#SURROGACY

CONFRONTING THE COLONIALITY OF TWITTER AND CONTEMPORARY TRANSNATIONAL SURROGACY PRACTICES IN INDIA

by

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Abstract

“#surrogacy: Confronting the coloniality of Twitter and contemporary transnational surrogacy practices in India” begins to think about how the racial histories of modernity provide a lens to consider transnational surrogacy in India. My thesis aims to unpack the complex dynamics that exist between contemporary commercial surrogacy practices, social media, archiving, and Western colonialism. This conceptual project is divided into three parts (historical, conceptual and empirical) to allow for a nuanced examination of colonial archives, the embedded colonial ‘logic’ and tropes in these archives, and the continuities of colonial and racialized histories that permit for an understanding of how and why India became the first transnational hub for commercial surrogacy. My scholarly work examines surrogacy and the racialized and gendered ‘markings’ of colonialism, as they intersect with modes of technology and transnationalism in the twenty-first century. Specifically, I seek to expose how Indian women’s bodies are ever tied to colonial processes seen through transnational surrogacy transactions.

This thesis spans historical moments as well as geographical and spatial locations as a means to necessarily articulate and conceptualize the coloniality of both surrogacy and Twitter. Here, the histories of transatlantic slavery, South Asian colonialism, and South Asian postcolonialism are pushed together to identify the dynamic workings
of these tensions that allow us to think through our historical and colonial present. Namely, I am situating contemporary transnational surrogacy practices alongside the histories of racial violence, motherhood, and technology. The historical, conceptual and empirical frameworks being employed here encourage, and necessitate, broader and more complex thinking around transnational surrogacy practices. To extend the thinking around contemporary transnational surrogacy is my intention; to position surrogacy practices within the processes of racialization and colonization necessarily illuminates the often-overlooked histories and positionalities that frame the reproductive transactions.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Hedda Krausz Sjögren @SevenHedda: 3000 clinics offer surrogacy services in India today. A 2.4 billion unregulated industry. #mrdagarna @Riksteatern @birgittaohlsson Babyfarm.13 November 2012, 2:35 a.m. [Tweet].

The contemporary space occupied by women’s reproductive bodies is one fraught with unsettling dynamics. As technology has come to mediate many aspects of daily life, so too has it become a defining feature of modernity, as can be seen through Western reproductive practices. A wealth of feminist literature in the area of reproductive politics has focused on the intersections between female reproduction and technology (Rich 1976; Chodorow 1978; Balsamo 1996; Sawicki 1999; Albanese 2007; Cheng 2007; Rothman 2007; Ruddick 2007; Satz 2007; Thurer 2007; Firth 2009; Aird 2010; Harrison 2010; Teman 2010; Markens 2007, 2012; Pande 2009a, 2009b, 2010, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c). While literature that considers the liberatory aspects of reproductive technologies exists (Firestone 1970; Petchesky 1987; Stabile 1994; Stanworth 1987; Umansky 1996), it is often framed in a liberal discourse of choice and as such
lends itself to an obscuring of the racial and colonial histories that implicate particular women’s bodies as tools for the development and deployment of reproductive technologies, namely surrogacy. What remains to be explored are the ways in which contemporary assisted reproductive practices and technologies are structured by persistent colonial power relations and by colonial narratives of race, gender, class and sexuality.

My thesis aims to unpack the complex dynamics that exist between contemporary commercial surrogacy practices, social media, archiving, and Western colonialism. This conceptual project is divided into three parts to allow for a nuanced examination of colonial archives, the embedded colonial “logic” and tropes in these archives, and the continuities of colonial and racialized histories that permit for an understanding of how and why India became the first transnational hub for commercial surrogacy. My scholarly work examines surrogacy and the racialized and gendered “markings” of colonialism, as they intersect with modes of technology and transnationalism in the twenty-first century. Specifically, I seek to expose how Indian women’s bodies are ever tied to colonial processes seen through transnational surrogacy transactions.

The thesis culminates with a critical examination of contemporary discourses of transnational commercial surrogacy present on Twitter. Through an analysis of data on surrogacy-related Twitter postings I demonstrate how colonial narratives continue to reveal themselves, even if in only one hundred and forty characters. Thus, Twitter is used to demonstrate and challenge how Indian surrogates’ bodies have largely been reduced to their colonial selves in this particular social media space. This will provide an important material dimension that limits the seeming boundlessness of Twitter by exposing and tying it to ongoing colonial narratives.
Using Twitter to map colonial narratives as they imprint themselves on Indian surrogates allows for a re-examination of these women as intimately intertwined in the projects of modernity and colonialism. Through this, we can come to understand how Indian women, both in past colonial periods and in India’s contemporary “post-colonial” state, can be read as geographies that bear the markings of modernity and colonialism. I examine this process by developing a genealogy of the colonial history of surrogacy and other maternal practices in India. Here, the material realities of transnational surrogacy are grounded in a historical network of colonialism, wherein Indian women’s bodies have been continually exploited through their sexual, reproductive and maternal capacities. Moreover, I also demonstrate how the materiality and histories of Indian women’s bodies can be understood on a continuum, both temporally and geographically, that more aptly represents modernity and colonialism as dynamic processes. Importantly, I am suggesting, too, that colonial histories and other processes of racialization, as they are linked to modernity and technologies, inscribe but do not wholly define Indian women. To do this work, black feminist and black diaspora scholarship is incorporated to intervene in considerations regarding agency, resistance and (un)freedom, particularly as they exist in the tactics that frame the constrained realities of some historically relevant and contemporary racialized women’s lives. Moreover, this discussion attempts to expose the complexities and intricacies of illustrating how colonial processes are by no means finished and to demonstrate how they exemplify that to be a modern subject is to also be a colonial subject.

Modernity can be understood as “the unfolding set of relationships—cognitive, social, and intellectual as well as economic and political—which . . . produced among
their contemporaneous witnesses the conviction of historical difference” (Wilson 2004: 8). For the purposes of this discussion, the focus is on “modern” constructions of race, gender, and sexual/reproductive capacities, as they were “forged through the practices and ideologies of colonization and slavery” (Wilson 2004: 9). In establishing this analysis of the ways in which the conditions of modernity and colonialism are enacted in and through the body it becomes clear that colonized bodies speak, simultaneously, of their oppression and of their emancipatory capacities. As Eisenstein (2004: 36-37) elaborates:

The body localizes power and it also diffuses it without regard to [the] controls of language. Considering the body as porous allows us to search for a notion of cultural sharing that can displace a Western notion of origin and replace it with a historical practice of democracy. Bodies always speak their passionate humanity even though in inseparable fashion from other networks of meanings. The body cannot announce its meanings in some kind of unmediated way, yet it can open us to a polyversal reading of humanity.

My investigation of how Indian women are continually wrapped up in colonial experiences aims to inspire different narratives that recognize the complexities and multiplicities of modernity and colonialism, in working “against the closure of categories” and towards “inescapable hybridity and intermixture” (Gilroy 1993, quoted in Eisenstein 2004: 46). Furthermore, moving from “colonial” to present-day India, I propose that the transnational surrogacy networks that we see in India today are not only part of an ongoing colonial history but in many ways constitute the very notions of modernity. Here, discourses of transnational surrogacy on Twitter and the material realities of transnational surrogacy in India become evidence of the assemblages of modernity, as particular bodies—in this case, Indian women’s bodies—come to be tied to the technologies of race in the most intimate of ways, and in so doing, reflect
the notion that to be a “modern” subject is to be a colonial subject.

1.1 Background: Transnational Surrogacy in India

The recent history of transnational commercial surrogacy—the practice and growing global industry of women being paid to gestate fetuses implanted through in vitro fertilization on behalf of “commissioning” parents from other countries who will become the legal parents of the child at birth—is deeply rooted in the proliferation of the medical tourism industry that offers affordable medical procedures in Third World countries for a typically wealthy, typically Western clientele (DasGupta and Dasgupta 2014). Medical tourism, and with it transnational commercial surrogacy, has seen a drastic increase in popularity as evidenced through online advertisements, information, and booking agents and services. The medical tourism industry has exploded worldwide as the Internet facilitates these transnational transactions.

Commercial surrogacy was legalized in India in 2002. Because of the lack of regulations, including “any system of national registration, data collection, or firm ethical practice guidelines” (DasGupta and Dasgupta 2014: x) it remains unclear how many surrogacy centres actually operate in India. In 2012, DasGupta and Dasgupta report, there were, however, 600 clinics registered with the government. Roughly 400 other clinics are operating without official government sanction. Moreover, by 2012 it was estimated that the number of births per year by surrogacy had increased to over 2,000.

The costs of surrogacy services in India are between USD 25,000 to USD 40,000 for a commissioning couple from the United States. These fees includes the various
medical procedures, from the surrogate’s IVF hormone treatments to the embryo transfers, as well as the commissioning couple’s travel costs to India to ‘collect’ their child. The rates of using surrogacy services in India pale in comparison to the costs of domestic surrogacy in the United States, which range from USD 80,000 to USD 100,000 and often do not include extensive travel for the commissioning couple. Of the USD 25,000 to USD 40,000 approximately USD 3,000 is paid to the Indian surrogate for her gestational services. The remainder of the monies go the surrogacy agency to pay the doctor and their staff, as well as the third-party agent who assists the commissioning couple throughout the process, ensures the surrogate (and her husband) signs the contract, and is usually also involved in recruiting surrogates. Importantly, the amount an Indian surrogate is paid for her services increases significantly for members of upper castes, better-educated women and those with a successful surrogacy record. It is also necessary to contextualize the realities of surrogacy work alongside the monetary figures. It is often poor Indian women with limited education who work as surrogates. The Western imperialist narrative that sees surrogacy as the “way out of poverty obscures the contexts in which surrogacy work becomes majboori [a compulsion]” (Bailey 2014: 30). Here, transnational commercial surrogacy “forces us to confront these intersecting issues of empowerment, ownership and integrity of the female body, and the compulsion of motherhood” (DasGupta and Dasgupta 2014: xii). Moreover, there is also the need to confront the histories of colonialism, racism, sexism and classism that contribute to the burgeoning transnational surrogacy industry.
1.2 Literature Review

As feminist scholars were the first to critically discuss reproductive theory and politics, this study begins by reviewing their literature. Broadly speaking, within feminist-focused work there are two main branches of research on reproduction and the maternal. The first includes conceptualizations of the maternal/reproductive body and a focus on reproductive politics within the realms of feminist theory (Rich 1976; Chodorow 1978; Kristeva 1982, 2007; Kaplan 1994; Walker 1998; Braidotti 2002; Kukla 2005; Betterton 2006; Ferrell 2006; Harraway 2006; DiQuinzio 2007; Douglas and Michaels 2007; O’Reilly 2007, 2010; Rothman 2007; Ruddick 2007; Thurer 2007; Stone 2012). A limited amount of feminist literature actively challenges essentialized notions of the maternal/reproductive body as a theoretical corpus (read: white, heterosexual, middle-class, able-bodied) (Sawicki 1991, 1999; Balsamo 1996; Albanese 2007; Cheng 2007; Rothman 2007; Aird 2010; Harrison 2010; Lee 2010; Das-Gupta and Dasgupta 2011, 2014; Pande 2009a, 2009b, 2010, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c). By contrast, other scholars have neglected to consider dynamic theories of the maternal/reproductive body that engage with difference and see the maternal/reproductive body as an embodied practice that is socially and historically located (Firestone 1970; Petchesky 1987; Stabile 1994; Stanworth 1987; Umansky 1996; O’Reilly 2007; Ruddick 2007). The second area of focus includes more empirically grounded research. Here, researchers utilize ethnography, qualitative interviews and discourse analyses to situate feminist debates around the complexities of reproduction, including feminist scholarship on surrogacy, within both broader socio-political contexts and personal experiences (Roberts 1998; Almond 1999; Narayan 1999; Ragoné 1999, 2000; Dalton 2000; Gailey 2000; Parreñas 2001; Shanley 2001; Markens 2007, 2012; Satz 2007;
Reproductive technologies are endowed with liberatory potential within some early second-wave feminist debates, as well as some contemporary liberal ones, particularly those surrounding familial liberalism and queer couples (Firestone 1970; Petchesky 1987; Stabile 1994; Stanworth 1987; Umansky 1996). However, discussions of reproductive technologies overwhelmingly frame these technologies as alienating and exploitative. Although these analyses are necessary, there are limitations to conceiving of technologies, including reproductive technologies, in largely negative terms. Overall, there is a gap in the literature between theoretical writings and empirical research on the maternal/reproductive body. While considerable work has been published on reproductive theory and politics, surrogacy is a topic that remains underexamined. Specifically, the surrogate body as a conceptual body is largely invisible within the literature.

My research seeks to advance beyond these limitations in the scholarly work on surrogacy and reproductive technologies. My thesis crucially develops discussion of the surrogate body both as a conceptual body that distinctly hovers between the reproductive and the maternal, and as a material body that experiences the situated realities inherent in transnational commercial surrogacy transactions. Moreover, in utilizing data collected from Twitter, I seek to consider the ways in which Indian

1. In 1988, the Baby M case became the first American court ruling on the validity of surrogacy, particularly as it relates to issues around legal parentage. While it was ruled that the surrogacy contract was void, the genetic (and intended) father, William Stern, was still awarded full custody of Baby M, with the surrogate, Mary Beth Whitehead, initially awarded visitation rights in recognition of her genetic tie to the child (Woliver 1995). This highly publicized case drew attention to the issues of contract law as it intersects with surrogacy transactions. Since this case there have been notable changes made to surrogacy contracts, including the recognition of “father-rights” in contractual form (Woliver 1995), and contracts that overwhelmingly afford contractual rights to the intended parents, often at the expense of the surrogate (Harrison 2010; Woliver 1995).
women’s reproductive bodies haunt colonial networks online, despite the fact that their voices are not always present in tweets pertaining to their embodied experiences as colonial subjects of transnational surrogacy. In framing this study, I use a configuration of theoretical approaches to position this project as contributing to a broader decolonizing process. These approaches include critical race theorists, feminist scholars, scholars of black diaspora studies and scholars of subaltern studies. This theoretical framework serves to underpin a drive to hold accepted theoretical constructs accountable to an anti-colonial project.

Situating myself in and through this project necessarily involves examining my position in relation to power, both broadly speaking and specifically in relation to forms of colonial, racialized, economic, gendered and global power. As a white, Western educated, feminist scholar, I acknowledge my access to legitimized political discourse that position me with the troubling power to potentially speak for and of Indian surrogates’ experiences. In seeking to be responsive to and accountable for my positionality I engage with critical race and postcolonial scholarship to develop an anti-racist, anti-colonial theoretical framework. Moreover, this involves considering the following passage,

though all feminist or antisexist projects cannot be reduced to this one, to ignore it is an unacknowledged political gesture that has a long history and collaborates with a masculine radicalism that renders the place of the investigator transparent. In seeking to learn to speak to (rather than listen to or speak for) the historically muted subject of the subaltern woman, the postcolonial intellectual systematically “unlearns” female privilege. The systematic unlearning involves learning to critique postcolonial discourse with the best tools it can provide and not simply substituting the lost figure of the colonized. (Spivak 1993: 90-91)

Thus, this project is an attempt to contribute to antiracist, anticolonial, antisexist
work, while remaining distinctly aware of the racist and colonial legacies that underpin white Western feminism.

1.3 Methodological Framework

This project combines a foundation in interdisciplinary critical theory with a qualitative methodological approach that provides additional grounding for this project. The following proposed methodologies, along with the conceptual framework allow for transparency in assessing the collected data within an analysis of colonial networks linking discourses of surrogacy on Twitter and the materiality of transnational surrogacy in India.

Using feminist discourse analysis, Chapter 2 begins by examining historical accounts gendered relations in colonial India, so as to develop a genealogy of the Indian woman’s sexual and reproductive body as bound to and constituted through colonialism. Citing the historical evidence and conceptual considerations of Ann Stoler, Anjali Arondekar, Anne McClintock, Inderpal Grewal, Durba Ghosh and Betty Joseph, Chapter 2 examines colonial categories as they existed in the intimate spaces of colonial homes. Following their example, I simultaneously locate the racialized, gendered and sexualized materialities of colonialism on the bodies of those labelled as colonizer or colonized to interrupt and blur strict categorical distinctions between them. Chapter 2 focuses on the often-contradictory (in)visibilities of Indian women within the colonial archive, spanning from the rise of the East India Company through the historical period of the British Raj. In situating this discussion of Indian women within intimate spaces, the body becomes a surface through which to expose the geographies
of race and modernity.

