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FEMINIST APPROACHES TO THE GLOBAL INTIMATE

ALISON MOUNTZ & JENNIFER HYNDMAN

INTRODUCTION

Luisa lives in a rural region of Oaxaca, México, where so many men had emigrated to the United States that by the 1990s her village came to be known locally as a village of women. Like most households in the town, Luisa's is characterized by absence. Her husband left to work in the service industry in urban upstate New York. Unlike other families, however, his has not received routine remittances. Over the years, Luisa has watched her neighbors enhance their homes with brick walls, concrete floors, and even second floors. She and her children, meanwhile, continue to sleep on mats on the dirt floor of her one-room adobe structure. U.S. remittances have enabled many daughters in the town to attend school and many mothers to stop the daily labor of making tortillas and selling them in local markets. Luisa, however, continues to work over the hot *comal*, the roughness of her hands testimony to the toil of tortilla-making where the skin of neighbors' hands has been smoothed over with the flow of "global" capital. Luisa suspects that her husband's earnings now support a new family in New York while she struggles to feed, clothe, and maintain the health of her children (Mountz and Wright 1996). These intimacies inflect the global.

Feminist scholars have made a number of important critiques of globalization (Kofman 1996; Marchand and Runyan 2000). Many of these contributions explore the relationship between "the local" and "the global." In this essay we review some of these contributions and argue that that the global and the intimate constitute one another. Feminist interventions question the disembodied masculinism of the former and interrogate the limits of local/global binaries, calling attention to the silenced, marginalized, and excluded. In so doing, they observe that the local is often essentialized (Roberts 2004), the domestic feminized (Domosh and Seager 2001), the discourses of globalization hypermasculinized (Nagar et al. 2002), and many forms of knowledge and social relations effaced.

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Feminists reclaim and analyze sites, voices, and ways of knowing the world epistemologically and methodologically that produce differences and disparities, among them gender and geographical location. They find these to be not only sites of knowing and being, but also sites of crossing, laboring, and living the global. They have thus worked scale in order to rework the global through their “grounded, feminist approach [which] starts from the lives of a variety of people with diverse relationships to globalization” (Nagar et al. 2002, 269).

Scholars often write *global* and *local* onto social, economic, and political phenomena, thus dividing empirical realities into hierarchical frames (Freeman 2001). Those phenomena, categorized as macrolevel economic processes, weigh more heavily, the globalization backdrop to life’s microlevel daily minutiae. For these reasons precisely, feminist scholars have argued that discourse on globalization is masculinist. Of course knowledges of the global and the local are epistemological assertions to know the same world. We deploy arguments about the social construction of scale to demonstrate the essential role that scale as a concept has played in feminist interventions in globalization discourse. We do not collapse these scales (c.f. Marston et al. 2005), but instead maintain that they are discrete categories best understood as constitutive of one another.

In order to develop this argument, we first review some of the ways that feminists have reclaimed the global through the *intimate*. The word *intimate* derives from the Latin *intimare*, “to impress or make familiar.” How have feminist attempts to make sense of the familiar intersected with their critiques of masculinist efforts to render known the global? As we seek to answer this question, we conceptualize the intimate as embodied social relations that include mobility, emotion, materiality, belonging, alienation. The intimate encompasses not only those entanglements rooted in the everyday, but also the subtlety of their interconnectedness to everyday intimacies in other places and times: the rough hands of the woman who labors, the shortness of breath of the child without medication, the softness of the bed on which one sleeps.

How can a feminist analytics of scale be put to work to express the global through the intimate and the intimate through the global? Is knowledge production of a different kind required to displace and reform dominant discourses of globalization? In order to answer these questions, we explore the border, home, and body as three sites through

which to flesh out the embodied dimensions of living and knowing the global. Like a kaleidoscope, each site blurs the global and the intimate into the fold of quotidian life. We conclude by bringing to the table the promising insights of transnational feminisms.

