

reappears in battles for social power, whether falling within the dialectics of anti-colonial against western colonialism or outside of these particular power relations.

Bannerji's second essay turns to the events that unfolded on the 28th of February, 2002, wherein Hindu fundamentalists in political and social power in the Indian state of Gujarat committed genocide and ethnic cleansing against Muslims living in the state. It is here that she turns to the ways that women, upon whose bodies the capacity to physically reproduce the nation state has literally been inscribed, remain the central targets in projects of nation building and national 'preservation'. The "demographic thrust" of ethnic nationalisms relies on the physical presence of bodies, actively reconstituting the language of 'majority' and 'minority' in corporeal terms. The project of population control, located in the bodies of women and children, is a fundamental component of ethnic nationalisms; from the struggles in Israel and Palestine, to Nazi Germany, and settlement projects in the United States and Canada, "the general and particular nature of the phenomenon of genocide [demonstrates] how in different cultural and historical environments genocide/ethnocide or ethnic cleansing takes on a particular ideological and symbolic constitution."

In "Cultural Nationalism and Woman as the Subject of the Nation," Bannerji asks "who is entitled by social relations and location to accord ... recognition," and as significantly, what is being recognized within this framing? It is here that Bannerji explores the dynamic creative processes of building hegemony whereby the plurality of categories, modalities of knowing and experiences are reduced to the singular. For example, she discusses the manufacturing of symbols within colonial and liberationist projects that reproduce 'tradition' and 'modernity' in the singular as distinct homogenized entities. In fact, these categories are multifaceted, plural, and contradictory. It is

this understanding of the plurality of all categories and the potential multiplicity of all linguistic concepts which saturate the rest of her essays.

While concepts become ideological in the very processes of articulation, it is important to recognize how concepts and categories are epistemologically deployed in order to uncover their potentially inherent ideological underpinnings. Bannerji eloquently explains:

Common nouns which are marked by the possibility of their boundless generality tend to lend themselves to ideological usage, and more readily so than others which signal plurality and specificity. Notions such as "nation," "tradition," "modernity," "mother tongue," and religions interpreted in terms of essences, provide us with ideologies. The politics of *hindutva* (hinduness), Zionism, Islam or Christianity could readily help us to perform ideology and typically help to accomplish the praxis of power. They can do so because they can be rendered into singular notions based on generality that can occlude lived spaces, times and practices of living subjects and agents. Similarly generalities such as "civilization," "culture," "science," "freedom," or "democracy" can do the same.

As she explores in her final chapter, there has been an overwhelming tendency within western European thought to anchor scholarly work in generalizations characterized by 'essences'. Locating her discussion in the tradition of sociology, Bannerji demonstrates how the making of the 'scholar' depends on an intimate relationship between the administrative structure of the colonial governments and various everyday social contexts. Throughout her collection, Bannerji presents her reader with a central concern that must be attended to: what disappears in the processes of making and writing categories? Practices of employing universal

categories distort lived social history as they are more committed to preserving power hierarchies and common sense ideologies rather than delving into the substance of everyday living conditions. As Bannerji reminds us, "the project of hegemony always remains incomplete and in an ever annexing mode, [seeks] to incorporate and neutralize the constantly emergent imaginaries of the nation's 'others'." For this reason, and in recognizing the "colonizing modalities of knowledge," she urges her reader to take the first step in a decolonizing pedagogy and praxis by interrogating their own place within systems of knowledge and knowing. In such a way, the reader must never forget to "read between the lines."

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## **BABIES WITHOUT BORDERS: ADOPTION AND MIGRATION ACROSS THE AMERICAS**

Karen Dubinsky  
Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010

### **REVIEWED BY JENNIFER MUSIAL**

Long before interracial and transnational adoptions became a popular culture phenomenon, my white parents fostered and later adopted my black sister. Like Dubinsky, a queer white woman with a Guatemalan child, I feel simultaneously blessed to have a wonderful sister and critical of the conditions of child removal and state-sponsored adoption that led to her placement with my family.