This project as a whole, but particularly Chapter 3 is indebted to the rich scholarship by black feminists within black diaspora studies, specifically including Dorothy Roberts, Angela Davis, Christina Sharpe, Jenny Sharpe, Katherine McKittrick and Sylvia Wynter. Chapter 3 considers the ways in which notions of agency, resistance and (un)freedom inform racialized subjects’ negotiations with institutionalized systems of oppression. Dorothy Roberts and Angela Davis contribute to a conversation about racist and colonial tropes of black womanhood during and after the period of slavery in the United States, and they interrogate the white supremacy that existed in abolitionist and early first-wave white feminist movements. Christina Sharpe’s (2010) critical text *Monstrous Intimacies: Making Post-Slavery Subjects* guides my consideration of the notion of (un)freedom within acts and tactics of resistance and agency. Moreover, I apply Sharpe’s scholarship to examine transnational commercial surrogacy in India, and specifically the surrogacy hostels through the lens of the concept of “monstrous intimacies,” which refers to the “everyday mundane horrors that aren’t acknowledged to be horrors” (Sharpe 2010: 3). Importantly, this concept permits reading the surrogacy hostel environment as a particularly racialized, classed, gendered and colonial space, where surveillance and medical interventions meet, and are in tension with everyday forms of kinship and tactics used by surrogates to negotiate their experiences as surrogates and as residents of the hostel space.

Jenny Sharpe’s accounts of slave narratives pairs well with both Christina Sharpe’s and Katherine McKittrick’s analyses to interrogate acts of silence by black slavery subjects that can be read as resistance, and the hauntings that these silences impart.
McKittrick’s (2006) *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle* directs Chapter 3 to examine the connectivities of multiple racialized and gendered subjects that remain affected by the histories of colonialism and transatlantic slavery and their legacies of violence. Finally, in Sylvia Wynter’s (2003) “Unsettling the coloniality of being / power / truth / freedom,” the inventions of Man and his human Other aptly illustrate the ways in which the processes of modernity, seen through transatlantic slavery and colonialism, continue to shape the history of the present, all of which highlights black diaspora scholarship as a means to consider colonial continuities within transnational commercial surrogacy networks and the monstrous intimacies of commercial surrogacy hostels in India.

The conceptual explorations of Chapter 3 I also examine interview data of Indian surrogates from Amrita Pande’s (2009a, 2009b, 2010, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c) pivotal ethnographic work in surrogacy hostels in India, and from the New Delhi-based NGO Sama’s (2012) qualitative study *Birthing A Market: A Study on Commercial Surrogacy* which incorporates interviews with doctors, agents, and surrogates from surrogacy agencies in Delhi and Punjab. Integration of the interview data of Indian surrogates in particular registers the tactics and negotiations that come to frame Indian surrogates’ experiences and their potential “interruptions” to colonial narratives. Bringing an interdisciplinary critique to this project necessarily reflects the multiple pathways that implicate Indian surrogates in ongoing networks of colonialism.

Chapter 4 then interprets Twitter data to analyze the globalized structures of coloniality. Twitter can be seen as an interface providing access to an array of conversations and debates around the topic of assisted reproduction (Buchanan 2009; Conley 2009; Escobar and Osterweil 2010). Each time someone re-tweets (re-posts a
tweet) a whole new set of people gain access to the conversation, which means these debates have a seemingly infinite capacity to grow and spread, while also exposing ongoing colonial narratives that serve to situate Indian surrogates within technologies of race and gender.

I collected Twitter data by entering keyword searches related to ‘surrogacy’. The data are limited to “top tweets” collected in August 2014. The tweets are coded thematically to reveal both contemporary discourses around surrogacy as well as those conversations directly related to surrogacy within India. Twitter data highlight the nuances not only of contemporary discourses around assisted reproductive practices but also of the reproduction of colonial narratives. By interpreting Twitter as a colonial network I recognize it as an influential site through which discourses around surrogacy exist even as these discourses are removed from the material realities of transnational surrogacy processes. The reproductive body “gestates online” as Twitter conversations merge the maternal/reproductive body with the social body of Twitter. Yet there is a level of superficiality in this merging: while Twitter can be recognized for its boundless potential, it never fully recognizes the material realities of transnational surrogacy as a colonial process.

These material realities, and the narrative structures that frame “top tweets” about surrogacy urge further attention to Gayatri Spivak’s (1993) influential work in “Can the Subaltern Speak?” I engage with Spivak in my discourse and content analysis of trending tweets surrounding surrogacy by asking how and in what capacities online social media sources reflect, consider and incorporate the subaltern’s voice, represented through Indian surrogates. Given that Spivak warned that the subaltern does not or cannot speak through narrative structures that predict her silence
or need her to be saved, I aim to expose the processes that continue to constrain or prevent Indian surrogates’ speech about their own lives. David Eng’s (2010) racialization of intimacy, Amrita Pande’s (2009a) critical interventions surrounding Indian surrogates’ self-fashioning of everyday meanings of kinship, and Sayantani DasGupta and Shamita Das Dasgupta’s (2011) writings on the intersections of online spaces and social media with commercial surrogacy arrangements and narratives provide additional support to considering Spivak’s scholarship within Chapter 4. Moreover, I examine the “interruptions” to colonial narratives through which the heterogeneity and multiplicity of Indian surrogate women’s experiences potentially break through the “skeletal and ignorant account(s)” currently present on Twitter (Spivak 1993: 613).

Beyond these considerations, however, there remains a disconnect between the seemingly boundless space of the Internet and the materiality of the body experiencing the process of surrogacy. Indeed, as Lisa Nakamura’s (2002, 2008) scholarship of the digitizing of race and colourblindness that exists online exposes, the interface of the Internet serves to organize raced and gendered bodies in categories, boxes, and links that mimic both the mental structure of a normative consciousness and set of associations (often white, often male) and the logic of digital capitalism: to click on a box or link is to acquire it, to choose it, to replace one set of images with another in a friction-free transaction that seems to cost nothing yet generates capital in the form of digitally racialized images and performances. (Nakamura 2008: 17)

Thus, taking from Nakamura (2002, 2008) and in situating the material realities of surrogacy within twenty-first century surrogacy hostels in India the surrogate body means confronting seemingly fluid, networked spaces of social media. That is, in
considering the racial economy of online cultures calcifications become apparent and the materiality of racism is exposed (Kolko 2000; Kolko, Nakamura, and Rodman 2000; Nakamura 2002, 2008). Additionally, the materiality of racism is extended to the surrogacy hostel insofar as it exists as a segregated space, allowing for an understanding of the deployment of technologies of race in controlling the movements, activities and even ingestion of food of the contracted surrogates, all for the alleged benefit of white consumers.

The material conditions that encourage women in India, as well as those elsewhere around the globe, to seek surrogacy suggests that it is framed as an attractive form of employment that also further ties these women’s bodies to modes of control and surveillance. In examining the historical, theoretical and empirical analyses that frame this project I illustrate how the processes of racialization, colonialism, and modernity situate Indian surrogates between and alongside multiple histories of race, gender, motherhood and technology. Thus, the twenty-first century racialized surrogate’s body represents the conditions of modernity, as she extends beyond spatial and temporal geographies.

“#surrogacy: Confronting the coloniality of Twitter and contemporary transnational surrogacy practices in India” begins to think about how the racial histories of modernity provide a lens to consider transnational surrogacy in India. To do this I have divided the thesis into three distinct, yet intimately intertwined, chapters. To begin, Chapter 2 uses a historical lens alongside Ann Stoler’s (2002a) notion of the “intimate” to bring together two moments in the colonial history of British India, first prior to 1857 and the Indian Rebellion of 1857, also referred to as “the Mutiny,” that
saw the expansion of the British East India Company throughout the India subcontinent, and second post-Mutiny which established direct rule under the British raj in 1858. This chapter uses the two historical moments with Stoler’s (2002a) concept of the “intimate” to consider the making and unmaking of strict colonial and racialized categories embedded in the racial, sexual and reproductive economies of concubinage and domestic work in colonial India. Next, Chapter 3 draws on critical race theories and the histories of transatlantic slavery to expose the interlocking workings of racial violence, motherhood, and racialized reproductive surveillance and control within the processes of modernity. This lens attends to the historical and situated complexities of contemporary surrogacy practices by unpacking differentially racialized and gendered tropes as they inform the historical present. Finally, Chapter 4 has an empirical focus and establishes a conversation with Spivak (1993) to analyze the Twitter data and illustrate the coloniality of Twitter, and through it, transnational surrogacy in India. This thesis spans historical moments as well as geographical and spatial locations, which contribute to the complexity of the writing. However, to necessarily articulate and conceptualize the coloniality of both surrogacy and Twitter the histories of transatlantic slavery, South Asian colonialism, and South Asian postcolonialism are pushed together to identify the dynamic workings of these tensions that allow us to think through our historical and colonial present. Specifically, I am trying to work out how modernity and histories of racial violence provide a way to attend to the nuances of gender, technology and motherhood.
The many components of this work—Twitter, surrogacy, archives, theory, sexual-racial economies, agency, resistance, (un)freedom—are brought together to differentially illuminate the complexities of surrogacy. For example, the histories of transatlantic slavery have allowed me to think through how contemporary surrogacy practices are haunted by, but not twinning, the differentially gendered workings of narrative, technology, happiness, oppression and situated agency and resistance. Herein, the histories of transatlantic slavery urge critical considerations of the notions of agency, resistance and (un)freedom as they were experienced in situations of bondage and subjugation and thus inform, through the incorporation of black diaspora scholarship, important and critical ways to think about Twitter, surrogacy, archives, sexual-racial economies, agency, resistance and (un)freedom. Moreover, engaging with black diaspora scholarship and postcolonial scholars has meant my work is responsive to the legacies of transatlantic slavery and British colonialism and as such critically intervenes in particularly Western feminist scholarship on reproductive technologies and surrogacy which, at times, can be criticized for the embedded, inscribed and obscured whiteness that frames, and limits, constructions of the “maternal” and “reproductive” body. It is here that Laura Harrison’s (2010) work on the racial histories that continue to frame American cross-racial surrogacy arrangements and Amrita Pande’s (2009a, 2009b, 2010, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c) work situating transnational commercial surrogacy in the postcolonial Indian context, among others (Bailey 2014; DasGupta and Dasgupta 2011, 2014; Nadkarni 2014; Nayak 2014), informed my work and encourages the interventions I am making throughout. Namely, I am situating contemporary transnational surrogacy practices through the histories of racial violence, motherhood, and technology. The historical, conceptual and empirical frameworks being employed
here encourage, and necessitate, broader and more complex thinking around transnational surrogacy practices. To extend the thinking around contemporary transnational surrogacy is my intention; to position surrogacy practices within the processes of racialization and colonization necessarily illuminates the often-overlooked histories and positionalities that frame the reproductive transactions.
Chapter 2

Intimate Histories

Reading the sexual, reproductive and domestic economies in the British Indian colonial archive

The meaning of “archive,” its only meaning, comes to it from the Greek arkheion: initially a house, a domicile, an address, the residence of the superior magistrates, the archons, those who commanded. The citizens who thus held and signified political power were considered to possess the right to make or to represent the law. On account of their publicly recognized authority, it is at their home, in that place which is their house (private house, family house, or employee’s house), that official documents are filed ... It is thus, in this domiciliation, in this house arrest, that archives take place. The dwelling, this place where they dwell permanently, marks this institutional passage from the private to the public, which does not always mean from the secret to the nonsecret.


There are many maps of one place, and many histories of one time.

Julie Fredrieske (quoted in McClintock 1995: 1)
2.1 Introduction

Both Derrida’s and Fredrieske’s excerpts serve as reminders to unsettle the meaning of histories, archives, and notions of time and place. In unpacking the etymology of “archive,” Derrida aims to expose and disrupt the political power embedded within the official records, or “museum,” that make up our relationship to colonial narratives. In line with Fredrieske, Anjali Arondekar (2009: 13) aptly reminds us that there is “no self-evident or singular colonial archive.” Reading the British Indian colonial archive requires questioning the imperial archive’s claims to authority and recognizing that the process of record-making itself is entangled in and through colonial India (Arondekar 2009: 13). Derrida’s, Fredrieske’s and Arondekar’s readings, taken together, provide a framework for entering into a discussion about Indian women’s sexual, reproductive and domestic capacities, both in colonial times as well as in the twenty-first century. Specifically, this chapter lays the historical foundation from which to consider the ways in which twenty-first century Indian surrogates are constituted in and through British Indian colonial histories of sexual and domestic economies by considering the continued relevance of the colonial archive to contemporary networks of transnational surrogacy.

This chapter will focus on reconciling and bringing together two moments in British India’s colonial history. I begin with the pre-British Raj period (approximately 1700 to 1858) when the British East India Company established the foundations of British colonial rule in India. In the colonial archive, the period prior to the Regulating Act of 1773 was one that reflected an “unofficial tolerance” for concubinage, including male Company employees cohabiting with their concubines. Representations of concubinage across the Indian colonial archive allow for an examination of the
gendered and racialized sexual and domestic economies that existed within intimate spaces of early British colonial India. From 1786 to 1793 Governor-General Lord Cornwallis established various social and political reforms that were strengthened by Lord Wellesley on his arrival in 1798. Instituted to prevent British officials from being “corrupted by local political and trading practices” (Ghosh 2006: 7-8), these policies included prohibiting “mixed-race subjects” membership in the civil service and the military in the East India Company and served as a reminder that people of mixed races were seen as “colonial subjects whose loyalty was compromised” (Ghosh 2006: 8). I then examine how gendered and racial power shifted after the Indian Rebellion of 1857 and the Government of India Act 1858, which marked the beginning of the British Raj and direct rule and governing control of India. Reflecting this time of turmoil, the colonial archive exposes the tensions, negotiations and messiness of the period of transition from indirect to direct rule.

The influential presence of the British East India Company in India after 1700 ushered in a crucial period in the history of the Empire when India became known as “the jewel in the crown.” Befitting this “jewel” was the accumulation of factory records, consultation books, parliamentary reports, legal registries, and so forth to form the archive as the “intended repository” of the historical record of British colonialism in India (Joseph 2004: 15). And yet the British Indian colonial archive reveals itself to be an “enunciative field through which British India emerges, exists, and disappears” (Joseph 2004: 15). Reading the colonial archive in this sense challenges the “official intended repository” and its monopoly over colonial truth, revealing the (in)visibilities of processes of gendered racialization that create, expose, encourage negotiations with, and dwell in the “institutional passage [of the archive] from the
private to the public” (Derrida 1996: 2).

A formative purpose of the colonial archive was to demarcate colonial categories, which were necessarily gendered and racialized. On the surface, these processes of categorization sought to organize the ‘colonizer’ and the ‘colonized’ into distinct groups, yet despite these efforts racial and colonial categories were often subject to much fluidity and contradiction. Herein it becomes clear that the gendered and racialized categories of imperial modernity “are articulated categories in the sense that they come into being in historical relation to each other and emerge only in dynamic, shifting and intimate interdependence” (McClintock 1995: 61). As McClintock elaborates, notions of racial purity, for example, rely on the rigorous policing of women’s sexuality; “as a historical notion, then, racial ‘purity’ is inextricably implicated in the dynamics of gender and cannot be understood without a theory of gender power” (McClintock 1995: 13). Therefore, examining colonial categories, as they existed in what Ann Stoler (2002a) terms the “intimate” spaces of colonial India, that is the colonial officers’ homes, but also spaces where specifically Indian women and British men would fraternize, simultaneously locates the racialized, gendered and sexualized materialities of colonialism on the bodies of those labeled as colonizer or colonized while also interrupting and blurring these strict categorical distinctions. Here, attending to the often-contradictory (in)visibilities of Indian women within the colonial archive serves to expose the geographies of race and modernity as they existed in colonial India.

The colonial archive reflects the “fragmented and dispersed appearances [of Indian women] in various sites of the colonial archive” (Joseph 2004: 4) as an inherently
tenuous and often contradictory figure of the racialized India woman within the complexities of colonial networks and relationships. Ann Stoler’s (2002a) work on colonial categories in “intimate” spaces locates these colonial processes as taking place in and through the bodies of both the colonizer and colonized. Thus, it is here, in considering the negotiations, anxieties, and processes of gendered racialization that framed “private” spaces that Ann Stoler’s concept of the “intimate” will be used to develop a cohesive analysis between the two distinct, yet connected, “historical moments,” pre-Mutiny India and post-Mutiny India that saw the establishment of the British Raj, in India’s colonial history. Yet it is also necessary to consider how, in the scattered sightings of Indian women as concubines, housekeepers and nursemaids within the colonial archive, resistance, agency and negotiations shape the narrative of the sexual, domestic and maternal economies present throughout British India’s colonial history, demonstrating the “messiness” that reflects colonialism as a dynamic and ongoing process.