FEMINISTS RECONCEPTUALIZE THE GLOBAL

As Basu et al. (2001) point out, feminist scholarship since the 1970s has addressed issues of gender and political economy, even if grand narratives of global political economy, such as those of Immanuel Wallerstein and David Harvey, ignore gender. They caution feminists to avoid “macrogeneralizations” on the one hand, and the romanticization of the microlevel, on the other. Political economy, social movements, and identity formation are all entwined with one another. Carla Freeman (2001, 1008) builds on this analysis, arguing that “not only has globalization theory been gendered masculine but the very processes defining globalization itself—the spatial reorganization of production across national borders and a vast acceleration in the global circulation of capital, goods, labor, and ideas . . . —are implicitly ascribed a masculine gender.”

In a similar vein, we aim to show that the intimate is inextricable from the global. They are neither separate spheres nor bounded subjects. Rather, they coconstitute places such as the border, the home, and the body. Following Shohat (2001, 1269), we argue for a relational understanding of the global and the intimate, “particularly significant in a transnational age typified by the global traveling of images, sounds, goods, and populations.” As Carla Freeman (2001, 1008–9) demonstrates vividly “not only do global processes enact themselves on local ground but local processes and small scale actors might be seen as *the very fabric of globalization*” (emphasis added).

Most research on and discourses of globalization are consistently masculinist (Nagar et al. 2002; Roberts 2004; Gibson-Graham 1996). Feminists in political science and geography have challenged the narrow and economistic renderings of globalization as a masculinist project (Kofman and Youngs 1996), dispelling myths that it is inexorable and drawing on the strong research tradition in feminist theory that concerns questions of identity construction and representation (Marchand and Runyan 2000). Sue Roberts (2004) asks, “Why does the global seem to preclude gender?” And we add the rejoinder, Why does globalization

seemingly exclude the intimate? In part, understandings of scale as fixed, discrete categories that often work as binaries are to blame. Roberts observes the repeated coding of the local as feminine and the global as masculine (see also Freeman 2001). Such a conceptualization relies on the erroneous assumption that the production of space occurs only within the categories that we invoke. Doreen Massey (1993) long ago debunked this idea, showing the local to be constituted by processes, politics, and people that exceed its boundaries. Yet globalization discourses perpetuate the myths that the global and local are somehow separate phenomena and that the global somehow prevails over, constitutes, penetrates the local.

Most feminist analyses of globalization would assume the everyday engagements of women and men, including the ways in which relations of work and play, production and consumption, defy any fixed or given scale: they are at once connected to global and local processes, politics and people. “A gendered analysis of globalization would [also] reveal how inequality is actively produced in the relations between global restructuring and culturally specific productions of gender difference” (Nagar et al. 2002, 261). A feminist analysis would travel further and develop “a broader critique of the social production of difference and the multiple exclusions enacted by dominant groups and institutions” (Pratt 2004, 84).

In a word, the politics, processes, and patterns of globalization are intimate. They may be represented as a free-floating discourse about the spaces of capital flows and macroprocesses of economic integration vis-à-vis communication and transportation technologies (Dicken 1998), but such representations are partial. Global migration, for example, is rarely discussed as an outcome of or contribution to this increasing global interdependency. So where are the people? They appear belatedly as messy bodies that spoil the smooth surfaces of roving global capital. If technology is a social process, as Dicken argues, so too is globalization. It produces and is produced by racialized, gendered, sexualized difference in specific ways. Just as much “contemporary political geography describes a ‘world without people’ or at least a world of abstract, disembodied political subjects” (Staeheli and Kofman 2004, 5), so too globalization discourse is conveniently depopulated in most renderings. We seek a corrective to some of these absences.

Feminists have extensively researched global processes, including

the gendered divisions of labor and identities produced by international capital to serve its interests (Marchand and Runyan 2000), as well as the gendered effects of structural adjustment programs (Lawson 1999). But intimacy is not only encapsulated by “the everyday” often foregrounded by feminist methodologies. The intimate involves a proximity that renders tangible the intimacies and economies of the body. Forced pregnancy tests required by some maquiladora employers of female workers are a telling illustration of the ways in which the body is literally monitored by and connected to the global factory. These accounts are important precisely because they elucidate silences in the political economy literature. They do not, however, challenge the very categories of scale—local, global, nation, and state—that overlap and bleed into one another, rendering the global intimate. It is to scale that we briefly turn.

