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Emily van der Meulen and Robert Heynen’s edited volume highlights gaps in the field of Surveillance Studies, specifically the “limited systematic attention to gender” (pg. 4). The editors argue that racialized and gendered accounts of surveillance are central to various histories that have systematically produced bodies and individuals as either “normal” or “deviant” (pg. 16). This collection highlights the importance of individual experiences and collective histories that shape contemporary surveillance culture. Expanding the Gaze: Gender and the Politics of Surveillance adds to a growing body of work in Surveillance Studies that draws attention to the lived experiences of surveilled subjects, and the ways in which individuals’ experiences of surveillance can change dramatically depending on their (intersectional) identities.

To provoke a “rethinking of the field” (pg. 5), the editors draw on critical and feminist scholarship that deals with contemporary and historical social practices that are sometimes not seen as forms of surveillance. Chapter authors build on central concepts used in Surveillance Studies, such as social sorting, the surveillant assemblage, and governmentality, by adding an empirical focus on gender. The collection is divided into three distinct but overlapping areas of focus: gender, media, and surveillance; surveillance and gendered embodiment; and surveillance and the gendering of urban space. Each of these will be discussed in turn.

The chapters in the area of gender, media, and surveillance assess questions concerning the ways in which women are told or expected to perform their gender, sexuality, and/or national subjectivities in particular ways, as well as how they resist or express agency in the face of the surveillance culture that surrounds them. Karaian engages with surveillance of teenagers’ self-produced and consensually shared sexualized selfies, and argues that teenagers are surveillance savvy. Analyzing an episode of Dr. Phil, Karaian shows how teenagers are shamed for their behaviour, and pathologized and responsibilized for failing to manage their risks in digital sexual expression. Steeves and Bailey draw on Brighenti’s understanding of visibility to demonstrate how surveillance is experienced across a spectrum, as panoptic understandings of surveillance fail to address the nature of power relations that contextualize the experience of being surveilled. In their analysis of young women’s performances on social media, they argue that young women are aware of the highly gendered aspect of their online identities and deploy a number of privacy mechanisms to limit their audiences. Khoja-Moolji and Niccolini’s chapter examines narratives about young Muslim women’s sexuality and the agency they have in disrupting stereotypes regarding their sexual and national subjectivities. They do this by focusing on the work of young Muslim women’s...
writing in special collections or blogs about the ways they face intersectional oppression and the way in which surveillance is part of cultural practices. Reburn’s chapter on crime dramas and hegemonic masculinity examines how portrayals of serial killers and the profilers reinforce patriarchal power structures within the panoptic city, by emphasizing public spaces as male spaces, and prompting women to modify their behaviours instead of tackling patriarchal attitudes. Reburn argues that while surveillance is both internalized and gendered, specific monitoring of female behaviour in response to risk and threats is not benign but repressive. While all chapters in this section highlight the repressive nature of surveillance, they also argue that women’s facelessness and loss of identity, or the intentional revelation of intimate details, especially in the online sphere, can be an empowering resistance to the surveillance culture that surrounds them.

The section on gendered embodiment and surveillance begins with Mason’s chapter, which examines a CBC documentary in which discourses around sex selective abortion stigmatize racialized women’s reproductive health practices in Canada. Mason argues this is especially problematic as the maternal racialized body has traditionally been a primary target for interventionist policies and programs related to reproduction. Guta, Gagnon, Mannell, and French’s chapter analyzes HIV treatment as prevention (TasP) programs by using governmentality to identify and problematize how these strategies result in new forms of administrative control. They argue that while TasP programs are an improvement on earlier practices of exclusion and erasure, these programs still use the security apparatus to make docile bodies and allow for increased classification, visibility, and discipline. Fischer’s chapter uses the case of Chelsea Manning to highlight the surveillance of transgender bodies within the safety state and offers an empirical contribution to critical engagements with the Prison Industrial Complex. Fischer argues that the “military’s refusal to let Manning transition exemplifies exclusionary and normative regimes of sexuality and gender” (pg. 197) enforced by the ban-opticon within the Prison Industrial Complex.

The final section of this volume explores surveillance and the gendering of urban spaces. Newman’s chapter provides an historical analysis of the surveillance of gay men in Toronto in the 1970s, focusing on the murder of Emanuel Jacques. The murder of the 12-year-old shoeshine boy was politically and culturally mobilized by the media and police to sanction spatial regulations in the downtown core, which reaffirmed white hetero-normativity and homophobia. Law and Bruckert focus on surveillance in strip clubs drawing on qualitative data from Toronto and Ottawa. Their chapter draws on interview data to demonstrate how their conception of the surveillance web framework disrupts the second wave feminist understanding of the male gaze as objectifying. Warren et al.’s chapter explores gender in Australia’s night time economies (NTEs) through an examination of security guards and security practices. Violence in these NTEs is fuelled by a concoction of toxic masculinity combined with alcohol and a dominant juridical and disciplinary discourse that excludes non-technological methods from NTE securitization. The authors argue that gendered understandings of surveillance, security, and risk need to be adjusted to focus on the objective of patron safety.

This collection brings critical and feminist work to the fore of Surveillance Studies, putting gendered perspectives at the centre of analysis. To break down hetero-patriarchal normative understandings of surveillance, as Warren et al. argue in the final chapter, surveillance has to be approached “as a proactive and nuanced human skill (…) rather than a mere technological phenomenon” (pg. 283). This work highlights the need for increased methodological discussions that allow Surveillance Studies scholars to access tools that expand their work to include intersectional analyses, and cases that demonstrate the appropriate methods required to carry out a gendered analysis of surveillance should be included in future volumes. Work that gives further consideration to the role of a researcher and how their own intersectional identities might help or hinder their research would be a useful addition to this body of work. This collection highlights the ways in which contemporary surveillance structures perpetuate systems of inequality where the burden continues to fall upon marginalized individuals, and the continued need for us to expand the gaze of our analysis as Surveillance Studies scholars.