2.2 From Company to Government: Concubinage, Cohabitation and “Mixed-Raced” Progeny

During the period of indirect rule through the East India Company, concubinage served to construct relations during contact times and the early beginnings of the East India Company, despite defying official colonial decorum. While interracial marriages were officially discouraged and even restricted, Indian women could still live as concubines to the Company’s British male population (Ghosh 2006; Procida
Despite the prevalence of interracial conjugal relationships, these domestic arrangements were seldom acknowledged publicly. Maintaining the distinctions between “respectable public relationships” with white British women and the “dangerous liaisons” with Indian women was of such importance that decorum instructions were explicitly discussed in the British guidebooks for India of the times, noting that “no lady, native of India, even though her father should have been of the highest rank in the King’s or Company’s service, and though she be married to a person of that description, is ever invited to those assemblies given by the governor on public occasions” (Williamson 1810: 452, quoted in Ghosh 2006: 35-36). Recalling McClintock (1995), as the domestic, intimate spaces can be seen as distinctly racialized here, the public, colonial spaces denote the façade of the British “civilizing mission.” Still, the unofficial tolerance of concubinage, until the Cornwallis prohibitions toward the end of the eighteenth century, served colonial interests in at least two ways. First, as most interracial marriages were denied legal recognition, there was an attempt to deny inheritance to the native wives and biracial progeny. Additionally, the unofficial tolerance of concubinage eliminated the responsibility of the Company to “import” British women, which later became an important part of the colonial project with the establishment of the British Raj in 1858. Through these policies, Indian women, both sexually as well as in their domestic capacities as housekeepers, became accessible to British men.

In the instances where interracial marriages did occur and/or mixed race children were involved in interracial relationships, vague or incomplete notations of the Indian wives or concubines are seen in the colonial archive. Specifically, in the Anglican Church records, when they were identified, baptismal and marriage registers listed
the Indian women by their Anglo-Indian married last names, consequently obscuring their indigenous forms of identification (Ghosh 2006: 18). In court records, specific although cryptic identifiers often labeled women. For example, as Ghosh (2006: 18) presents, in baptismal records a name such as “Anna” would be listed followed by “a native woman” or “a Hindoo girl.” When “Anna” married, she became Anna Fitzpatrick, in effect “erasing archival evidence of her identity as an indigenous woman” (Ghosh 2006: 18). Alternatively, in court cases, indigenous women were often documented in the archive by nicknames, having much of the same effect as in the church records.

These archiving practices extended to the realm of mixed-raced children. Depending on the legitimacy or illegitimacy of the child only the Indian mother’s family name would appear in the baptismal registers, though still obscured through the notation practices described above (Ghosh 2006). We see here evidence of the use of colonized women’s reproductive capacities for the purposes of European colonial projects. Here, colonial histories become intertwined in and through the construction of colonized women’s bodies as sites of access and exploitation.

For Stoler (2002a: 9), the notion of the “intimate” becomes a marker of the “familiar and the essential and of relations grounded in sex.” The “intimate,” then, establishes what constitutes the “private” sphere, which, in colonial India had significant gendered and racial consequences. Related to the notion of the “intimate” is that of domesticity, which denotes a space (a geographic and architectural positioning) as well as a social relation to power. Significantly, the notion “domesticate” has historical roots and iterations closely related to the idea of “domination” (McClintock 1995: 35). In the colonies, the association of domesticity to notions of domination
came to be understood as the action “to civilize” (McClintock 1995: 35). McClintock (1995: 36) explores the salience of this etymological significance further, arguing that the cult of domesticity . . . became central to British imperial identity, contradictory and conflictual as that was, and an intricate dialectic emerged. Imperialism suffused the Victorian cult of domesticity and the historic separation of the private and the public, which took shape around colonialism and the idea of race. As the same time, colonialism took shape around the Victorian invention of domesticity and the idea of the home.

The implications were thus: “as domestic space became racialized, colonial space became domesticated” (McClintock 1995: 36). And yet, as Stoler (2002a) examines, how colonial projects, which had embedded racial and gendered implications, actualized themselves “on the ground” in the colonies did not maintain strict separation of private and public spaces. Through this, colonial cultures altered what it meant to be “European,” which ultimately disrupted the constructed unity between the colonies and the metropole.

There were, however, efforts to keep these disruptions to a minimum. As Stoler (2002a: 25) elaborates,

racist ideology, fear of the Other, preoccupation with white prestige, and obsession with protecting European women from sexual assault by Asian and black males were not simply justifications for continued European rule and white supremacy. They were part of a critical, class-based logic; not only statements about indigenous subversives, but directives aimed at dissenting European underlings; and part of the apparatus that kept potentially recalcitrant white colonials in line.

In this way, the internal divisions present among white colonials can be seen to have contributed to the intensity of racist practices, as well as how these were embedded in the social policies within the colonies (Stoler 2002a). The racist social policies made
their way into the most intimate spaces of life in the colonies. And yet these policies were inherently contradictory.

While colonial archiving practices, as well as access to public spaces afforded to British colonials presented numerous obstacles to female Indian concubines, the colonial archive has not entirely erased evidence of their persistent agency and resistance. Particularly in the case of conjugal relationships with middle and lower-class Anglo-Indian men, Indian concubines were able to negotiate various conditions of their relationships, from being written into their male partners’ wills and receiving modest estates to being involved in the arrangements of the upbringing and education of their offspring. Here we see that as members of the British non-elite, many middle-to lower-class British men were neither concerned about nor held to the class and cultural standards observed by men of the British elite (Ghosh 2006). This can be seen in the excerpt of the following will by C. Berry:

I desire that whatever property I possess, or may hereafter possess in India after discharging my lawful debts (which may be found detailed in this book) be given to my female companion Noor Jehan Khahum, for her entire use and benefit. (H.C.O.S. [1803-1805]: 246, quoted in Ghosh 2006: 129)

Additionally, there exist official records of wills written by local Indian women. Primarily Indian women who converted to Christianity and who, after baptism, changed their birth name to a Christian name wrote wills that appear in the colonial archive. Name-changing practice shows one way that local Indian women negotiated their social, cultural and religious locations within the colonial project and actively involved themselves in fashioning their subjectivities (Ghosh 2006: 134). Importantly, in the context of the Indian subcontinent, names marked one’s region, caste and access to
status and social spaces. Thus, when local Indian women changed their names, their regional, caste and religious origins became obscured (Ghosh 2006: 135).

As the following excerpt shows, the presence of the will of a local Indian woman named Elizabeth in the colonial archive becomes a telling “reproductive biography” revealing her cohabiting experiences as well as an inscription of her racialized Indianess:

In the Name of God, Amen, I, Elizabeth a Native Woman, formerly companion of the late Conductor Ferrier, now living with Serjeant [sic] F. Fitzpatrick, finding myself weak in Body thru Sickness but sound in mind and memory do make this last will and testament. (O.I.O.C., L/AG/34/29/14: 10-11, quoted in Ghosh 2006: 137)

As Ghosh (2006: 137) elaborates, Elizabeth also writes of her children, born to European men who took their fathers’ last names. While the presence of a local Indian woman’s will is rare in the colonial archive and can be seen as a mark of elite status, Elizabeth’s will nonetheless shows the complex network of relationships—social, financial, conjugal, and domestic—that structured her life and linked her to both European and local native communities (Ghosh 2006: 138). Here, elite Indian women experienced colonial life in complex, hybrid ways that defy clear categorization as “European” or “native,” while in the self-fashioning of renaming suggesting moments of agency even within the limited horizon of compliance with a colonial “civilizing mission.”

As Stoler (2002a) discusses, constructions of race and gender through the labels of “European,” “Indian,” “African” and “British” did not maintain neat boundaries, despite the material and institutional realities that became associated with a particular label. For example, being “British” and “white” and “male” came with a
vast array of advantages as compared to being an “Indian” and “female,” when one’s body was quite literally used as a material product for colonial advantage. Moreover, the historical moments being explored here serve to move beyond, as Joan Scott (quoted in McClintock 1995: 16) discusses, “the things that have happened to women and men and how they have related to them; instead it is about how the subjective and collective meanings of women and men as categories of identity have been constructed.” Both echoing and building on these words, McClintock (1995: 16) adds, referencing the British imperial presence in southern Africa that “this story is not simply about relations between black and white people, men and women, but about how the categories of whiteness and blackness, masculinity and femininity, labor and class came historically into being in the first place.” Pre-Mutiny, concubinage serves as an example of how multiple inscriptions of race, gender, caste, class and labor were unsettled within the sexual and domestic economies of colonial India.

2.3 The memory of the Mutiny: Colonial ‘truths’ and processes of gendered racialization

The shift from indirect to direct rule in colonial India came in the wake of the Indian Rebellion of 1857. In an uprising later dubbed the Mutiny, Indian soldiers employed by the British East India Company, discontented indigenous rulers and oppressed peasants rebelled violently against the British rule (Procida 2002: 17). The British responded swiftly and forcefully, reinstating and increasing their control over colonial India. In 1858, as a direct result of the Mutiny, the Government of India Act 1858 was passed, establishing the British Raj and British control of India. While the
Mutiny had lasting ramifications to the imperial policies championed in the wake of the rebellion, it also served as a trope for future challenges to the colonial government, which extended well into the twentieth century as Indian nationals struggled for independence against British colonial rule.

Part of the lasting implications of the 1857 Mutiny included an intensification of constructed fear by British colonialists of native Indian masculinity. Drawing from Jenny Sharpe’s (1994: 221) reading of E.M. Forster’s novel *A Passage to India* it becomes apparent that the knowable (colonial) memory of the Mutiny is situated in a “discourse that racializes colonial relations by implicating rebellion in the violence of rape.” Forster’s novel frames the lasting memory of the Mutiny in the drama surrounding Adela Quested, an English woman, accusing Dr. Aziz, an educated Muslim of sexually assaulting her in one of the Marbar Caves (Sharpe 1994: 221). As Sharpe (1994: 221) explains, analyzing a novel situated in India’s history of British colonial rule not only demonstrates the limits of an “official discourse on native insurgency,” but also exposes the ways in which the memory of the Mutiny, and the ideological production of colonial ‘truths’ read as ‘history’ have been cast into the minds of British colonialists insofar as it became reified in fiction.

Although the fear of the “intermingling of the two races” (British and Indian) that haunts *A Passage to India* does not definitively reveal the events that transpired in the Marbar Caves, it does permeate the narrative with the troubling and racist image of the “native [reverting] to his barbaric ways” (Sharpe 1993: 122). Moreover, the close connections to the Mutiny, that is, the tale of the violent native attacking the white woman, stands in as a fundamental (mis)representation of the contextualizing circumstances surrounding the Indian rebellion. As Sharpe (1993: 123) argues “the
(mis)representation of the object of the 1857 uprising is so closely imbricated with the racial stereotype of brown-skinned men desiring white women that the Mutiny serves as a convenient name for expressing colonial fears and fantasies over the intermingling of two races.” With Forster positioning the Mutiny as the representative crime of sexual assault (Sharpe 1993: 123), the racialized and gendered complexities of colonial rule are revealed. Indeed, embedded in Forster’s novel is a discourse that codes anticolonial action and rebellion as “the assault of English women” (Sharpe 1993: 123). Herein, A Passage to India consciously invokes, in its animation of a sexual assault that transforms Adela into a sign for the victimage of imperialism, a nineteenth-century colonial discourse of counter-insurgency. During the 1857 uprisings, a crisis in colonial authority was managed through the circulation of “the English Lady” as a sign for the moral influence of colonialism. A colonial discourse on rebellious Sepoys raping, torturing and mutilating English women inscribed the native’s savagery onto the objectified body of English women, even as it screened the colonizer’s brutal suppression of the uprisings. When the Anglo-Indians of Chandrapore read “rape” as the “unspeakable limit of cynicism, untouched since 1857,” they are not only associating the attack in the cave with the racial memory of those earlier “unspeakable” acts, but also reproducing its effects. (Sharpe 1994: 225)

In the Indian colonial context, then, A Passage to India distinctly positions the English woman in opposition to the Indian man (Sharpe 1993: 119). Doing so fails to address the “historical production of the category of rape within a system of colonial relations” (Sharpe 1993: 120). Moreover, Adela’s confrontation of “what it means to be rapable” (Sharpe 1993: 120) is intertwined with racialized and colonial relations that “cannot be understood as yet another form of patriarchal oppression” (Sharpe 1993: 120). Thus, the historical specificities of colonial constructions of race, gender,
class, caste and sexuality must be addressed when considering the historical conditions that shaped the particular forms of racism situated in colonial India, which also bear continuities in twenty-first century ‘postcolonial’ India. As the following chapter will tentatively consider, reading “stereotypes according to different histories of racism is to recognize that they do not simply exaggerate a characteristic that is perceived by a ‘white’ eye” (Sharpe 1993: 128). As Sharpe’s (1993: 129) examination of the constructions of race and gender as they exist in the colonial aftermath of the Mutiny suggests: “colonial narratives of rape are so invested with the value of English womanhood that they strategically exclude Indians, men and women alike.” Thus, reading the colonial archives necessarily becomes a task of reading the ideological projects invested in British colonialism in India.

Importantly, the transition of the East India Company from primarily a trading operation to a ruling power in 1757 engendered a dramatically increased focus, and subsequent reliance on record-keeping, “linking imperial governance to a massive archive of texts that literalized the distance between colonizer and colonized” (Arondekar 2009: 13). Here, colonial governance was achieved through a “practice of archiving, a systematic circulation, preservation, and recall of written texts that allowed rule by remote control from London” (quoted in Arondekar 2009: 13). On the establishment of the British Raj in 1858, the records were passed to the new imperial state. With this, there was a shift in the primary function of the colonial archive; but as Joseph (2004: 6) delineates, paramount to this archiving project was the underlying idea that the “official record was never deemed to be a repository for public scrutiny; it remained throughout this period an instrument of governance.” Indeed, it was only after Indian independence in 1947 that the archive was made available for
public viewing (Joseph 2004; Arondekar 2009). As Arondekar (2009: 13) notes, the inaccessibility of the archive throughout the tenure of the British Raj has resulted in a sense of the colonial archive as a “secret archive, a space precariously hinged between a languor of loss and recovery, absence and presence.” Therefore, in recognizing the “paradox and political consequences of racialized categories that were fixed and fluid, precise and protean, received and malleable, all at the same time” (Stoler 2002a: 8), the colonial archive itself becomes a subject rather than a mere analytical source. It becomes a site of knowledge production, consisting of “monuments of states as well as sites of state ethnography” (Stoler 2002b: 87). Thus, what constitutes the archive, its form and its systems of classification and epistemology “signal at specific times (and reflect) critical features of colonial politics and state power” (Stoler 2002b: 87). The archive can be seen as a “supreme” technology of the late nineteenth-century imperial state, as it represents a “repository of codified beliefs that clustered (and bore witness to) connections between secrecy, the law, and power” (Stoler 2002b: 87). Working from here, the sexual and domestic economies of the colonial archive serve as a basis from which to develop a genealogy of twenty-first century transnational surrogacy networks operated in and through India.

With the establishment of direct rule under the British Raj, European women as the bearers and upholders of “colonial morality” were positioned against the “sexually accessible” colonized women. As the sexual economies of concubinage were being pushed to the margins of colonial life in India, there was a simultaneous effort to launch the presence of nineteenth-century British morality through the establishment of British monogamous heterosexual households in colonial India. The presence of British women, then, became seen as a pertinent feature of the “success” of British
colonialism in India. Yet, with this “success” of Empire, the fears of interracial “mixing” were further intensified, beyond those of white men cohabiting with Indian women as concubines.

As male British government officials and British employees of the East India Company were encouraged to bring their British wives and families to India, shifts took place in the previous sexual and domestic economies of concubinage, replacing sexual concubines with domestic servants, housekeepers and nursemaids, or ayah. Thus, with the presence of European women in the colonies, new gendered and racialized tensions between European woman and Indian women also began to emerge. The “intimate” space of the private sphere became a site where these tensions were magnified. With the colonized women working as nursemaids and servants, white women were not only the symbols of empire in the home but also acted in a managerial role in the private sphere. A particular area of tension in the home in relation to the presence of colonized women and notions of “white motherhood” emerged in the caring and tending to the “children of the empire” (Stoler 2002a). With motherhood so closely tied not only to notions of femininity and domesticity but also to national welfare and “racial purity,” white women became responsible for their children as well as for the “proper” maintenance of their homes. Thus, while the presence of a full staff of servants was signifier of class privilege, the very presence and proximity of servants had the potential to compromise the household, in particular the white children (Stoler 2002a: 139). The results were arbitrary restrictions on access to the white children as well as added responsibility on the white mothers to ‘preserve’ the morality of their homes, despite these homes being “tainted at their heart” (Stoler
2002a: 139). Still, as European children were deemed ‘not yet harmed’ by the colonial environments but “only up to the age of six,” local Indian *ayahs* typically looked after the European children until the age of five (Stoler 2002a: 74). Thus, while the racialized *ayahs* were seen to “pollute” the white home space, they were very much a part of the raising of young European children. This is not dissimilar to cases in the Americas, during and post-slavery, where black women have a long history of raising white children.