ON SCALE

To speak of local, regional, national or even global processes is meaningless—social relations are in fact played out across scales rather than confined within them. Consequently, it makes little sense to privilege any scale as a primary referent for analyzing particular social processes.
—Philip Kelly, “The Geographies and Politics of Globalization”

In her important intervention in a prolonged discourse about scale in the discipline of geography, Sallie Marston (2000) argues that the social construction of scale highlights the ways in which dominant invocations of scale, such as the state and global economy, serve to efface political and social relations and more “minor” scales, such as the household as gendered, uncounted space of social reproduction. By arguing that scale is not pre-given or fixed, the political stakes of selecting scale as a way of framing struggle have also been exposed (Staeheli 1994; Swyngedouw 2000). Since Marston’s (2000) argument, extended debates about scale have ensued, and perhaps one of the most provocative is Marston et al.’s (2005) rejoinder, a call to flatten the hierarchies of scale and even abandon the concept altogether. In arguing that the global and the intimate constitute one another, we recognize the problematic conceptualization of scale as fixed. And yet we caution against the abandonment of scale precisely because of the ways that feminists have used scale to subvert this hierarchy. For feminists, scale is a leaky category that remains fluid, contingent,

and overlapping. One scale is not mutually exclusive of others.

We do not, therefore, agree that scale is dead or has ceased to serve a conceptual or political purpose. In contrast, we subscribe to feminist arguments that claim the body as the finest scale of political and economic space, that analyses drawing on multiple scales including the body and the global represent a way out of narrowly economistic globalization discourses. Marchand and Runyan (2000) argue that the nation-state is often feminized, as its sovereignty is questioned, in relation to processes of globalization, yet both the state and global economy are dominant scales of analysis that render both sites visible, legitimate subjects of analysis. The scale of the body—whether interpreted as the bodies of women raped by soldiers fighting for their nation during war or those who work in foreign countries as live-in caregivers and maids—allows one to explore global processes as intimate phenomena. Feminists “recover place, but not to celebrate experience or the local per se, but rather to ‘reveal a local that is constitutively global’ [Katz 2001, 1214]” (Nagar et al. 2002, 277).

Rethinking scale entails more than deconstructing dominant narratives of globalization; it involves engaging relationally with processes that are made powerful by the existence or erasure of borders.

BORDER

Borders are geographically and analytically dynamic sites where feminist interventions into and understandings of relations between global and intimate occur. Geraldine Pratt (1998) names borders as poignant “transfer points” in our geographical imaginations of self, other, nation-state, and global relations. They delineate binaries between states and regions in cartographic mappings that are reproduced at multiple sites and scales in our daily lives. Through dualities, borders produce and reproduce differences. They construct people as in/out, legal/illegal, here/there, white/racialized “other.” Not just spatialized delineations on the landscape, borders are temporal as well: moments of truth when power that often operates more subtly is exposed in all its incarnations.

As such, borders present confrontational moments in which we must declare ourselves and in which others exercise power to identify, an exercise that conveys power through visibility. At the international border, the power of the nation-state is enacted through the disciplining of bodies. The state is not only performed along the international border,

however, but also in daily life, through the construction of identities of citizens, noncitizens, and “partial” citizens. Borders are reproduced and inscribed on the body in daily life where the state influences the body in the most intimate and far-reaching of ways, from the regulation of abortion to euthanasia.

Borders also appeal to feminists because of the former’s transformative potential. They are lines drawn to be crossed: sometimes solid, militarized; other times porous and crossed daily on the way to work. They are places that divide, but also contact zones where people meet, conjoin, neighbor, abut. In her pioneering and celebrated Chicana text *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987), Gloria Anzaldúa depicts daily life growing up along the U.S.-Mexico border. She recounts formative experiences characterized by identities in which the contradictions of dualities collide and are embodied. Anzaldúa speaks of the border often as an edge: the edge of something, the end of something, the beginning of something else. For her, borders function as both oppressive sites “una herida abierta [an open wound] where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds” (3) and sites of resistance. She frames her autobiographical experience of the borderlands as a “consciousness of the borderlands.” She names “mestiza consciousness” as an upheaval of dualistic thinking.