Dubinsky shows that these feelings are not incommensurate. Despite, or possibly due to, her personal investment in the topic, Dubinsky offers a well-crafted, thoughtfully argued and researched text on interracial and transnational adoption that moves beyond the kidnap/rescue binary to look at the symbolic nature of children.

Dubinsky's objective is to make adoption more complex than kidnap or rescue discourses provide. Dubinsky says adoptive parents are neither imperial kidnapers who steal children from the Global South nor are they benevolent providers of a "better life" for children. These tropes do not reflect the reality of adoption, which involves personal agency, complicated relationships, community dynamics, militarist politics, shifts in immigration law, and nation-building strategies that allow for the circulation of children from a family of origin to an adopting family. Her unique contribution, then, is to draw out the nuances of gender, racialization, family, militarism, and nation in her look at adoption by Canadian and U.S. American parents.

To achieve this, Dubinsky uses three symbolic children as chapter tropes: the national baby, the hybrid baby, and the missing baby. In her chapter on "the national baby," Dubinsky discusses the migration of Cuban children to the Global North in an effort to escape nationalist, pro-Castro brainwashing. Prospective U.S. American parents saw themselves as benevolent Christians and anti-communists by taking in Cuban children. Dubinsky hints towards the interconnections between racialization, ethnicity, religion, and class in these discursive renderings of adoption, but this could be developed further. For instance, Dubinsky notes that anti-Castro, U.S. created propaganda worked primarily on middle-class Spanish-Cuban families who, in part, feared relocation of their children to the countryside populated by poor African-Cuban families. Therefore, a brief look at racism, religion, socio-economic class, and

region in Cuba would illuminate the patterns of migration even further.

The tensions of racialization, ethnicity, socio-economic class, and region *are* taken up in Dubinsky's next chapter on "the hybrid baby." Here, Dubinsky examines discourses of anti-racist parenting, colour-blind liberalism, and colonialism in Canadian interracial adoption. The chapter compares Montreal's Open Door Society, an organization of anti-racist white parents who adopted black children, to the removal of aboriginal children from their homes, and placement within white families. Dubinsky's important contribution here is to point out that anti-racist parenting of black children was held up to demonstrate a progressive Canadian nation, while the adoption of aboriginal children by white families represents a national shame that has never been adequately addressed. Dubinsky could do more to draw out the nuances of adoption demography, which is buried in the final pages of the chapter, but it is a solid complement to a book that otherwise focuses on transnational adoption.

In her final chapter on "the missing baby," Dubinsky once again returns to the movement of children across national borders. Dubinsky outlines what she calls a culture of child "missingness" as a legacy of civil war. Since children went missing through death, displacement, and disappearance, it is not surprising that Guatemalans are suspicious of transnational adoption. Dubinsky closes the chapter by arguing that the traumas of war on family structure are not yet known in Guatemala. However, the Guatemalan adoptee who sends remittances back to his/her/hir birth families and the proud Guatemalan birth mother who shows off photographs of her more-affluent child, complicate the kidnap/rescue binary as it seems neither wholly "good" nor wholly "bad," but something a bit murkier.

Dubinsky draws on an array of research materials including film, interviews, archives, adoption case files, and public monuments. Her book represents a fascinating look

at families and nationalism vis-à-vis pronatalism, racialization, militarism, and colonialism. It would be a fantastic read in family studies, women's studies, history, sociology, children's studies, or cultural studies courses. Beyond wanting more detail about the intersections of racialization, ethnicity, class, and religion, part of Dubinsky's own narrative is missing. Queer parents who adopt across racial and national lines are absent. I suspect this is partially due to the timeline of the book, but it would be interesting to hear more about the migration of queer parents to the Global South for the purposes of transnational adoption. This analysis would serve to enrich an already terrific text.

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## **GIVING BREASTMILK: BODY ETHICS AND CONTEMPORARY BREASTFEEDING PRACTICE**

Rhonda Shaw and Alison Bartlett,  
Eds.

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**REVIEWED BY  
CAROLINA CREWE**

Shaw and Bartlett's groundbreaking compilation adds significant depth to contemporary debates surrounding the characterization of breastfeeding and breastmilk as a gift. Shaw and Bartlett present breastfeeding as a