Stoler’s (2002a: 216) work on colonial categories in “intimate” spaces examines how colonial authority was shaped, how cultural resources were distributed and how “the production of sentiments worked with and against the production of privilege, allocations of labor, and distributions of wealth.” Colonial processes come to be recognized through the material inequities they reproduce but also through the instability of rigid boundaries, particularly in the “intimate” space of the home. Through *Home and Harem: Nation, Gender, Empire and the Cultures of Travels*, Inderpal Grewal (1996) examines colonial modernity in nineteenth-century India, not as a homogenized and universalized discourse but as a gendered one. Focusing on the “intimate” spaces of the home and the harem, Grewal frames the ways in which gendered bodies came to represent and internalize notions of empire to enable a discussion of colonial Indian women as embedded within the geographies of race and colonialism.

Beginning with discourses of home and domesticity within the colonial context of India, especially in the latter part of the nineteenth century, the Indian woman became a nationalist symbol. Reconstructing the middle-class Victorian woman in moral and spiritual standing, this characterization of the Indian woman was aptly positioned against the English *memsahib* who was seen as “idle, useless and too free
in her associations with men” (Grewal 1996: 25). Here, Indian nationalists used a construction of “woman” from the “empire” against the “empire.” This construction also placed colonial Indian women in a precarious position. For Indian nationalists, their pursuit of an independent Indian nation-state produced an image of the Indian woman as a progressive symbol to represent their shift away from colonial images of the traditional pre-colonial Indian. And yet, there remained the concern of the containment of women’s sexuality, which appeared to disrupt not only the symbol of “woman as nation” but also India’s independence project (Grewal 1996). This “woman question” was resolved with the simultaneous reconfiguration of the home as the “repository of nationalist culture and the embodiment of the spiritual element that characterized India” (Grewal 1996: 53). More than this, the “Indian home,” with its “respectable,” middle-class women inhabiting it, worked in opposition to the construction of the West as symbolic of consumption and materialism. These nationalist symbols and cultural narratives distinctly erased not only class disparities, but also the violence of colonial rule.

Not surprisingly, Indian anti-colonial nationalism aligned with the shift in the notion of freedom and independence in Europe following the end of the eighteenth century. Freedom, since the European Enlightenment, emerged as a “natural right”

4. While the focus here is on Indian women’s sexual, reproductive and domesticated capacities, Indian male sexuality, as it pertains to notions of purity and nationhood bear mentioning in regards to the legacy of colonial sexuality. Similar to the constraints placed on Indian women’s sexuality, Indian nationalists encouraged the practice of celibacy, or brahmacharya, as a way in which to uphold “respectable” notions of the imagined independent Indian nation-state (Alter 2005). Brahmacharya derives its roots in spiritual yogic practices, yet in the context of colonial India, this practice imbues to the body—in this case the male Indian body—the potential to “reform the nation” (Alter 2005: 317). Any “waste” of the “vital fluids” of semen was seen as discarding the “nectar” of the nation. Through this, the body, again, is made the site of nationalism, with the (Indian male) individual “held responsible for embodying such things as freedom, glory, peace, and happiness” (Alter 2005: 317). Here, the male Indian body and his sexuality become intimately tied to colonialism and the pursuits of ‘freedom’ from colonial rule.
(Grewal 1996). Yet, rather than dissuade colonialism, this in fact perpetuated notions of individualism and exploration therein. Furthermore, within a colonial context in India, the notion of freedom was understood quite a bit differently from in the West. Dipesh Chakrabarty (2003: 439) suggests that freedom in the West meant *jathec-hachar* or “to do as one pleased, the right to self-indulgence,” whereas in India it was defined as “freedom from the ego, the capacity to serve and obey voluntarily.” While there is a challenge to Western discourses of individualism and a certain spirituality to this framing of freedom⁴, it also carried particularly significant implications for Indian women, who were expected to “serve and obey voluntarily” (Chakrabarty 2003: 439) not only the imagined independent Indian nation-state, but also their husbands as patriarchs at home. Through this, modernity within a colonial context in India also carried deeply embedded patriarchal assumptions.

The colonial experience for many Indian women was not a blissful path towards spiritual enlightenment, nor was it experienced in the comforts of a middle-class environment. Added to this, the notions of respectability and morality adopted both by colonial powers and Indian nationalists reflect a cultural ideology of purity and pollution, which has justified the control of Indian women’s behaviours in the spaces they can occupy. As Kalpana Viswanath (1997: 315, quoted in Jackson 2011: 59) explains,

3. A number of Indian anticolonialist critical theorists, past and present, including Mahatma Gandhi, Sri Aurobindo, B.C. Pal, Rabindranath Tagore and others considered, at length, the idea of ‘democracy’ to encompass the notion of ‘human totality’. Specifically, for Tagore, there was great concern not about the idea of the nation, but the “general idea of all nations” (Tagore 1961, quoted in Eisenstein 2004: 99). These theorists saw ‘unity in diversity’, recognizing that individuality is not “in opposition to one’s universal meaning. Singularity and plurality [need not be] positioned against each other” (Eisenstein 2004: 99-100; 98). Moreover, these notions of ‘universalism’ were and remain understood as deeply connected to forms of spiritual thought (Eisenstein 2004).

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purity and pollution are central categories that determine social relationships in Hindu society. Within the caste hierarchy, there are certain castes, which are considered inherently more or less pure... Within the context of women’s lives, purity and pollution take on a further dimension as these are closely linked to their sexuality and fertility. Women’s bodily experiences of menstruation, childbirth, and lactation are also seen to define them as polluting or impure.

These gendered, racialized, class- and caste-based relations conjure up tensions, particularly in regards to the “wonders” of modernity, from the vantage point of colonial authorities as well as Indian nationalists.

The colonial realities, thus, left something to be desired. As seen in Stoler’s (2002a) work, Indian women within the colonial context worked as servants and nursemaids, or *ayahs*, for European households. In these functions, the shifts from the “unofficially tolerated” practice of concubinage in locales of the East India Company to the figure of the devoted *ayah* expose both the presence of the forms of indirect and direct rule within the intimate spaces of the Anglo-Indian home and the tensions of legitimacy with respect to progeny, inheritance and understandings of whiteness in eighteenth and nineteenth century colonial India. In the case of *ayahs*, a connection can be drawn to colonial Indian women’s maternal capacities and to those of other colonized women who were intimately involved in the care of young European children. Thus, while colonized bodies were perceived to “taint” white homes, their bodies appeared as the sites of conflicting discourses: colonized bodies were at once understood to “pollute,” and in the same moment to have a value determined through their capacity for labour extraction.
2.4 Conclusion

Unpacking the colonial archive exposes how the constructions of race and gender through the colonial categories of “European,” “Indian,” and “British” did not maintain neat nor strict boundaries. Moreover, recalling Eisenstein’s (2004: 191) remark that “modernity exposes the woman’s body,” it becomes imperative to reflect on how modernity, through colonial conditions, has taken up and used the bodies of slave and colonized women, both in their material capacity as productive and reproductive labourers and as symbols of “savagery,” “nation,” “empire” and “progress.” These reductionist and contradictory categories reveal how colonized women can be made into empty signifiers to serve particular colonial, racist and patriarchal ends. Here, race and gender are deployed as technologies.

Reading the colonial archive from around 1700 exposes the tenuous processes of gendered racialization that exists as part of the colonial project in India. Focusing specifically on the sexual and domestic economies that made up a portion of some local Indian women’s colonial experiences allows for a historical understanding of the colonial networks and relationships that can be seen to frame and shape contemporary transnational surrogacy experiences in India. Investigation of the ongoing implications present in and through twenty-first transnational surrogacy in relation to the technologies of race will be a corollary focus throughout Chapter 3. Here, technologies of race such as the “one-drop rule,” and others stemming from the processes of transatlantic slavery and colonialism, will be considered as processes that serve to police black women, specifically in their reproductive capacities, and will be assessed as a means of shedding light on the complex negotiations of agency, resistance and surveillance within the surrogacy hostel spaces in India.
In bringing together multiple scholarly works on the colonial archive, my aim in this chapter was to demonstrate how at distinct, yet intimately intertwined, historical moments under British rule colonial relationships, particularly in the “intimate” spaces, paradigmatic roles were established for sexualized Indian women’s bodies, as concubines and ayahs, to play within colonial and reproductive relationships. In “making empire respectable” sexual control and domestic control become technologies of race, gender and colonialism. As Stoler (Stoler 1989: 367) elaborates “sexual control was both an instrumental image for the body politic, a salient part standing for the whole, and itself fundamental to how racial policies were secured and how colonial projects were carried out.” This can be read through a broader lens that considers the intricacies and contradictory nature of coloniality and modernity. Thus, as the theorists throughout have made clear and as Walter Johnson (2004: 204-205) observes,

lived history . . . is produced out of the clash of contending temporalities. These temporalities, however, must be seen as being themselves historical. Rather than marking the difference between timeless cultural essences . . . they reflect the politically and historically embedded circuits through which they are transmitted. And because they [are] historically shaped and politically situated, it is not enough simply to set these temporalities side by side and split the difference. The history of time is one of continual contest: a history of arguments about history; of situated and sometimes violent acts of synchronization; of forcible re-education, resistance appropriation, and everyday negotiation; of conflicts in which time itself [is] a dimension of contest.

Herein, the narratives and experiences of both the colonized and the colonizer have been woven through this discussion in an attempt to explore the ways in which particular bodies read, and are simultaneously read, through the lens of modernity and coloniality. In the instances of immediate and intimate interactions with European
officials, it becomes evident that local Indian women brought local knowledge and
linguistic abilities, engaged sexually and provided local domestic expertise to the
colonial experience in India. As Ghosh (2006: 256) expands,

in less obvious ways, [local Indian women] also crossed various bounda-
ries—cultural, ethnic, religious, racial—when they entered into these do-
mestic arrangements. Although they were set on the margins of historical
and literary narrative, local women proved to be critical to the colonial
enterprise in the contact zone between Britons and the peoples they en-
countered on the Indian subcontinent.

More than this, however, local Indian women negotiated their colonial experience,
even in times of limited and restricted agency. As the colonial archive reflects, even in
attempts to obscure their intimate existence local women interrupted such processes,
as twenty-first century Indian surrogates continue to do, revealing their negotiated
experiences as part of the colonial project in India. Within this, considering the
constructions, and simultaneous disruptions, of racialized and gendered colonial cat-
egories in the intimate spaces of colonial India have necessarily established historical
continuities of the sexual, reproductive and domestic economies in India. Through
this I am building analysis that acknowledges how contemporary surrogacy practices
are informed by and responsive to the legacies of Western colonialism.
Chapter 3

Bound to Modernity

Thinking through agency, resistance and (un)freedom

in contemporary surrogacy practices

Black experience in any modern city or town in the Americas is a haunting. One enters a room and history follows; one enters a room and history precedes. History is already seated in the chair in the empty room when one arrives. Where one stands in a society seems always related to this historical experience. Where one can be observed is relative to that history.

Dionne Brand, A Map to the Door of No Return: Notes to Belonging (2001: 24-25)

The Black body is a domesticated space as much as it is a wild space. It is domesticated in the sense that here are set characteristics ascribed to the body which have the effect of familiarizing people with it—making it a kind of irrefutable common sense or knowledge. It is a wild space in the sense that it is a sign of transgression, opposition, resistance, and desire.

Dionne Brand, A Map to the Door of No Return: Notes to Belonging (2001: 35-36)
Who would choose to do this? I have had a lifetime’s worth of injections pumped into me. Some big ones in my hips hurt so much. In the beginning I had about 20-25 pills almost every day. I feel bloated all the time. But I know I have to do this for my children’s future. . . This is not work, this is majboori [a compulsion]. Where we are now, it can’t possibly get any worse. . . in our village we don’t have a hut to live in or crops in our farm. This work is not ethical—it’s just something we have to do to survive. When we heard of this surrogacy business, we didn’t have any clothes to wear after the rains—just one pair that used to get wet—and our house had fallen down. What were we to do?


### 3.1 Introduction

Bringing together the three excerpts above distinctly reveals the histories of transatlantic slavery and colonialism that continue to haunt the present. This chapter draws on intimate stories and spaces to map a narrative of resistance that persists against a background of insidious, all-too-common “monstrous intimacies” that often go unseen in the transnational surrogacy industry (Sharpe 2010). Merging the fragmented voices of black slaves in the New World with more contemporary, but historically relevant and relatable, accounts of black women’s continued experiences with the policing and surveillance of their reproductive capacities in the United States will be used to consider the notions of agency, resistance, and freedom as they relate to twenty-first century transnational surrogacy in India. The histories of transatlantic slavery, motherhood, and femininity, allow us to frame, through a particular racial-sexual history, some of the intricacies of surrogacy practices in the present. Without conflating these narratives and experiences, I am suggesting here that the lens of
plantation slavery allows us to not only critically engage with Indian surrogacy in
the present, but to critically explore the historical complexities of Indian surrogacy
through a discussion of racialization, motherhood, and the processes of modernity.
Specifically, acknowledgement of agency and resistance that exists within the social
conditions of subjugation and bondage will be used as a lens to differentially consider
not only what agency and resistance mean in contexts of constraint, but also how
these are produced and experienced differentially across place, space, and time, al-
lowing for a reading of ethnographic narratives of Indian surrogates that is responsive
to the histories and legacies of racial violence that have structured reproduction under
modernity. While seemingly disjointed, these narratives, in fact, plant us firmly in the
“history of the present” (McKittrick 2006), making known the continuities and social
conditions extending both from transatlantic slavery and the “age of Empire.” These
historical moments that have, at times, cast racialized people into limiting roles of
“colonized,” “slave,” “victim,” both necessitate and are imbued with resistance, not
only from within uncovered narratives, but within the works of critical race scholars,
black feminists, and scholars of subaltern studies, which together position racialized
people—in this case, specifically racialized women—as continually negotiating and
resisting conditions that make daily life contained by and in excess of “monstrous
intimacies.”

Deborah E. McDowell argues that novels on slavery authored by black women
resist dramatizing “what was done to slave women” and instead see slave women’s
agency as “what they did with what was done to them” (1989: 146, quoted in Sharpe
2003: xiv). McDowell’s insights into slave women’s agency within and through sites of
subjugation and bondage resonate with Jenny Sharpe’s (2003: xiv) interest to “[raise]
the possibility of action without negating the unequal relations of power that restrict the ability to act.” Sharpe (2003) argues, alongside other anti-racist and anti-colonial scholars, that to consider agency and resistance requires confronting the racist, sexist, heterosexist, and bourgeois class structures that contextualize them. Expanding on this, Ruth Wilson Gilmore (2007: 27) explains that

the world does not operate according to an analytically indefensible opposition that presumes that ‘agency’ is an exclusive, if underused, attribute of the oppressed in their endless confrontation with the forces of ‘structure’. Rather, if agency is the human ability to craft opportunity from the wherewithal of everyday life, then agency and structure are products of each other.

Thus, when discussing agency and resistance, embedded structural inequalities and power relations must be acknowledged and confronted, while considering how their complexities demand, as Ware (1992: xiv) demands from scholars, “a language that would express the links between race and gender without prioritizing, without oversimplifying.” I contribute to these discussions my reading of a series of texts by anti-racist and anti-colonial scholars that help me interpret resistance by Indian surrogates in relation to the enduring and transforming institutions of modernity, race and gender that frame the “monstrous intimacies” of the transnational surrogacy industry.

In considering agency, resistance, and freedom Christina Sharpe’s work on “monstrous intimacies” is particularly insightful, specifically in relation to critically unpacking the notion of freedom. To fully understanding freedom is to recognize that freedom does not stand or exist on its own, but “is always freighted with being freed from something” (Sharpe 2010: 15). In rooting freedom historically, Sharpe (2010: 15) elaborates that it becomes clear that freedoms “for those constituted as white
were and are produced through an other’s body legally and otherwise being made to wear unfreedom and to serve as a placeholder for access to the freedoms that are denied [to] the black subject.” Sharpe’s contributions to an understanding of freedom disrupt simplified, capitalistic, Eurocentric, whitewashed notions of emancipation. In doing so, Sharpe (2010: 22) presents a reminder of a twenty-first century struggle over “what blackness looks like and an accompanying change in (narrative) strategies, desires, and demands in which the ability to pass into and pass on the signatory power of (future) whiteness appears as the only space of ‘complete freedom’ that can be imagined.”