Anzaldúa describes a fear of going home (21) because the borderlands are a place of “intimate terrorism” (20). They offer comfort and contradiction, security and insecurity. She undergoes a series of crossings that signal processes of profound transformation. Along the way, she resists, travels through, and mobilizes binaries; and her revelations render those binaries her home, a hybrid space of wounding, healing, and then empowerment. Anzaldúa locates herself in this site in countless ways, arguing that the new mestiza, the hybrid woman, mitigates duality and embraces contradiction and ambiguity. She embodies the borderlands and the intimacy of scales traversed there. The “new mestiza consciousness” embraces ambiguity, ambivalence, multilingualism, psychic restlessness, a state of perpetual transition (78). Ultimately she argues, “To survive the Borderlands you must live *sin fronteras* [without borders], be a crossroads” (195).

Anzaldúa’s theory has traveled extensively among feminist theorists. Melissa Wright (1998) revisits Anzaldúa’s work in her research in a maquiladora close to the U.S.-Mexico border. Wright depicts the repro-

duction of the international border in the operation of the factory. It is divided rigidly between primarily female, Mexican wage laborers and primarily male, American engineers and administrators (116). The American administration polices the women by measuring identity performances in relation to nationality. They stereotype Mexican women as promiscuous and dangerous (119). Wright's analysis centers on two women whose identity performances evoke the border in distinct ways. Rosalía, a Mexican national, climbs the corporate ladder to become an administrator. She uses the national border to prove that she can become "American" because she is "not just any mexicana" (121), in the words of her boss. She improves her English, changes her clothing style, moves to the U.S. side of the border, and obtains U.S. residency. Cynthia, by contrast, is a U.S.-born Chicana engineer who dresses "Mexican" (125). This identity performance meets with a hostile reception from management. The boss tells her to "tone down her hair" because she has "gone too Mexican" (125). Despite awards for excellent work performance, she eventually resigns under pressure. Marking a contrast with Anzaldúa's inclusive *mestizaje*, hybrid identity, Rosalía remarks: "Here you have to be one thing or the other. You are either Mexican or American. There is no place for a Mexican-American here" (125). The border here produces identities that are at once represented in the comportment of the body as well as the consciousness of the women. Understandings of border and body are inseparable.

Wright uses this scenario to challenge Anzaldúa's conception of "the new *mestiza*," arguing that the women "maintain the border of a class division on which the *maquiladora* industry thrives" (127). Rather than form alliances with the wage laborers in the factory, they play off the scripted identity of the Mexican worker. Wright challenges the potential of the "borderlands" theory to travel to different settings; to understand the daily lives of women located in close geographical proximity to Anzaldúa's autobiographical borderlands.

We find, however, that Wright and others (e.g., Friedman 1998) do not pay sufficiently careful analytical attention to the oppressive threads of Anzaldúa's text. The borderlands concept suffers from the overcitation and underreading of Anzaldúa's text to become, sadly, a "dead metaphor" (Ellis and Wright 1998). Like other geographers (Smith and Katz 1993), we caution against the slippery use of spatial concepts¹ and particularly those that entail transgression (Hyndman 2000) and the cele-

bration of hybridity (Mitchell 1997). Spatial metaphors should not stand in as the easy feminist fix to move “beyond” that which is painful and problematic, the “intimate terrorism” of global forces. “Borderlands” tends to be used primarily for its metaphorical utility. As our discussion demonstrates, the metaphorical should be anchored by geographical location toward a politics of location.

In the material sites where they are policed and in the more geographically diffuse locations where they are reproduced, international borders bring into view the disparities and violence of juxtaposing the global and the intimate. Even borders themselves have become dispersed, chaotic, uneven, sites enacted abroad through interdiction and surveillance mechanisms powered by biotechnology. Borders are constantly in motion for the same reasons that our daily lives are intertwined with the daily lives of people in places around the globe. These empirical realities form the basis and rationale for transnational feminisms informed by a politics of location.

The border is located and reproduced not only in the workplace but the home as well. For Anzaldúa, the border is home, whereas Luisa finds the disparities of border crossings reproduced materially in her home on a daily basis because of an absence of U.S. remittances. For many women, home encapsulates reproductions of the border, inflections of the global in intimate spaces.

