperialism and nationalism in feminist histories.

Considering the Nixon case (and, by extension, anything we discuss about transsexuality) as not solely a question of identity pushes us out of comfortable abstraction and into the messy dissonances of transsexual and feminist theory and politics.

Rachel Hurst
York University

Made in India: Decolonizations, Queer Sexualities, Trans/national Projects. Suparna Bhaskaran. Palgrave: NY, 2004; 180 pages; ISBN 1-4039-6726-1; \$33.95US (paper).

Taking to task poststructuralist theories that shape anthropological research, Suparna Bhaskaran's book, *Made in India: Decolonizations, Queer Sexualities, Trans/national Projects* examines multiple perspectives on feminine and queer Indian subjectivities through the matrices of both national and transnational practices. Her own dis/placement as a diasporic Indian, who was seen to be the "native informant," interested only in "all things Indian" (2), begins her search for a way to think through the colonial roots of anthropological discourse and to make those colonial connections salient to the articulation of "the modern woman" and "queerness" in India. Each chapter in the book, which can be read as an independent essay, engages with various, often contentious, western theories which are often at odds with the lived realities of the people about

whom she writes. The primary argument of the book is centered on the notion that "queer and non-heteronormative sexuality are fundamental issues of economics and material life especially in the geographic third world" (14).

The first part of the book takes anthropology and its theories to task, particularly around the formation of the discipline vis-à-vis the Other. She argues that third-world academics working in the first world, whom she refers to as anthropology's "Curdled Others," the "hyphenated, halfie..." (15), contribute to the underdevelopment of analyses of their subjects since their realities have been disciplined and accepted insofar as they are blind to their own class privilege. This, combined with the politics of multiculturalism, has created a "boomerang anthropology" that only reflects back to the student. Thus, the colonized other remains always the other. A way out, she argues, is through an idea she borrows from Maria Lugones, a "world traveling" (33) that is grounded in love and intimacy, necessary for doing the kinds of embodied analysis of third-world sexualities her book wants to do.

Following the theoretical framework she sets up, Bhaskaran then devotes the remainder of the book to examining the creation of the postcolonial modern woman in India through a study of the Miss World and Miss Universe pageants in the late 1990s and the hegemony of Indian pageant winners in both contests. She sees these pageants as the site where the "new" Indian woman emerges - one who is confident, independent, and who configures India in the trans/national imaginary. In the world of femininity in which these women belong, the only kind of sexuality which is present is compulsory heterosexuality.

The last two chapters of the book are case studies. Chapter Four, framed in the contemporary discourse of AIDS and family planning, focuses on the writing of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, which prohibits same-sex copulation. Much like the work of other Indian feminists, Bhaskaran demonstrates brilliantly how the writing and enforcement of Section 377 mirrored British colonial anxiety about the sexuality of the "native" in the 19th century. She ends the chapter by studying the impact of Section 377 on gay men in India.

The final chapter begins by examining the invisibility of lesbians in any of the literature she has previously discussed. She further argues that insofar as the "lesbian" exists in popular culture, she is seen as a pathologized being in need of being "cured." What does this then mean in the lives of khush (Indian gays and lesbians) women? By going through the archives of Sakhi, a now-defunct women's organization in New Delhi, Bhaskaran ends her book by studying cases of lesbian "marriages" and "double suicides," prevalent primarily in the southern state of Kerala. Ultimately, she pleads for a "radical reinvention of tradition" by activists and scholars in a way that studying the embodied sexual markings of postcolonials becomes transformative politics.

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Sexing the Church: Gender, Power, and Ethics in Contemporary Catholicism. Aline H. Kalbian. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2005; x +169 pages; ISBN 0-253-21750-4; \$19.95US (paper).

Aline H. Kalbian's book *Sexing the Church* is a comprehensive exploration of the documents of the modern Catholic Church regarding marriage, sexuality and gender roles. The organizing structure of this exploration is around the importance of order, both in the senses of pattern and of command, to the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. Kalbian asserts that the Catholic understanding of moral life, particularly when related to sexuality, is that of maintaining the order of God's creation. Thus, marriage, for example, is not a human social invention but a mirror of God's relationship with his people/the Church. The Church hierarchy is invested in maintaining this order of creation through the insistence on the gender roles of husbands and wives - roles which revolve around the Church's presumption of the distinct nature of male and female participation in procreation and marital unity. Interestingly, Kalbian explains, the Church's portrayal as female and the bride of Christ complicates the very understanding of Church authority when placed beside the insistence on the masculinity of authority within the marital relationship. Ultimately, though, Kalbian sees the feminization of the Church, in the context of the