Confronting the signatory power of whiteness means confronting the politics and acts of eugenics, which represent an example of the legacies of racial violence that have structured reproduction under modernity. Furthermore, these politics and acts of eugenics remain embedded in transnational surrogacy networks. As Indian women carry primarily white children to term the technologies of race that serve to maintain restrictions of population control for those racialized groups deemed “irresponsible breeders” within India’s transient borders, simultaneously work to proliferate access to assisted reproductive services for those white Westerners travelling from locales

4. The discussion of the transnational surrogacy industry in India will focus primarily on white commissioning parents/clients. Importantly, non-white commissioning parents exist and make up an important client base of the industry. In particular, wealthy expatriate-Indians are increasingly using the surrogacy services available in India. These transactions often encounter different narratives and issues particularly in relation to religion, caste and complexion, which are not always present, or may be less emphasized, in transactions with white clientele.

Additionally, but also significantly, Israeli users of Indian surrogacy services also make up a rapidly growing portion of the clientele. This growing user base necessitates focus and analysis that is not within the scope of this thesis, but presents intersections with pronatalism under a particular set of conditions, as reproduction becomes increasingly politicized and maternity nationalized, herein exposing how reproductive practices are part of creating and sustaining the Israeli nation-state and are intimately intertwined in the ongoing history of violence and regional tensions between Israel and Palestine (Kanaaneh 2002).
where the “birth deficit” is considered a national problem. Returning to Sharpe (2010: 23), then, the complexities of agency, resistance and freedom mean recognition of the multiple intimacies (domestic, political, academic, social and familial) but also of a fantasized and romanticized desire to be free, which “require one to be witness to, participant in, and be silent about scenes of subjection that we rewrite as freedom.” This chapter highlights “monstrous intimacies,” as Sharpe (2010: 26) exhorts, in order that

we may see and think anew about slavery and the access routes to freedom, the blood-stained gate, the closet and the kitchen, and the longing (to be human) created in the post-slavery subject in the spaces I call monstrous... *Monstrous Intimacies* [intervenes in and positions] us to see and think anew what it means to be a (black) post-slavery subject positioned within everyday intimate brutalities who is said to have survived or to be surviving the past of slavery, that is not yet past, bearing something like freedom.

Using anti-racist and anti-colonial scholarship to illuminate the nuances of womb work thus requires being cautious in our analyses of “freedom.” Building on the narratives of colonial subjects during the historical period of colonial India, I present narratives from black slaves on the legacies of transatlantic slavery as a way to think through the differentially gendered and racial violences of modernity. Incorporating this connective conceptual lens allows for an examination of the ongoing processes of racialization in institutions of modernity that are seen articulated in and through experiential accounts from Indian surrogates. Here, I seek to contribute to a dialogue about transnational surrogacy in India that does not fall back on racial and colonial tropes but rather “interrupts” the polarizing ends of the “surrogacy debate” by reflecting on the continuities of colonialisms.

This chapter is divided into three parts. Section 3.2: “Defining” the racial Other,
begins with a discussion of racialized tropes, which locate the racialized and gendered construction of “figures” of colonized subjects in India and black slaves in the “New World.” Considerations of the use of tropes as a technology of race illustrate the persistence of racialized and gendered relations of power stemming from transatlantic slavery and colonialism that continue to be seen today. Interrogating these racialized categories also means considering the construction of whiteness enveloped in processes of “defining” the racial Other. Thus, in unpacking the racialized and gendered tropes it becomes possible to challenge the racist legacy of white feminism that continues to be seen in certain facets of the surrogacy debate, making important anti-racist, anti-essentializing and anti-colonial interventions into contemporary surrogacy scholarship.

Section 3.3: Institutions of Modernity, focuses on revisiting narratives of black slaves that disrupt the notion of emancipation that was said to come with the abolition of slavery, and that evince other forms of resistance and agency. Uncovering the “ghosts of slavery” (Sharpe 2003) in a contemporary American context means facing the racial politics of eugenics and surveillance that have shaped many black women’s experiences, particularly in the area of reproductive control. The policing of black(ened) women in the United States is aptly linked to surrogacy, as contributions from Laura Harrison’s (2010) “Brown Bodies, White Eggs: The Politics of Cross-racial Gestational Surrogacy” will demonstrate, thus bringing the legacies of transatlantic slavery into a broader discussion of the transnational and cross-racial surrogacy industry.

Section 3.4: “...This is majboori [compulsion]”: Discursive resistance to Choice Talk, begins by briefly presenting a recent history of the development of the surrogacy industry in India. From here, mapping the surrogacy hostel space exposes the
structures and figured ideologies of Western imperialism as seen through the stark contrast between surrogacy hostel medical facilities and the public medical facilities available to most Indian nationals. Locating this section within the walls of the surrogacy hostel compound creates a confrontation with monstrous intimacies of surveillance, eugenics, issues of consent and dehumanizing techniques that often objectify the Indian women in their position as surrogate. And yet, as will be seen, the narrative interruptions spoken by Indian surrogates disrupt and complicate these everyday horrors of transnational surrogacy and provide an alternative mapping of the hostel space, what McKittrick (2006) terms “oppositional geographies.” Exposing the alterability of the surrogacy hostel space as narrated by Indian surrogates exposes the hauntings—but not twinning—of the differentially gendered workings of technology, motherhood, and racial violence that underwrite modernity and shape contemporary surrogacy practices in India. Moreover, the central paradox, outlined in Section 3.4, of this booming industry proliferating in anti-natalist India provides another avenue from which to consider the varied and complex conditions that encompass transnational surrogacy transactions. Exploring these paradoxes make possible an analysis of the processes and institutions of modernity, seen through the legacies and figures of transatlantic slavery and Western colonialism, as they relates to transnational surrogacy in India.
3.2 “Defining” the racial Other

As Chandra Mohanty (2003: 17) argues, “any discussion of the intellectual and political construction of “Third World feminism” must address itself to two simultaneous projects: the internal critique of hegemonic “Western” feminisms and the formulation of autonomous feminist concerns and strategies that are geographically, historically, and culturally grounded.” Specifically, interrogating Western feminisms and their racist legacies of white supremacy involves first unpacking the production of racial and colonial tropes that cast non-white women into static, reductive, and in some cases monolithic, roles. The works of Angela Davis, Mohanty, and Dorothy Roberts illustrate the racial and colonial tropes of the “Third World woman” and the “black woman” that set bases for critically considering the historical construction of white bourgeois femininity as a normalized archetype against which racial, colonial tropes are coded and sustained. This analysis urgently recognizes how Western white feminisms have developed as political movements in racist, colonial societies to shape the social contexts in which reproductive and population control emerged alongside reproductive choice and freedom, as seen in the marketing of surrogacy services and their restricted class- and race-based points of access.

Racist and colonial tropes of black women denote the sustained legacy of transatlantic slavery. As outlined by Dorothy Roberts (1998) in Killing the Black Body, contradictory but pervasive images of black motherhood and sexuality have ultimately and inextricably linked black reproduction to the degeneracy of (white) American society. Through this pervasive association black mothers, not arrangements of power, are blamed for black poverty and marginality, thus legitimizing reproductive control of black women’s bodies by the state and other institutions of white supremacy.
Roberts specifically examines the racist tropes of the Jezebel, the Mammy, the Materiarch, and the Welfare Queen, each of which posits the figure of the black woman as monolithic, static and recognizable under the gaze of the white supremacist American state. In doing so, pathologizing, criminalizing and individualizing social disparity and marginalization evokes remnants of the colonial logic of the civilizing mission alongside the ideology of white racial purity, in this case through various forms of reproductive control and surveillance of black bodies.

Before unpacking the racist tropes associated with black women, it is first necessary to acknowledge the linkages these tropes bear to the slave trade, specifically the "point of sale" on the slave auction block. Importantly, what McKittrick (2006: 80) calls "the blackness 'purchased' on the auction block" served to naturalize a particular construction of black women’s identities: that of reproductive working-sexual bodies. This was done through public auction, where black women’s bodies were displayed and scrutinized, focusing on their sexual and reproductive capacities to maintain and increase the slave population (McKittrick 2006: 80). As McKittrick (2006: 80-81) explains,

the point of sale, for a black woman, is coupled with her public racial-sexual body: her flesh, her sexed body, motherhood, family ties, her dignity, sociosexual safety, her intelligence... The feminine flesh is not just blood, muscles hair, skin; it is also womb, breasts, the space between the legs. These physiological differences are purchased because they are not white and not masculine; they are materially and ideologically distributed in and amongst slave geographies to fulfill various violent racist-sexist demands. Violence, then, has a geography, and geographic property ownership (of black female slaves) provides the means through which violence is justified.

The objectification of black femininity on the auction block elucidates the “bodily
consequences” of the slave trade on womanhood “across and beyond transatlantic slavery” (McKittrick 2006: 80). Thus, as the black woman’s value was inextricably linked to her reproductive capacity during slavery, marking her as a “fertile commodity of exchange,” in a post-slavery context this reproductive capacity is constructed as “unruly” and “dangerous,” exposing the racist ideologies that deem black procreation as no longer “valuable” in contemporary white-supremacist, patriarchal, capitalist, but “free” society.

The gendered and racialized dynamics associated with the auction block and point of sale necessarily locate Dorothy Robert’s discussion of racist tropes of black women as intimately linked to procreative issues and located in and through the legacies of transatlantic slavery. Recognizing these connections means better understanding how persistent tropes of black women reflect on efforts by white slave owners as well as by white supremacist legislators to institute racist-sexist policies to control black women’s reproduction. The figure of the Jezebel arising out of anti-abolitionist ideology represented a version of black femininity associated with promiscuity that responded directly to emancipation (Roberts 1998: 10-12). Here, the Jezebel, positioned in stark contrast to the American ideal of white womanhood that came out of the Victorian era, was meant to demonstrate the problems ensuing from freeing black slaves. That is, if the Jezebel is seen to be governed by her erotic desires, reinforcing the myth of black hypersexuality alongside “innate hyperfertility,” then free society is doomed without explicit government regulation that would better control the unruly post-slavery Jezebels. Accompanying this racist figuring of black free women is that of the asexual and maternal “Mammy.” As another figure that served to support anti-abolitionist ideologies, the Mammy was the embodiment of the ideal black (slave)
woman. Based on the construction of the perfect black female slave who cared for her master’s children, the Mammy was seen as a “passive nurturer, a mother figure who gave all without expectation of return, who not only acknowledged her inferiority to whites but who loved them” (Roberts 1998:14). Importantly, the Mammy did not reflect any virtue in black motherhood. The ideology of the Mammy placed no value on black women as the mothers of their own children; rather, the Mammy’s total devotion was reserved for the master’s children. Further, while the Mammy cared for the master’s children, she was under constant supervision by her white mistress. Here, the development of the black mother as neglectful and as in need of constant supervision became apparent, in relation to caring for both the master’s children and her own, the latter form of neglect becoming particularly emphasized post-slavery.

Next, the Matriarch, or the unwed black mother, which was a racist figure developed in the 1920s and 30s, was said to damage her family in two ways: she de-moralized black men and she transmitted a “pathological” lifestyle to her children, thus perpetuating poverty and antisocial behaviour from one generation to the next (Roberts 1998: 15-17). As this myth saw renewed vigour in the 1960s, with continued presence today, the rhetoric associated with the matriarch casts single black motherhood as the cause of all social problems, both within black communities and more broadly throughout American society. Additionally, this trope has become so embedded within mainstream American consciousness that it sees single motherhood as a specifically black cultural trait. With this in mind, myths about immoral, neglectful and domineering black mothers have been transfigured into the contemporary image of the black Welfare Queen (Roberts 1998). This figure is constructed as the “lazy” mother on public assistance who deliberately “breeds children at the expense
of taxpayers to fatten her monthly welfare check” (Roberts 1998: 17). Here, the myth encompasses the idea that poor black mothers are calculatingly procreating to serve their own welfare ends, which thus legitimates state regulation over their reproductive capacities. Moreover, black women, specifically, are blamed for the “poor choices” that they allegedly make. This view suggests, then, that far from helping children, welfare payments to black single mothers merely encourages the transgenerational pathology of “her culture of poverty” (Roberts 1998: 18). Furthermore, in individualizing the problem of rampant poverty by suggesting that it is black single mothers who, in fact, (pro)create the culture of poverty in American, the stereotypes outlined above simultaneously dismiss the continued violences of transatlantic slavery while also legitimating and encouraging neoliberal policies to eviscerate the few social services that remain available.

The disconcerting stereotypes and images surrounding black motherhood bear the weight of centuries of disgrace “manufactured in popular culture and academic circles” (Roberts 1998: 21), and thus aptly reflect the legacies of transatlantic slavery. Through these stereotypes racist-sexist policies become legitimimized to the extent that they are seen as poverty-alleviation strategies. Considering these tropes in relation to mainstream reproductive rights movements, not only in the United States but throughout the Global North, presents another disturbing reality: framed around the notion of choice, with choice being afforded to some—that is white, affluent women—mainstream movements obscure the structural and racist-sexist policies that serve to regulate, police, and discipline many poor, racialized women’s reproductive capacities (Silliam 2002: x-xi). As will be discussed in Section 3.3, institutions of modernity—which include provisions for adequate “population control” through the availability of
long-term birth control and justified mass sterilization—expose the rhetoric of choice as distinctly related to legacies of slavery and colonialism. Among these, surrogacy is often cast as a prime example that emphasizes neoliberal notions of individual choice and freedom of both the intended parents and the surrogate herself: but it does so while markedly obscuring the continued profit that can be extracted from post-slavery and post-colonial racialized women.

As Roberts and McKittrick encourage reflection on the legacies of transatlantic slavery and stereotypes surrounding black femininity and black motherhood, Chandra Mohanty’s (2003) “Under Western Eyes” interrogates binary structures and colonial tropes associated with the Third World that have pervaded white Western feminisms. Drawing on Michel Foucault’s notion of the “juridico-discursive” model of power, Mohanty critically considers the construction of “Third World women” as a unified, monolithic group that registers as powerless within Western-influenced feminist scholarship. Several features of the juridico-discursive model of power appear in tropes that homogenize Third World women’s struggles across classes and cultures against an equally generalized notion of oppression traced to Third World men and patriarchy. Mohanty (Mohanty 2003: 38) names these features as a negative relation associated with limit or lack, an “insistence on the rule” forming a binary system, a “cycle of prohibition,” the “logic of censorship” and a “uniformity,” which suggests a consistent relation to power and its apparatuses functioning at different levels. This model of power creates a monolithic category of “Third World women” that is predicated on their being powerless, particularly in relation to the equally monolithic category of “Third World men.” In locating this “colonialist move” Mohanty (2003: 39) makes clear that
while radical and liberal feminist assumptions of women as a sex class might elucidate (however inadequately) the autonomy of particular women’s struggles in the West, the application of the notion of women as a homogenous category to women in the Third World colonizes and appropriates the pluralities of simultaneous location of different groups of women in social class and ethnic frameworks; in doing so it ultimately robs them of their historical and political agency.

The process through which “Third World women” become defined as a coherent, unified group ultimately suggests that they exist outside of social relations, rather than considering the ways in which women are constituted in and through the contextually relevant structures and histories.

Importantly, the construction of “Third World women” is predicated on the additional attribute of “Third World difference,” which marks “Third World women” as different from the category of “oppressed women,” who are implicitly assumed to be Western. As Mohanty (2003: 40) outlines, “Third World difference” assumes the relative underdevelopment of the Third World, while distinctly disassociating the mechanisms of Western colonialism in this assertion. Moreover, this notion of underdevelopment as related to the Third World posits “Third World women” as “automatically and necessarily defined as religious (read: not progressive), family-oriented (read: traditional), legally unsophisticated (read: they are still not conscious of their rights), illiterate (read: ignorant), domestic (read backward)” (Mohanty 2003: 40). With the production of “Third World difference,” the erasure of Western cultural imperialism proliferates. In so doing, colonial tropes of “Third World women”, such as the “veiled woman,” the “powerful mother,” the “chaste virgin,” the “obedient wife,” exist as universal, ahistorical images, “setting in motion a colonialist discourse that exercises a very specific power in defining, coding, and maintaining existing First/Third World connections” (Mohanty 2003: 41). Exposing the insidiousness of
these constructions of “Third World women” in some Western feminist scholarship means confronting the racist and colonial legacies that exist in feminist movements. Within this, some scholarship and news media related to transnational surrogacy participate in constructing the colonial of images of “Third World difference” and “Third World womanhood” as they relate to representations of “Indian women.” As Mohanty (2003: 42) rightly reminds and encourages us,

in the context of hegemony of the Western scholarly establishment in the production and dissemination of texts, and in the context of the legitimating imperative of humanistic and scientific discourse, the definition of “the Third World woman” as a monolith might well tie into the larger economic and ideological praxis of “disinterested” scientific inquiry and pluralism that are the surface manifeststions of a latent economic and cultural colonization of the “non-Western” world. It is time to move beyond the Marx who found it possible to say: They cannot represent themselves; they must be represented.