HOME

The experiences of foreign domestic workers, a quantitatively explosive and qualitatively diverse global labor force, in many ways illuminate the global as intimate. Geraldine Pratt’s (1998, 2005) decade of work with Filipina women who immigrate to Canada through its Live-In Caregiver program provides insight into the intimacy of these scales. These women are “global workers” with short-term visas to work in Canada. On the condition that they remain employed and live in the homes of their employers where they provide domestic labor, they become eligible to apply for Canadian citizenship after two years. Pratt’s interviews, focus groups, and collaborative research endeavors with women workers highlight the ways that microgeographies of Canadian domestic spaces “at home” reproduce the economic disparities and intersecting nationalisms of the global political economy.

Rhacel Parrenas (2001) analyzes the female labor diaspora of Filipina

domestic workers in global cities. Like Pratt, Parrenas discusses the denial of full citizenship to these migrant workers and the denial of reproductive rights by their contracts. For example, the contracts of Filipina domestic workers in the Middle East and Asia prohibit pregnancy, one of the most intimate of human acts yet formally not allowed by foreign employers.

Home is a site where the body is border, where one nationality polices another in overlapping home/work space. Domestic workers in Canada occupy highly ambiguous positions in relation to the nation-state, neither quite in nor out. Their experiences of sexual harassment, unpaid overtime, and subservience are part of the gendered, international division of labor. Global inequalities between nations are inscribed on the racialized body of the domestic worker and reproduced at the scale of the household. Within domestic spaces, Pratt addresses women's inability to draw boundaries around their own private living spaces or the beginning or end to their workdays.

Kimberly Chang and L. H. M. Ling refer to subaltern female domestic workers as the "intimate other[s]" of globalization (2000). They do the kind of intimate labor that enables white-collar professionals to act as a more highly paid, but similarly transnational, labor force. This intimate labor includes child and elder care, washing, cleaning, and cooking. This "regime of labor intimacy" extends to "leaving home, living among strangers, facing sexual harassment and abuse, making moral choices" (Chang and Ling 2000, 27). As in Canada, they find themselves positioned as racialized and sexualized subjects in home and city spaces. These heavily regimented workdays and heavily inscribed subjectivities amount to a large and exploitable labor force of women "who must contend with low-wage menial labor, enforced intimacy, and incarcerating daily routines" (Chang and Ling 2000, 24). Within their dual home and work spaces of their "host countries," women's bodies are commodified.

Filipina domestic workers also turn the inside out. On Sundays in Hong Kong, they turn home inside out in a dramatic transformation of the public spaces of this large yet compact cosmopolitan city. These women occupy the center of Hong Kong Island, where they perform the intimate: cutting hair, dancing and singing, participating in prayer circles and other social activities, all conducted out of doors in close proximity to the bus loop.

In yet another inversion, Inger Agger (1992) turns domestic spaces

into global sites of testimony and healing for refugees in Denmark in *The Blue Room*. She collected oral histories to expose human rights violations, connecting gendered life experiences of oppression and displacement to political forms of repression that women suffer while incarcerated. Agger attends carefully to the construction of sexualized borders and the meanings and consequences of their transgression by women in political exile.

Agger painted a room in her home blue and invited respondents to enter this room as a space of testimony where private history would become public and political via the collective narrative. In this “women’s house of exile” each chapter symbolizes a room, “spaces in which the feminine aspects of life can both be told and de-privatized” (4). She uses the metaphor of home for its transformative potential from public to private, ordering the chapters to illustrate the life cycle. In the Daughter’s Room, the women recall early experiences of sexuality, corporeal borders, and menstruation. In the Father’s Room, they tell of early experiences, often abusive, with the opposite sex in private and in public. In prison, the women experienced a politicized re-creation of technologies of oppression that they had first experienced in the Daughter’s and Father’s Rooms (61). In the cell, Agger interprets consequences of sexualized forms of torture whereby women were disciplined for being “dangerous.” The Mother’s Room, divided into spaces inside and outside, illustrates women’s experiences of pregnancy and motherhood. In the Living Room, Agger discusses many aspects of the daily life of relationships in exile. Finally, in *On the Veranda*, the women come together in a healing circle to share experiences. Stepping outside the home, they extend its transformative function through collective witnessing.

