

## BOOK REVIEW/COMPTE RENDU

**van der Meulen, Emily and Robert Heynen, eds.** *Expanding the Gaze: Gender and the Politics of Surveillance*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016. 288 p, \$29.95 paper (9781442628960)

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**E***xpanding the Gaze* is an ambitious and precarious text. Positioning itself at the intersection of gender and surveillance studies, Emily van der Meulen and Robert Heynen bring together a diverse set of authors to examine the various ways that gender and surveillance interpenetrate, and unpack the taken-for-granted heterosexisms that undergird the Surveillance Studies corpus. Although *Expanding the Gaze* is a welcome intervention, the resulting text doesn't quite fully cohere as a collection by way of either substance or methodology. While it impels serious interrogation of various instances at which gender and sexuality come into resolution under surveillance, it does not arrive at a theoretical vantage point from which we can look back at the field and see how they have always been at play. Nor does it provide any concrete methodological interventions aimed at attuning our senses to the variety of roles gender can take on within surveillance societies. Rather, *Expanding the Gaze* relies on conventional forms of discourse and qualitative media analysis—more common, perhaps, within the fields of Cultural, Media, or Gender Studies than “traditional” Sociology—to support its claims. Indeed, the volume's eclecticism seems to purposefully eschew a systematic rethinking of methodology, or of surveillance itself, as intrinsically gendered practices that, from their points of origin, dovetail with sexual politics.

This eclecticism is in line with the volume's stated goal to “engage critically with the gendered nature of surveillance in its many forms” (4). *Expanding the Gaze* provides an exciting, yet superficial, survey of gender's multifaceted articulations with surveillance and, in doing so, shows a kind of playfulness and intellectual ferment that is less interested in supplementing or enriching old dialogues than with inspiring novelty. As a collection, it is an ambitious, multidisciplinary assembly that critically engages with a number of gendered perspectives, adapted from a variety of traditions; it should be congratulated on its disciplinary agility and the commitment to diversity that it employs while attempting to stitch together disparate literatures and theoretical bodies.

One of *Expanding the Gaze*'s major successes as a collection is that it attempts to move beyond, and in some ways circumvent, vast theoretical and disciplinary divides. Reburn's chapter, *Profiling the City: Urban Space and the Serial Killer Film*, explores the television and movie portrayal of killers and detectives and their roles as surveillance "experts". By highlighting the tensions that overcode acts of seeing and being seen, she shows how surveillance is rendered simultaneously predatory and paternalistic in relation to a passive, pathologically feminized victim and geography. Reburn takes on a unique position, vacillating between the surveillance of bodies at their most visceral—at the point of murder, as a corpse, as biological evidence—and their most textual and abstract: as rhetorical device, as image, as simulacrum. The result is an provocative synthesis of film, surveillance, and body politics that raise numerous questions regarding not only the act of surveilling gendered bodies, but also the ways in which surveillance has been absorbed into and enacted through various media.

Contributions by Karaian and Steeves & Bailey focus on surveillance beyond the limits of the body proper. They show how the production and surveillance of texts and images—whether in the form of an intimate biography or a nude selfie—further alienate the body from the loci of performance, pleasure, objectification, or revolt. What results from this alienation is not an erasure of the body, but rather a sense of its multiplication and liberation from the somatic limits of biological instantiation. These chapters do much to overcome the endemic cynicism and technophobic argumentation that surveillance scholars so often return to. By showing that surveillance can be used as a means of self-investigation and sexual discovery, these authors explore the hidden instances of rebellion and liberation that can exist beyond or in partnership with the subjugation of the lens.

Newman's piece "The Spectacle of Public Sex(uality): Media and State Surveillance of Gay Men in Toronto in the 1970s" does much to demonstrate how (homo)sexuality can be policed by state actors in opposition to laws that ostensibly guarantee its free expression. Although Canada had already moved to legalize gay sex, Newman shows how the murder of a young boy in Toronto's "gay district" in 1977 prompted the collusion of state and media actors to encourage both lateral (public) and police surveillance of gay men's sexual practices. This extrajudicial use of surveillance to enforce sexual values in opposition to legal precedent stands as an important injunction into the Surveillance Studies canon wherein the state and law are often supposed to act in tandem.

What the volume lacks in theoretical cohesion, it more than makes up for with concrete example. *Expanding the Gaze* is not a lofty, eso-

teric collection. Indeed, it manages to anchor and give shape to a wide array of insights borrowed from Gender Studies in a way that shows their relevance to scholars of surveillance. Contributions by Mia Fischer, Corrine L. Mason, and Guta *et al*, in particular, clearly demonstrate how the intersection between surveillance and trans\* and queer sexualities solidifies at points of societal crisis: the HIV epidemic, national security concerns, murder and the resulting media frenzy. These chapters bring surveillance studies into a fruitful dialogue with Gender Studies in a way that avoids the “add women and stir” problem so common in attempts to bring gender and sexuality into view inside previously de-sexed, gender-blind discourses. *Expanding the Gaze* does not just comment on the surveillance of individuals, or groups of individuals, who happen to be women, trans\*, or queer; it centres their experience, demonstrating how primary and vital intersectional analysis is to Surveillance Studies, and how impoverished it is without.

*Expanding the Gaze* is eclectic in both subject matter and methodology. While the volume provides little continuity around which to structure an introductory course in Surveillance Studies, it opens up many productive avenues for investigation and discussion. Although its reliance on discourse and media analysis hinders its usefulness as a traditional sociological course text, it might find productive use as a reader for graduate or advanced undergraduate seminars in Surveillance or Gender Studies that seek to move beyond the conventional and into interdisciplinary frontiers.

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