The existence of the sentiment expressed by the disconcerting words of Marx in the quote above finds itself firmly located in early white Western bourgeois feminists movements. White Western (bourgeois) feminists, in positioning themselves as the spokespeople for “Third World women,” but also of “all oppressed women everywhere,” (Mohanty 2003) expose a legacy within white Western feminist movements that can be distinctly identified during the abolitionist movement throughout the New World and Europe, as well as part of the civilizing missions during the “age of Empire.” Angela Davis’ (1983) work in *Women, Race & Class* develops this intersecting analysis by lucidly pointing out the discrepancies in bourgeois white feminist actions in the United States during the abolitionist movement. Not only did early white bourgeois feminists have the audacity to compare their position as housewives to that of black slaves (Davis 1983: 33-34), they also founded their contributions
to early feminist and anti-slavery movements on “moral and humanitarian grounds, [which] failed to understand that the rapidly developing capitalism of the North was also an oppressive system” (Davis 1983: 65). The anti-slavery movement before and during the Civil War in America offered middle-class white women the opportunity to “prove their worth” in ways that were tied not to their roles as wives and mothers, but to their work as organizers and activists. However, in conflating the experience of bourgeois housewives with slavery, these early feminists failed to recognize what domestic labour symbolized for black slaves. As Davis (1983: 18) discusses, domestic labour in slave quarters was not based on gendered hierarchies but rather on sexual equality. In this way, domestic labour was seen as the “only meaningful labour for the slave community as a whole” (Davis 1983: 17).

For some working-class white women involved in early American feminist movements, the assertions by white bourgeois feminists that marriage as an institution was the “foundational” issue plaguing women definitively failed to recognize the class struggles that arose from capitalism and industrialization and their significant shaping of associations of femininity with the home (Davis 1983: 32). Moreover, Davis argues, both black anti-slavery activists like Sojourner Truth, and white working-class feminists like Sarah and Angelina Grimké recognized the inseparability of class, race, and gender struggles in social justice movements. As such, Truth and the Grimké sisters were invariably critical of the racism and class privilege that polluted the organized movement for women’s rights. This can be seen in Sojourner Truth’s powerful speech “Ain’t I a Woman?” delivered at the 1851 women’s convention in Akron, Ohio, and Angelina Grimké’s “Address to the Soldiers of Our Second Revolution” at the 1863 founding convention of the Women’s Loyal League, both illustrating the depths
of their political consciousness in relation to their contemporaries. Beginning with an excerpt from “Ain’t I a Woman?” Truth (quoted in Davis 1983: 61) declares

I have ploughed, and planted, and gathered into barns and no man could head me! And ain’t I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man—when I could get it—and bear the lash as well! And ain’t I a woman? I have borne thirteen children and seen them most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother’s grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain’t I a woman?

Angelina Grimké’s address considers the importance of acknowledging the intersections of class and race in early feminist and anti-slavery movements, remarking that

The war is not, as the South falsely pretends, a war of races, nor of sections, nor of political parties, but a war of Principles, a war upon the working classes, whether white or black... In this war, the black man was the first victim, the workingman of whatever color the next; and now all who contend for the rights of labor, for free speech, free schools, free suffrage, and a free government... are driven to do battle in defense of these or to fall with them, victims of the same violence that for two centuries has held the black man a prisoner of war. While the South has waged this war against human rights, the North has stood by holding the garments of those who were stoning liberty to death...

The nation is in a death-struggle. It must either become one vast slaveocracy of petty tyrants, or wholly the land of the free (Grimké, quoted in Davis 1983: 68)

The words of Truth and Grimké exposed the class-bias and racism that existed in the early feminist and anti-slavery movements, making clear that “all women were not white and all women did not enjoy the material comfort of the middle classes and the bourgeoisie” (Davis 1983: 63). While Davis outlines how early white bourgeois feminists ignored the nuances of class and race politics and how their racism and class privilege became defining features of early feminist movements, and while Mohanty...
exposes the legacies of racism, colonialism and class privilege as they exist within some contemporary Western feminist discourses it is important to recognize the resistance and challenges that have existed and continue to exist around racist, sexist, class-biased, and colonial tropes surrounding black women, “Third world women” and working-class white women.

Although resistance and challenges to oppressive structures and narratives exist, these acts, particularly in relation to everyday mundane horrors and the histories and legacies of slavery and colonial violences, exist in the interruptions to dominant racialized, gendered, and class-biased discourses. Thus, the conditions under which something is labelled as resistant, an act of agency, and/or subversive must be troubled. Maintaining a binary between the notions of subjugation and freedom erases the nuances and complexities that make up negotiated realities in contexts of limited and/or constrained agency. For example, examining historical colonial archives in relation to black slave women’s experiences as concubines reveals some ability to achieve a “mobility of sorts by moving into the homes of white men who did not own them and extract from them favors for their extended families” (Sharpe 2003: xvii). As slavery encompassed the sanctioning of sexual subjugation of black women, resistance to sexual subjugation within this context often meant black slave women entering more formal and long-term arrangements with white men as a means of removing themselves (even if only provisionally) from the “threat of rape or the control of their owners” (Sharpe 2003: xviii). Moreover, these more formal and long-term sexual arrangements with white men enabled some form of mobility that could allow black slave women to negotiate certain accommodations for themselves and their extended families under the conditions of bondage (Sharpe 2003: xviii). Related, but
contextually differentiated, to these kinds of negotiated realities were the experiences of concubines in colonial India. The experiences of Indian surrogates, which will be developed further in Section 3.4 of this chapter, serve not only as a more contemporary example of everyday negotiations within constrained social contexts, but also as a reminder of the legacies of South Asian colonialism and the gendered and racialized processes of modernity that structure reproduction more broadly.

These kinds of actions by black slave women, concubines in colonial India, and contemporary Indian surrogates cannot be conflated, but trouble notions of resistance and agency and are closely related to what Michel de Certeau calls a “tactic.” Distinguished from strategies that maintain the power of institutions to support them, a tactic exists in the “crevices of a power” that are external to it:

A tactic is a calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus...the space of a tactic is the space of the other. Thus it must play on and with a terrain imposed on it and organized by the law of a foreign power...It operates in isolated actions, blow by blow. It takes advantage of “opportunities” and depends on them, being without any base where it could stockpile its winnings, build up its own position, and plan raids. What it wins it cannot keep. This nowhere gives a tactic mobility, to be sure, but a mobility that must accept the chance offering of the moment, and seize on the wing the possibilities that offer themselves at any given moment. It must vigilantly make use of the cracks that particular conjunctions open in the surveillance of the proprietary powers. It poaches in them. It creates surprises in them. It can be where it is least expected. It is a guileful ruse. (de Certeau 1984: 36-37, quoted in Sharpe 2003: xxi)

Tactics, being intimately tied to the power structures that be, expose the everyday mundane horrors, rather than glossing over them. That is, while tactics may negotiate situations of limited choice and agency, the constraints continue to exist. It is not enough, then, to deem Indian surrogates either the “victims of an exploitative
industry” or part of a self-emancipating “global sisterhood” (Pande 2009a, 2009b, 2010, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c; Nayak 2014; Bailey 2014). Rather, the connectivities of histories and their continued legacies, the myths that construct tropes of racialized women and the moments of spoken and at times publicized resistance and agency must be brought together to interrogate the negotiated realities and tactics employed by Indian surrogates against a background of ongoing colonial histories. Drawing on Sylvia Wynter’s (2003) analyses of the inventions of Man/human and his human Others, McKittrick conceptualizes this notion of connections, which serves as a transition from Section 3.2 to Section 3.3 of this chapter. Envisioning beyond dominant hierarchies and binary logics, McKittrick (2006: 135-165) elaborates that

partial human stories that have, for so long, organized our populations and the planet... means accepting that global, human, and environmental connections—of cultural histories, exchanges, “discoveries,” experiences—are evidence of a conceptual shift. This shift, while overrepresented as hinging on the voyages of Christopher Columbus and subsequent intellectual and global expansions, also brought into being our present world order and a single world history, and therefore new culturally connective subject positions. It is the geographic and human connectiveness that makes possible envisioning and accepting flesh-and-blood humans as an interrelated, co-identified species.

Moreover, McKittrick (2006: 123), in considering Wynter’s significant contributions to critical theory, asks key questions surrounding the invention of Man/human, his human Others, and “Man’s geographies” (Wynter 2003): “So, how do Man’s geographies get formulated, cast as natural truths, and become overrepresented? How does this politics of mapping, of making space, shed light on the repetitive displacement of the planet’s non-white subjects?... What kinds of new and possible spaces are made
available through our past geographic epochs?” Without assuming the capacity to un-pack and answer these questions, both McKittrick’s and Wynter’s scholarship guides my thinking and provides a space from which to critically consider the connections of histories, processes of modernity and the making and disrupting of the production of racial-sexual-economic categories, forms of knowing, and conceptions of time-space that will be taken up in Section 3.3.

### 3.3 Institutions of Modernity

Modernity, in its conceptual, ideological and realized capacities, is often associated with the Enlightenment, processes of demystifying nature and the development of scientific procedures and technologies to gain “progressive control of nature” and champion techniques of Western reason (Dube 2002: 729). Modernity has been said to have ushered in the “disenchantment of the world” (Dube 2002: 729) and thus has served and continues to serve as justification for the violences of civilizing missions. Built on Western ideas of secularization, individualization, the creation and separation of private and public domains, and assertions of universality (enmeshed in Western coloniality), these features of modernity in effect contribute to the “dense institutionalization of the West as history and modernity, acute fabrications of race and reasons within civilizing missions and colonial cultures, and aggrandizing blueprints of third world modernization and statist development” (Dube 2002: 742). In doing so, modernity performs a double role in establishments of discourse and configurations of power; “part of a series of authoritative antinomies, modernity equally names and constitutes the “paradigm” producing and reproducing these oppositions” (Dube
Despite modernity resting on the idea of “rupturing” medieval superstitions and “disenchancing” through the “powerful techniques of reason” (Dube 2002: 729), the processes and institutions of modernity inevitably create their own enchantments seen through the creation and naturalization of modern institutions. Here, Dube (2002: 729) explains the enchantments of modernity as “the immaculately imagined origins and ends of modernity, to the dense magic of money and markets, to novel mythologies of nation and empire, to hierarchical oppositions between myth and history, ritual and rationality, East and West, and tradition and modernity.” Importantly, Sylvia Wynter’s (2003) work necessarily intervenes here to situate and consider the inventions of Man and his human Others as central tropes and subject-positions within European colonial modernity that continue to be produced in relation to each other. Wynter (2003) suggests two formations of Man, Man1 and Man2, which emerged from two overlapping shifts provoked by fifteenth- and sixteenth-century voyages to the New World. Briefly, paraphrased by McKittrick (2006: 124), Wynter (2003) argues that the historical moments of the inventions of Man correspond, first, with the conception of the “encountered and encountering human (Man1), who has traveled (materially and imaginatively) to the New World for socioreligious exploratory purposes” and then the “imperialist political human (Man2),” who ventured outside Europe for “territorial expansion, conquest and wealth.” Importantly, the inventions of Man are intertwined processes that instigated the reorganization of the notion of “humanness.” As McKittrick (2006: 126) observes on Wynter’s conceptual work,

Man had to be worked out differently, humanness altered, on terms that spiritually legitimated a nonindigenous New World presence and the profitable dehumanization of indigenous and enslaved black cultures. This
set in motion a second, interrelated, invention of Man (Man2), strikingly brought into focus in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Man2 was a more secularized, political state actor whose planetary interests were/are underwritten by bodily schemas and their attendant geopolitical constructs... Man2 reconfigured humanness by ideologically re-presenting itself as “world” humanness.

As Wynter (2003) makes clear, our contemporary social order and existence—that is the histories and processes that underlie and determine the notion of humanness—are constituted in and through not only the inventions of Man, but also by discourses of normalcy.

And yet, the inventions of Man are “neither guaranteed nor absolute” (McKittrick 2006: 126). Specifically, it is the conceptions of Man/humanness that force us to acknowledge the ways in which we “normatively conceptualize difference, cast our present hierarchical order, and site Man as a location of desire” (McKittrick 2006: 126). Here, Wynter (2003: 160, quoted in McKittrick 2006: 126-127) explains,

the conception is the imperative. This is why, however much abundance we produce, we cannot solve the problem of poverty and hunger. Since the goal of our mode of production is not to produce for human beings in general, it’s to provide for the material conditions of existence for the production and reproduction of our present conception of being human: to secure the well-being, therefore, of those of us, the global middle classes, who have managed to attain its ethno-class criterion.

The development of a more complex narrative of modernity necessarily means confronting discursive as well as institutional conceptualizations of progress and freedom as they are inextricably linked, albeit differentially, to the “terrors of slavery, the living memories of slavery, and diasporic migrations” (McKittrick 2006: xx) as well as to practices of colonization, including resource and labour extraction, and to the spatialization and regulation of gendered and racial hierarchies. Here, it becomes
possible to imagine transnational surrogacy as existing in relation to the conception of “being human.” That is, I am tentatively suggesting that the colonial narratives on Twitter that will be explored in Chapter 4 allow for a reading of humanness as it relates to the connective, but still distinct, histories specifically stemming from the invention of Man2.

Through Wynter, there is the space not only to conceptualize the re-presenting of humanness through those who use, profit from and engage with transnational commercial surrogacy networks but also to consider the ways in which transnational commercial surrogacy re-produces humanness in and through the spatial and bodily geographies that attempt to “contain” Indian surrogates. Wynter’s scholarly contributions articulated through the notions of Man1/Man2 and the connections to the processes of modernity provide further insight into a conceptual lens that sees contemporary surrogacy practices as confronting the interlocking workings of the histories and legacies of racial violence and motherhood. Specifically, Wynter assists in this project that begins to think about how the racial histories of modernity provide a framework to analyze transnational surrogacy by considering the different, but intimately intertwined, historical moments that produced Man1 and Man2, and through these histories, differentially produced, re-presented and experienced racial violences. Importantly, as McKittrick (2006: 127) reminds,

the making of Man is a process, connected to broad and violent classificatory systems and local contextual experiences. The hierarchy of human normalcy is a dilemma, furthermore, because it is difficult to think outside of what appears to be a natural human story: we are bound to it, anchored to a familiar plot that “should not be taken as any index of [...] justness” (Wynter 2003 quoted in McKittrick 2006: 127). Humanness is, then, both Man made and human made, pivoting on the displacement of difference and alternative forms of life, which can be articulated, Wynter
argues, through a new poetics. (McKittrick 2006: 127)

As Section 3.4 of this chapter begins to consider, the surrogacy hostel space, including the narratives of Indian surrogates, can be repositioned to disrupt the hierarchies of knowledge and human normalcy, exposing the “racial-sexual functions of the production of space and establish[ing] new ways to read (and perhaps live) geography” (McKittrick 2006: 143).

Bringing this discussion of modernity alongside Wynter’s inventions of Man to the considerations of agency, resistance and freedom, not only as they relate to slavery and colonialism, but also as they relate to the transnational surrogacy industry in India, means, then, considering the tactics and negotiations that are involved in shaping the lives of racialized people with constrained agency—for example, slave women in the New World—and the tactics that are embedded in the hauntings of slave narratives. Doing so further develops an understanding of “monstrous intimacies” as they relate to (un)freedom. Additionally, on considering how institutions of modernity, of which colonialism and slavery represent key features, function to support the policing of the black(ened), specifically reproductively female, body, we must confront modern technologies of eugenics as they continue to be refined and rhetorically sold as progress, choice and an escape from poverty.

The previous chapter examined the colonial archive and the presence of some Indian women concubines within it. The gendered and racialized experience of concubinage in pre-British Raj India relates to some of the slave narratives that have emerged around concubinage in the West Indies. Importantly, concubinage in the context of transatlantic slavery introduces “questions of female agency to a site of
subjugation” (Sharpe 2003: 44) in a manner that illuminates the notions of “tactics” and negotiations differently than they existed among concubine arrangements in pre-British Raj India. In the West Indies, the existence of concubinage in colonial and slave narratives reveals the presence of particular tactics, as they related to “sexual domesticity,” that black and racially mixed women were able to negotiate within the “coercive relations of slavery” (Sharpe 2003: 44). Slave women were sometimes able to achieve a modicum of autonomy through the “manipulation of their sexual exploitation,” if they were able to establish conjugal relationships with unmarried white men who were not their owners, a situation that would allow them to relocate from the households to which they belonged (Sharpe 2003: 45). Additionally, concubines were often referred to as “mulatto,” regardless of whether they were black or racially mixed, slave or free (Sharpe 2003: 45). For Sharpe (2003: 45), the colonial practice of using “mulatto” to generically refer to concubines can be considered ideological, as it “identifies the power that slave women negotiated for themselves within slavery with the concubine’s statues of having white blood and being free, as well as with the rank of the men who were their ‘keepers.’”