The blue room extends an intimate invitation to the women to step outside their daily lives to speak of experiences of sexual violence. Agger’s is an innovative transnational feminism: “a single testimony of one sex’s painful struggle to extend its space—to move beyond the boundaries of the permissible and fight the power of shame.”

In these home and city spaces, transnational realities intersect to blur the scales of global and intimate.

BODY

The body is also a site where feminists have attempted to know the global through the intimate. Theorizing across poststructural and postmodern conceptual approaches to difference and identity, feminists conjure bod-

ies that appear sometimes as one abstract figure (“the body”), other times as more specific bodies differentiated and located disparately by class, race, ability, gender, nationality, location.²

In many ways, the laboring body functions as the most intimate site in which we experience the global. From Aihwa Ong’s hypermobile “flexible citizens” (1999) who cross borders with ease to Kemala Kempadoo and Jo Doezema’s sex workers (1998) who service a global clientele in situ, no body exists beyond global forces. Leslie Salzinger (2004) and Melissa Wright (2004) write of women working in maquiladoras in free trade zones whose daily movements involve highly regulated controls of the body: the ability to sew quickly, to withstand long hours without use of bathroom facilities, to achieve negative results on pregnancy tests. Here, the working woman’s body holds intimate knowledge of the global powers of transnational corporations. While she may not have crossed international borders to work, she finds herself simultaneously displaced by poverty and held in place by global capitalism.

Not only are women’s bodies displaced and held in place by the global economy, they are out of place and read as such, often an endeavor undertaken by cultural geographers (Massey 1993; Cresswell 1997; Sibley 1995) who study spatial metaphors of displacement. Timothy Cresswell (1997), for example, theorizes society as a human body, and “leaks” as out of place, in need of being cleaned, contained, or removed. Some bodies are more visible because of race, class, gender, sexuality, and citizenship. These differences are inscribed onto the body and reveal the operation of power (Pratt 1998). Bodies emerge as more and less visible in distinct locales, a particularly powerful exercise for those racially and legally othered. Often such processes of identity construction place the body at the center of theorizing around the nation-state and global relations, wherein states manage populations by producing identities through practices of classification and categorization, exercises that entail the material inscription of identities onto the body.

Some scholars read nation and state as body. Diane Nelson (1999), for example, explores visual and textual representations of the body in order to posit the Guatemalan nation-state as a wounded body, ethnic organizing as the finger in the wound. Still others engage with a politics of location through embodiment. In our own work (e.g., Hyndman 2004; Mountz 2004) we have attempted to embody the state, contributing to feminist geopolitical projects identified to ask, Security for

whom? As Simon Dalby contends in his discussion of Cynthia Enloe's (1989) work, "politics is not just the grand dramas of war or the media rituals of statesman. . . . it is about the practical power arrangements of everyday life" (Dalby 1994, 598–99). Similarly, Suzanne Bergeron (2001) argues for closer examination of the links between globalization discourse and feminist subjectivity. She calls for a probing of the identity of the "global economy" by exposing the ways, for example, that multinational corporations are contradictory or decentered organizations. Challenging their hegemony can serve to take apart dominant scripts of globalization in which workers are but the dupes of capital. An important strategy is thus to question disembodied knowledge production and propose embodied epistemologies that create more accountable renderings of globalization.

TRANSNATIONAL FEMINISMS RECLAIM THE INTIMATE

Each of these sites—border, home, and body—requires a feminist politics of location. This has been a central part of the burgeoning field of transnational feminisms: to ground, locate, map, and link empirical realities. Transnational feminisms are among the most exciting theoretical and political feminist interventions to have been developed in response to "the global" in recent years. Here, the trans in transnational is not only about crossing boundaries where the politics of location and historical contingencies such as colonial histories differentiate, but also connecting across these differences. In working toward a transnational feminist politics of location, spatial metaphors are often deployed to conceptualize diverse experiences or to achieve a political objective, such as a transnational feminist politics. Those feminists calling for a "politics of location" actually mean quite distinct things. Some advocate a "transnational geo-politics of mobility" that is materially attentive to money, power, and space (Hyndman 2000). Pratt and Hanson also seek a politics of location that holds "geographies of displacement" in tension with "geographies of placement" (1994, 5). They argue that "seeing geography as central to the construction of difference opens avenues for building feminist affinities" (6). Grewal and Kaplan concur: "What theorists of the diaspora often tend to forget is that location is still an important category that influences the specific manifestations of transnational formations" (1994, 16). Their project to "compare multiple, overlapping, and discrete oppressions" (17). Like Pratt and Hanson, their strategies