Jenny Sharpe (2003) seeks to both expose and untangle the contradictions encased in the practice of concubinage for slave women by critically examining the figuration of a slave woman known simply as Joanna in John Gabriel Stedman’s travelogue Narrative of a Five Years’ Expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam (1806 [1796]) alongside other colonial texts from the same era. In these colonial texts, situated during the period of military action against the rebellious maroons in Surinam, the figure of the “mulatto” concubine significantly represented the “good” counterpart to the “bad” rebel women who “threatened” colonial rule. Importantly, the
“good” mulatto concubine was identified as racially mixed as opposed to her “wild” rebel “sister” who is figured as African, thus constructing an allegiance to white (domestic) femininity. As Stedman’s text became known as antislavery literature despite the evidence of Stedman’s support for the slave trade in his travelogue, the racializing device that emphasized the “civility” of the “good mulatto” was deployed in relation to the domesticity of white femininity (Sharpe 2003: 51; 82). Moreover, Joanna’s experiences in Stedman’s Narrative as the “good” and “nurturing” mulatto concubine are distinctly separated from the harsh conditions of slavery and plantation life (Sharpe 2003: 54-56). Stedman set Joanna apart from black slave women, depicting her as “modest, fair-skinned and physically unmarked by torture” (1806[1796]: 658 quoted in Sharpe 2003: 56), constructing Joanna as an ahistorical version of the “Noble Slave” and making her the “appropriate” choice for a concubine. Instead, concubinage was positioned as necessary in the face of a shortage of white women to appropriately assume the role of “wives” in this colonial context (Sharpe 2003: 57-58). In acting in the capacity of the absent white wife, not only did slave women as concubines assume the role of secondary wife, but this action afforded them certain opportunities for negotiation in the form of money, gifts, prestige, and at times, the chance to extract favours for themselves and their families (Sharpe 2003: 59). The aspect of negotiation contained within experiences of concubinage presents some historical connectivities to the practice of concubinage in pre-British Raj India, as concubines were seen to assist in establishing the relationships and presence of British men working for the British East India Company as well as accomplishing domestic duties, along with providing sexual companionship. While concubinage was tacitly condoned in the West Indies, this view was not widely held in colonial contexts that
sought to import white women for the sake of colonial morality, a shift that was seen during the Cornwallis years until the official establishment of the British Raj in India.

While there was a form of privilege associated with being a concubine, Jenny Sharpe encourages an additional reading of this concubinage within the context of colonialism and slavery in the West Indies. Working from Homi K. Bhabha’s notion of mimicry, Sharpe contends that the concubine inhabits the “ambivalent world of ‘the not quite/not white,’ which is the space of the colonial production of ‘a reformed, recognizable Other’” (Bhabha 1994: 85-92, quoted in Sharpe 2003: 61). For slave women as concubines, this means that as the racialized concubine attempts, through actions and as a result of circumstance, to resemble the figure of respectable white femininity, this is challenged, but also encompassed, by the “threat she poses to the sanctity of marriage” (Sharpe 2003: 62). While Sharpe sees Bhabha’s theory of colonial mimicry as leaving limited room for agency she draws on Luce Irigaray’s reading of mimicry as it relates to the performance of gender identities, whereby “women assume the feminine role “deliberately” in order to undermine their subordination” (Sharpe 2003: 62). As Irigaray (1985: 76, quoted in Sharpe 2003: 62) informs, “to play with mimesis is thus for a woman to try to recover the place of her exploitation by discourse, without allowing herself to be simply reduced to it.”

The concubine, here, becomes menacing because she is seen to perform her domestic roles so well and so deliberately that she not only challenges white femininity but “threatens to usurp the place of white women” altogether (Sharpe 2003: 62).

Reading the figure of the concubine in the contexts of transatlantic slavery and South Asian colonialism as it relates to the concept of mimicry means considering how black slave women and colonized Indian women found ways to manipulate their
sexual exploitation, “even [and especially] if they could not escape it” (Sharpe 2003: 62). Relatedly, surrogacy, as a particularly racialized and classed practice, can be seen through the lens of mimicry as surrogates find ways to negotiate, self-fashion and make meaning from this form of economic, gendered and reproductive exploitation. While the contemporary conditions surrounding commercial surrogacy as an exploitative practice are inescapable, the ways in which surrogates, in this case Indian surrogates, make meaning out of their surrogacy experiences, including what Amrita Pande calls “everyday forms of kinship”, can be seen as conscious everyday strategies serving as a “vehicle for survival and/or resistance” (Pande 2009a: 380). Pande’s (2009a, 2014a) ethnographic fieldwork with Indian surrogates reveals the creative and flexible forms of kinship that the surrogates used to disrupt and challenge relatedness based solely on biology and procreation, as well as the patrilineal assumptions set specifically in the context of Indian kinship. From the responses of the Indian surrogates in Pande’s (2009a, 2014a) work, kinship becomes located in the shared bodily materials (blood, breast milk), the shared company, and the labour of gestation and of giving birth. By simultaneously asserting the significance of these connections based in shared bodily substance and de-emphasizing the ties of the baby to its genetic mother as well as to the men involved in surrogacy, including the genetic fathers and the surrogates’ husbands, the surrogates effectively challenge established kinship hierarchies (Pande 2009a, 2014a). Moreover, despite the notable measures put in place by surrogacy agencies and doctors to limit any form of connection between the surrogate and the baby in particular but also the intended parents, surrogates nonetheless form kinship ties with the baby, the intended mother and other surrogates residing with them in the surrogacy hostel. In this context, Indian surrogates establish ties that cross
boundaries based on class, caste, religion, race and nation, all the while exposing the existence of these boundaries as markers of difference between the surrogate, the baby and the intended parents.

In considering slave narratives and the mention of Indian women in colonial archives, it becomes evident that in many cases the narrated “I” (that is, the slave or colonized) is stripped from the narrative (Sharpe 2003: 119). For abolitionists and colonialists alike, this splitting of the narrator from the narrative further inscribes the coloniality of the historical archive, leaving a silence of the narrated “I” to haunt these texts. Additionally, the splitting of the subjugated narrator from the narrative informs us of the ever-present unfreedom that pervades official doctrines of the abolition of slavery and “national independence.” Herein, it becomes clear, as Saidiya Hartman (1997: 8, quoted in Sharpe 2010: 112) argues that the “crimes of slavery are not only witnessed but staged,” thus recognizing that the splitting of the narrator from the slave narrative by abolitionists was done to depict “the humanity of the slave while showing the dehumanizing effects of slavery” (Sharpe 2003: 119), with “humanity,” here, as read through a Eurocentric, Christian, patriarchal lens.

Slave narratives, such as those that figure Joanna the concubine, exist as part of a repertoire of the “official cultural history of antislavery” and are representative of the stories “that a culture tells to itself and about itself...register[ing] slavery as prolonged and horrific and the abolitionist battle against it as heroic” (Sharpe 2010: 120). Additionally, as Christina Sharpe considers, there is a complex relationship between (anti)slavery, the abolitionist movement and desire. That is, as abolitionists who witnessed slavery’s scenes of torture and degradation, as well as the contemporary onlookers of such scenes as they are featured in museums like the Wilberforce
House Museum, Sharpe, as well as Saidiya Hartman, importantly question the entertainment, desire and pleasure that is experienced by the onlookers who have a relationship to power that enables them to bear witness to such “acceptable” scenes of horror. As Hartman (1997: 22, quoted in Sharpe 2010: 120) perceptively asks, “Is the act of “witnessing” a kind of looking no less entangled with the wielding of power and the extractions of enjoyment?” Here, the slave narrative may well become a “vehicle [of] white enjoyment” (Hartman 1997: 23, cited in Sharpe 2010: 120).

In confronting the proximity to power that incorporates pleasure through witnessing “monstrous intimacies,” Dionne Brand (2001: 38) reflects that “the black body is a space not simply owned by those who embody it, but constructed and occupied by other embodiments. Inhabiting it is a domestic hemispheric pastime, a transatlantic pastime, an international pastime. There is a playing around in it.” Through this, the time and space of slavery is at once “in the past,” while being all too present, all too real; existing within the “retroactive hauntedness of history” (Copjec quoted in Cheng 2007: 14, quoted in Sharpe 2010: 122). Recognizing the intimate entangling of horror and pleasure means also unpacking how “black bodies are made to bear the burden of this signification (what James Baldwin calls the “burden of representation”) in ways that white and other raced bodies do not” (Sharpe 2010: 122), as they are “bodies occupied, emptied, and occupied” (Brand 2001: 94).

Recalling Dorothy Roberts (Roberts 1998), the condition of being “visibly marked” brings with it the inevitable policing of the black(ened) reproductive body. Thus, the conditions are laid for the practices and politics surrounding eugenics to be justified and sustained. We see this markedly in the suspicion and caution that continues to frame the racial politics of surrogacy in the United States. This is seen in the
continued influence of the “one drop rule” in cross-racial surrogacy arrangements in the United States. The “one-drop rule,” which was a legal statute until the end of the nineteenth-century in the United States, used “blood” as the “factual ground of biological ancestry” (Sheth 2009: 28) specifically as a “measure” of blackness. Any identification of blackness in one’s blood meant, among other things, the “insistent naming of a person as Black,” which were “under such specific conditions is designed to relocate or “demote” [one’s] status on a legal, social or political scale” (Sheth 2009: 29). As a technology of race, the “one-drop rule” depends on the concept of blood as a natural category—that is, as the grounds of race—which ultimately lends itself to an erasure of the socially and historically constructed significance of race (Sheth 2009: 29). Moreover, not only does this technology of race speak to the notion of “taming” those who are deemed “unruly” (i.e. black bodies), but it also recalls a “moment of unruliness” wherein a history of miscegenation emerges, and thus this technology provides a means through which to demarcate and reaffirm racial hierarchies (Sheth 2009).

As Laura Harrison (2010) makes clear in her article “Brown Bodies, White Eggs: The Politics of Cross-racial Gestational Surrogacy,” surrogacy can be read as a form of “symbolic politics,” where approximately 30 per cent of all gestational surrogacy arrangements in the United States involve surrogates and commissioning couples matched from different racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds (Ragoné 2000: 65, cited in Harrison 2010: 265). Importantly, Harrison (2010) locates her discussion of American commercial gestational surrogacy in relation to the specific historical and cultural context that makes black women particularly vulnerable to reproductive exploitation. Here, as Dorothy Roberts (1998) informs, the history of slavery serves to
naturalize black women as physical, paid labourers, while white women were lauded as the providers of valued genetic material. This reifies the ideological construct of the “sexual economy of slavery” that posits white women as physically weak and unfit for heavy labour, giving credence to black women’s oppression while locating them as an integral, although invisible, component of white reproduction (Morgan 2005). As Harrison (2010: 272) makes clear, “it is this unquestioned value of the end result of gestational surrogacy that serves to elide the material and historical inequities that exist within the relationship between surrogate and contracting parties.” Through commercial surrogacy, then, the continuities of transatlantic slavery and racialized politics of eugenics shape cross-racial commercial surrogacy arrangements in the United States. Importantly, however, as I will draw attention to in Section 3.4, the histories of violence and legacies of transatlantic slavery have been incorporated to inform the work around agency, resistance and (un)freedom; the inclusion of black diasporic scholarship encourages thinking beyond Eurocentric notions of time and place, and as such, these considerations support thinking through twenty-first century transnational surrogacy in India beyond its contemporary location, both physically and affectively. To be clear, there are points at which black feminist scholarship surrounding black (post)slavery subjects reaches its limit within this discussion of colonial networks and transnational surrogacy in India. These limits will be explored further in the coming section.

Black men and women, as the descendants of transatlantic slavery, are visibly marked in Euro-American contexts in ways white and other raced bodies are not. This is significant, as the analytical and narrative considerations that I have presented throughout this chapter have occurred in a conscientious and careful manner,
attempting to take on the challenges involved in drawing on multiple historical interce-
tions as a way of thinking of modernity as constituted in and through the processes of transatlantic slavery and colonialism. While the scope of this thesis involves a his-
torical critique of the colonial archive of transnational surrogacy, in developing this analysis the concepts of agency, resistance and (un)freedom urged the inclusion of critical race and black feminist scholars. Notably, the work of Dorothy Roberts, Kath-
erine McKittrick, Sylvia Wynter, Christina Sharpe, Jenny Sharpe, Saidiya Hartmann, Dionne Brand and Laura Harrison substantively challenges the rhetoric of choice and empowerment and requires recognition the complexities of freedom as always embed-
ded with the markers of bondage and subjugation, thus bringing the narrative of race, transatlantic slavery and colonialism to the forefront of my work.

3.4 “...This is majboori [compulsion]”: Discursive resistance to Choice Talk

The transnational surrogacy industry in India proliferates in a context surrounded by a crucial paradox. The surrogacy industry in India, which is built on pro-natal technologies, exists against a backdrop of a national anti-natalist policy (Pande 2014b, 2014c). Anti-natalist sentiments gained popularity pre-Independence, largely through British and American influences. Indeed, colonial censuses and famine control policies of the 1870s onward produced a global image of India as “desperately diseased and overpopulated” as a result of the high birth and death rates (Nadkarni 2014: 2). In a 1935 radio broadcast in Bombay titled “What Birth Control Can Do for India,” American birth control pioneer Margaret Sanger discussed the importance of birth control
and the “fitness” of some over others to reproduce, exemplifying Western colonial eugenetic sentiments. As sympathetic to the cause of Indian independence, Sanger (1935: 4-5, quoted in Nadkarni 2014: 1) proposed that India’s “first consideration must be the primary one of what kind of people you are going to have in the future. You need, as never before, the finest men and women possible, the strongest, spiritually, intellectually and physically. This means you must give consideration to what kind of children you are now bringing into the world to take up the responsibilities of your nation in the future.” Here, birth control, population control and the project of nation building were packaged as a form of necessary and progressive “positive eugenics.” Moreover, as Ashna Nadkarni (2014) develops in Eugenic Feminism, the anti-natalist policies and intersecting regimes of population control in India must be traced to technologies of American imperialism and the international eugenics movement that were introduced in India in the first part of the twentieth century.

Importantly, as British and American influences encouraged anti-natalist policies as progressive “positive eugenics” the histories of empire and post-colonial independence become linked to the promise of happiness. Through these narrative encouragements, happiness in the context of empire is imagined in terms of civility. As Sara Ahmed (2010: 124-125) unpacks,

human happiness is increased through the courts (law/justice), knowledge (reason), and manners (culture, habits). Civilization is imagined first as what is brought to “their doors” and second as an irresistible moral pressure. In the first image, the civilizer would be the guest who awaits the opening of the door. The second, in contrast, uses the language of force. The civilizer may remain a guest but demands entry, as an entry that cannot be refused. Empire becomes a gift that cannot be refused, a forced gift. If the empire is understood as giving happiness, then perhaps happiness names the force of this gift.
In considering the promise of happiness as a civilizing mission alongside anti-natalist policies that continue to frame Indian women’s relations to reproductive rights as well as employment as surrogates, there are a number of points of contention that require untangling. To begin, the point at which the histories and legacies of British colonialism distinctly diverge from the histories of violence and legacies of transatlantic slavery can be at least located in the promise of happiness associated first with the British East India’s Company commercial civilizing mission, and then with the establishment of the official colonial government under the British Raj. Within this context, there existed a narrative that not only deemed the colonized unhappy, but established happiness as a way of measuring civility. Ultimately, however, the narrative promise of happiness was made available to Indians through their entry, whether forced or not, into the British Empire.

Colonialism is “justified as necessary not only to increase human happiness but to teach the natives how to be happy” (Ahmed 2010: 128). Inevitably, this involved “teaching” the colonized “good habits” (Ahmed 2010). Thus, the British Empire is evoked as “bringing good things to indigenous peoples of the world—law, unity, self-government, and so on. Indeed, the language of empire is that of a gift: through empire, others were given forms of nationhood that rested on European and specifically British ideals” (Ahmed 2010: 131). In reading twenty-first century transnational surrogacy through the lens of British colonialism, the divergence of experiences from those of black (post)slavery subjects becomes increasingly clear. Specifically, employment as a surrogate can be seen to be situated in the language of empire, not only as a gift to economic freedom for the figure of the “Third World woman” but also in support of a prosperous post-colonial nation through the appropriate civility that
encompasses the intersections of anti-natalist policies alongside altruism of surrogate transactions.

For Indian women looking to be surrogates, the anti-natalist policies become associated with success as a surrogate. This is most starkly in the situation of a surrogate who is sterilized to add to her “suitability” (Sama 2012: 44). Not only does this work to satisfy population control policies by encouraging poor Indian women in need of employment to undergo sterilization to increase their chances of becoming a surrogate, but as a surrogacy agent told Sama (2012: 44) researchers, “if they [surrogates] have had a [sterilization] operation [nasbandi], it is a good thing, implying that in case of sterilization there was no possibility of a genetic link between the surrogate and the child, which settles all doubts for everyone.” Here, “everyone” can be read through the lens of consumer satisfaction, in that if the intended parents (consumers) are assured that there is no potential for a genetic link between the surrogate and the baby, this establishes the surrogacy agency as a reputable agency. The paradox of transnational surrogacy proliferating in a nation with anti-natalist policies exposes not only the intersection between global capitalism and racialized population control and eugenics but also longer histories of Western colonialism.