involve a politics of placement. Grewal and Kaplan seek alliances among distinct feminisms in distinct locations. Chandra Mohanty echoes this goal in her call to “be attentive to the micropolitics of context, subjectivity, and struggle, as well as to the macropolitics of global economic and political systems and processes” (2003, 223).

The use of a transnational feminist approach problematizes binary conceptions of politics and scale as either global or local, central or peripheral, focusing instead on the circulation of power, identity, and subjectivity across space vis-à-vis transnational populations (Grewal and Kaplan 1994; Silvey 2004). “We need to articulate the relationship of gender to scattered hegemonies such as global economic structures, patriarchal nationalisms, authentic forms of tradition, local structures of domination, and legal-juridical oppression on multiple levels” (Grewal and Kaplan 1994, 17).

The murder of women working in maquiladoras along Mexico’s northern border with the United States illustrates how the global and the intimate are inseparable. Intimate violent acts committed on women’s bodies in the form of rape, abduction, and homicide went unrecognized by local, state, and federal authorities for many years. Feminist advocates organizing on the ground in Ciudad Juárez argued that the confluence of the women’s identities and intimate geographies contributed to the silence around their disappearance. The woman who leaves home to work is considered to have made herself vulnerable. Many of the women disappeared on the way to or from work at the factory, their bodies often abandoned in vacant urban spaces. Melissa Wright (2004) argues that their disappearance confirms the idea of the global worker with exploitable and disposable, devalued body as commodity.

The increasing occurrence of disappearances of women in multiple nation-states and the calls for feminist advocates to “jump scale” by appealing to national and international bodies to recognize femicide as genocide also suggests the urgency of the work of transnational feminisms to name, map, connect, and mobilize against oppressions occurring across international borders. The strategies of activists organizing to call attention to such violent silences demonstrate that the mobilization of scale has proved an effective political strategy. This transnational feminism articulates the global as intimate, the intimate as global.

While our discussion addresses the ways that feminist scholars have reclaimed sites using more fluid notions of scale, it is also always neces-

sary to consider the silences generated by these interventions. Transnational feminisms must reclaim the intimate through some of the strategies detailed in this essay: the embodiment of global processes (Hyndman 2004; Mountz 2004); the linking, implosion, and rearrangement of scale (Marston 2000; Nagar et al. 2002); the sustained attention to key sites where the intimate and the global are pronounced. Nationality, gender, race, religion, class, caste, age, nation, ability, and sexuality represent unequal locations within a web of relationships that transcend political borders and scale the global and the intimate simultaneously.

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NOTES

1. We are also compelled, however, by Gillian Rose's (1996) argument that spatial existence too can be easily divided and dismissed in masculinist musings into the real/material and the unreal/metaphorical.

2. Stasiulus (1999) and Nagar et al. (2002) distinguish *between* feminist and postmodernist work, arguing that postmodernist and poststructuralist theory deny the material bases of power and are therefore not useful to feminists. This is a distinction we challenge. Feminist thought and politics are often reconceptualized and enhanced through poststructuralist thinking. Such an analysis can reveal the processes by which constellations of power are effaced or naturalized. Pratt (2004, 84) challenges the

claim that poststructuralist arguments immobilize feminism: “[W]e would expect the feminist movement to be increasingly emptied of its singular focus on woman, and possibly rethought around a broader critique of the social production of difference and the multiple exclusions enacted by dominant groups and institutions.” Pratt’s argument is particularly pertinent here because it is the dominant discourses of the global that largely exclude or efface the intimate, treating them as discrete scales. Mohanty (2003) launches a similar defense of her position in chapter 9 of her book. Wolf also highlights the importance of postmodern interventions in analyses of the global political economy in her conversation with Patricia Fernandez-Kelly (Fernandez-Kelly and Wolf 2001).

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