Gestational surrogacy as the process whereby a surrogate is implanted with a previously fertilized embryo to carry to term for commissioning parents means engagement with the intersectional dynamics that shape the relationships between the doctors, the surrogacy agency, the commissioning parents, and the surrogate (Nayak 2014; Sama 2012). Through international surrogacy agencies, surrogacy “packages” are determined, specifying the number of implantation cycles as well as the number of embryos implanted in each cycle until there is a successful implantation and pregnancy
is achieved. Surrogacy packages also assign a corresponding agent for international clients in particular. As one Sama research respondent explained,

Why does the commissioning couple need agencies? They don’t live in India. They need some responsible person who can look after the surrogate for nine months. Agents have only come [sic] for foreigners because they don’t live in India. So they [foreigners] pay 7, 8, 9 lakhs, and tell the agents to take care of the surrogate. Surrogacy normally is [for] Rs 250,000–300,000, but with an agent it is [for] Rs 1,200,000–1,300,000\(^5\). It is not for the surrogacy. It is for the nine months and for the responsibility [to the agent]. (Sama 2012: 113)

Through the agent, the impregnated surrogate must comply with the intended parents’ requests. This includes medical examinations, dietary and rest requirements, possible environmental changes, and so forth. In this way, the surrogate, while carrying out a reproductive “assignment,” is constructed as disembodied from this experience (Nayak 2014: 15; Sama 2012). In regards to the maternal functions, the surrogate is expected to care for the foetus as if it were her own while also being capable of relinquishing the child after birth. The reproductive and maternal expectations serve to recast the surrogate body as a “storage unit,” which is reflected in an Indian surrogate’s experience with the surrogacy agency’s doctor:

Here the thing is that you can neither talk to the doctors nor to the couple [commissioning parents]. You have to keep your thoughts to your

\(^5\) Pricing for Surrogacy Packages: Indian Rupees/Lakhs conversion to Canadian and US Dollars.

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own self. Whatever they say, you have to do it. Madam said, “Do this, do that.” And you have to do it. You can’t talk freely. She [doctor] just asks, everything is fine, is there any problem, eat this, eat that. They will ask about all the things that they are concerned with as part of their work... They won’t look at you. They will look at your file. “How are you? Do you feel fine? Are you eating? Is the movement okay?... That is all they say. Even if you try to talk to them, they will say, “I don’t just have one patient to see, I have many.”... They only talk to the family [commissioning parents], as if it is them and not us who are pregnant. (Respondent SD2, quoted in Sama 2012: 76).

Through these processes, the surrogate is reduced to a series of viable and productive body parts and thus is rendered invisible in her personhood. And yet the medications, hormone injections and procedures involved in a successful surrogacy are anything but disembodied for the surrogates. These experiential details, which are often left out of mainstream Western advertising and discourse of surrogacy, are aptly captured in the critical ethnographic work done by scholars such as Amrita Pande and members of the New Delhi-based NGO, Sama - Resource Group for Women and Health. As Pande (2009b) explains, since gestational surrogacy means that the surrogate has no genetic tie to the baby, her body has to be “prepared” for the pregnancy. The transfer of the embryo itself is not a very difficult procedure, but the process of getting the surrogate ready for that transfer and the treatments required during the weeks after the transfer until it is determined whether the transfer “took” require intense medical intervention and surveillance (Pande 2009b: 147). To begin, birth-control pills and hormone shots are required “to control and suppress the surrogate’s own ovulatory cycle and then injections of oestrogen are given to build her uterine lining.” After the embryo transfer, daily injections of progesterone are administered until the surrogate’s body recognizes that it is pregnant and can sustain the pregnancy on its own (Pande 2009b: 147). It is extremely rare that the pregnancy will “take” on the first try. As
a result, the surrogate often goes through this process up to four times per surrogacy arrangement (Sama 2012). The side effects of the various medications can include “hot flashes, mood swings, headaches, bloating, vaginal spotting, uterine cramping, breast fullness, light-headedness and vaginal irritation” (Pande 2009b: 147). Moreover, as Pande found with the surrogates in Anand and as Sama’s research confirms, the surrogates are not made aware of all of the procedures involved, including how many embryos were transferred (Pande 2009b: 147; Sama 2012: 64-65).

Additionally, because of the continued stigma surrounding surrogacy in India and the need for many prospective surrogates to travel from rural villages and towns to larger city centres for surrogacy work, most surrogates opt to stay in the surrogacy agencies’ hostels, thus putting themselves under constant surveillance for the duration of the pregnancy (Pande 2009b: 154). Despite living on site, as surrogate SD2 detailed above, the surrogates have limited access to pertinent information involved in the surrogacy process that would also allow them to negotiate features of the transaction (legal, health and medical, monetary, travel, and so forth). This limited access to information combined with the surveillance compromises the surrogates’ autonomy and their ability to provide informed consent to the various medical procedures involved in the gestational surrogacy process.

The circumstances under which the contracts are drawn up and executed serve to illustrate the ways in which prevailing colonial attitudes and “monstrous intimacies” become legally documented. The contract represents but one of the very lop-sided processes in the surrogacy arrangement. The surrogates often refer to the contract process as merely “signing papers” (Sama 2012: 90). For the most part, no legal aid or counsel is provided to the surrogates during the contract, nor are they involved
in the contract negotiations (Sama 2012: 90-91). As one surrogate, SP4 (quoted in Sama 2012: 91), succinctly points out “I have no money for lawyers! Right now I don’t work. Everything rests on my husband.” Moreover, Indian surrogates are not considered legitimate signatories by themselves; meaning their husband’s signatures are mandatory for the contract (Sama 2012: 92). This places surrogacy in India in a particularly gendered space, as the need for this signature excludes single, separated, divorced and widowed women, as well as those married women who wish to do surrogacy work without the explicit consent of their husband. Moreover, in cases where the husband strongly encourages surrogacy, there are issues of coercion and non-consent on the part of the surrogate.

Next, the contents of the contract, including payment processes and medical procedures involved, are not divulged in detail to the surrogates (Sama 2012: 93). In most cases, the contracts are drawn up solely in English, and as a result, most surrogates can neither read nor understand the contracts (Sama 2012: 93). In all surrogacy arrangements, including those without formal contracts, what is made clear is that the surrogates have no claim over the baby whatsoever, full payment will only be received if and when a healthy baby is delivered, and neither the doctor nor the couple is liable for any death or injury to the surrogate resulting from the process (Sama 2012; Nayak 2014; Pande 2009a, 2009b). As Seema, a surrogate, told Sama interviewers (Sama 2012, quoted in Nayak 2014: 16)

though I didn’t sign any contract, the terms of the arrangement were communicated verbally to me over and over again. No sex, no smoking and no drinking throughout the pregnancy. My husband should not accompany me to the clinic for check-ups or for the delivery. I would be paid half the sum in installments and the other half after I hand over the baby, healthy, to the couple. I would have no claim over the baby whatsoever. In case
of a miscarriage, I would have to return whatever money I had received from the couple.

The contract is clearly not a result of negotiations between two informed parties; rather, the document acts as a disciplinary tool for the surrogates and also serves to secure “the rights of the commissioning parents while completely neglecting the right of the surrogates” (Sama 2012: 94).

As the previous interview excerpts reveal, surrogacy experiences often encompass various forms of surveillance and objectifying techniques, all making up moments of monstrous intimacies that become part of the “embodied labor” throughout these gestational transactions (Pande 2014c: 106). Through this, Indian surrogates bear the knowledge of sexual and reproductive economies of Western colonialism intimately through the corporality of surrogacy work. This, however, becomes obscured through the choice talk that surrounds mainstream reproductive rights. In regards to surrogacy, both domestic and transnational, commercial surrogacy is often presented as a win-win situation for all involved. This view, which also intersects with the rhetoric of empowerment, depicts surrogacy “as a matter of free “choice” on the part of individual women and is a matter of women’s right over their own bodies, while completely lacking a critique of the practice as conducted in its present form” (Sama 2012: 135). “Choice talk,” as Allison Bailey (2014: 30) argues, represents “a form of discursive colonization: it obscures the nuances implied by majboori [compulsion].” Moreover, under the ideological frameworks of global capitalism and neoliberalism racialized poor women are being given the “power” to make the “right” choices through surrogacy: “to have fewer children, to become mini-entrepreneurs or low-wage workers, to buy more consumer goods” (Ross 264, quoted in Bailey 2014: 30). Through the use of “choice talk” and empowerment rhetoric, and given the pervasive racist and colonial
perspectives that view surrogates in the Third World as victimized women “who lack agency and who, lacking any agency, are coerced into the [surrogacy] arrangement” (Sama 2012: 135), the processes and organization of the surrogacy industry as well as the context of women’s participation in this industry are remain largely unexamined. Further, when “choice talk” is invoked the tactics and negotiations involved in becoming a surrogate and doing surrogacy work are neglected.

As the figure of the victimized “Third World woman” is invoked in relation to surrogacy, it is done through Western colonial assumptions that surrogacy is the best and right choice for these women and that it acts as a form of empowerment, tying Third World women to the global sisterhood of liberal feminism (Pande 2009a, 2009b, 2010, 2014a, 2014b; Nadkarni 2014; Sama 2012; Bailey 2014). As Nadkarni (2014: 204) unpacks, surrogacy can been seen as a form of population control that exists under the rubric of choice and empowerment and resembles “much-vaunted microcredit programs, which solve the problem of women’s poverty by enabling women’s entrance into largely unregulated and exploitative informal sector work.” Thus, Third World women’s escape from poverty relies on and coincides nicely with the interests of global capitalism, as the “global biopolitical field...fabricates the interest and needs of the individuals exploited by global capitalism, integrating them by weaving them into the very fabric of the system” (Cheah 1995: 200, quoted in Nadkarni 2014: 204). Again, commercial surrogacy as “almost the only way to make a life changing move” (Frank 2010, quoted in Nadkarni 2014: 203) becomes the focus of much discussion, instead of encouraging a critical examination of the histories of privilege through colonialism, slavery, racism, sexism, and classism.

Importantly, surrogacy cannot be removed from the conditions of modernity. The
transformative works of critical race and black feminist scholars (Roberts 1998; Harrison 2010; McKittrick 2006; Sharpe 2003; Sharpe 2010; Davis 1983; Brand 2001) have made clear that in regards to racialized bodies and reproductive “interventions” and control, it is typically poor, racialized women who are targeted globally, by the virtue of their allegedly “uncontrolled” reproductive capacity, as the ideal candidates for surrogate motherhood. We see a containment of poor, racialized women, who, while they are constructed as “irresponsible breeders” when they procreate, are seen as accessible bodies to incorporate into networks of surrogacy (Chun 2012). The racism that is deployed within the practice of cross-racial gestational surrogacy is insidious in part because it does not exile the racial Other from the economy of reproductive labour, but rather situates non-white surrogates in a location that benefits the white consumer.

As the excerpts from Pande’s (2009a) and Sama’s (2012) fieldwork on surrogacy in India have demonstrated, there do exist critical “interruptions” to the Westernized, colonial focus that overwhelmingly centers around the needs, desires, and fertility situations of the commissioning parents in transnational surrogacy arrangements. These studies are some of the few to provide both quantitative and qualitative data on the surrogacy industry and surrogacy hostels in India, as well as accounts from doctors of surrogacy agencies and Indian surrogates themselves. The 2012 Sama study, Birthing a Market: A Study on Commercial Surrogacy, provides data on issues of race, caste and religion that are often overlooked, or underdeveloped in Western academic research on surrogacy. Specifically, Indian women who make successful applications to be surrogates are predominantly Hindu, of lighter complexion, and not from a low caste (Sama 2012: 39-40; Bailey 2014: 27-28). One doctor from Punjab made
it clear that these “qualities” are not irrelevant to surrogacy arrangements, stating that “there was a surrogate who belonged to a low caste and she was rejected on that basis. [The commissioning parents said] We don’t want a low-caste surrogate, or someone with a dark complexion or someone who is not good to look at” (Sama 2012: 39). These identity markers were often justified on the basis of what was referred to as the health of the surrogate, with another doctor from Punjab commenting, “Even if it is not her genetic material, patients may demand [it]. They think of the blood and [the] environmental factors that may affect [the child]” (Sama 2012: 40). Thus, the fertility and “fitness” of an Indian surrogate becomes linked to religion, caste and complexion. More than this, anecdotal evidence from at least one clinic in western India reveals that upper caste Indian surrogates receive almost double the remuneration of lower caste Indian surrogates for the same work (Nayak 2014: 19). These points are relevant in establishing the material realities that serve to perpetuate the politics of exclusion, which date back to colonial India, when European privilege and power was contingent on and safeguarded through the construction of social categories. These categories served to demarcate legal and social classifications defining, as Stoler (1997: 45) makes clear, “who was ‘white’ and who was ‘native,’ who could become a citizen rather than a subject, which children were legitimate progeny and which were not.”

For Indian women entangled in networks of transnational surrogacy, the caste system plays a key role in their sexual domestication insofar as women of higher caste status were not historically required to work and thus were tied to the notion of housewife (Lee 2010). This is significant, not only in relation to colonial histories and the construction of the “Indian woman” as a symbol of nationhood, but also because,
as Wendy Lee (2010: 65) informs, “given the mutually reinforcing effects of sex and caste in the production of “women in the house,” it is not surprising that among the first to offer comparatively inexpensive one-stop surrogacy would be agencies operating in India—and that among the first to take advantage of these would be couples from wealthy Western nations.” Here, the Indian transnational surrogacy agencies, through their surrogacy hostels, reproduce the image of the upper caste housewife for potential Indian surrogates to aspire to. For a surrogate, living in a surrogacy hostel and being looked after by a staff of doctors, maids and cooks, the constructions of both the “happy housewife” and “loving mother” permeate the space and conceal the exploitative realities that encompass surrogacy experiences. This is further emphasized as surrogates speak of altruism and giving another woman the experience of motherhood through an act of bhalayi [goodness, benevolence] (Sama 2012: 57). As surrogate SD4 (quoted in Sama 2012: 57) explains, “Well, I thought someone who does not have a child will get it. I will get their dua [good wishes/blessings].” The point here is that surrogacy appears attractive based on a cultural image that sees the upper castes and classes, for women, associated with the notions of housewife and mother.

As it has been suggested, the conditions under which surrogates make the choice to enter into surrogacy arrangements require examination. While these conditions overwhelmingly expose economic necessity, the reasons surrogates gave in interviews also convey a meaning-making process, whereby the significance of their experiences as surrogates connects them to their families, other surrogates, the intended mothers and the baby (Pande 2009a). As Pande’s (2009a) work shows, these creative forms of kinship ties act as a way to navigate the surrogacy experience through a framework
that is broader than the binary of either “free individual choice” or “Third World exploitation.” As a mother, SD4 reflects on her decision to enter into surrogacy and its relationship to her desire to give her daughter a better life, “I thought about my child. I will educate her. She will also be able to read, write, work on computers like you. I want this for my daughter. Not like me” (Sama 2012: 52). Surrogate Mansi discusses the bonds made among surrogates living in a hostel in Anand:

We don’t fight...okay, only over the TV! This doesn’t feel like a hostel at all. This is more like home. As long as we stay in, we can eat what we like, when we like, move around, watch TV, sleep when we want. We are seven surrogates in this room—seven sisters pregnant at the same time! Our villages are not very far—I am sure we will be able to meet each other even after we leave this place. We have convinced Raveenadidi [the hostel matron] to train us in the beauty business. I don’t think English and computer will get us a job, but we may be able to work in a beauty parlor. Once we are done here I might start a beauty parlor with Diksha. (Pande 2009a: 390)

For some surrogates, the hostel space can exist beyond the surveillance and monitoring; the space becomes alterable, mapping a space of negotiations and confrontations that exist in and through surrogacy experiences.

Indeed, resident surrogates’ ties and coalitions can serve as powerful tools not only for negotiating with surrogacy agents, but also for establishing support networks and as resources for future employment (Pande 2009a: 390). Surrogate Varsha discusses (quoted in Pande 2009a: 390-391) one surrogacy agent, revealing that

I was brought here by Nirmala. Oh, you haven’t met her yet? She is the one who gets us all here. She is my devrani [sister-in-law]. She goes from house to house, knocks on the door and whoever she sees first she grabs them and asks “Do you want to be a surrogate?” [They all laugh]. No, but maybe I shouldn’t be telling you about her. I don’t want any trouble. Why live in a pond and make the crocodile your enemy?
Here, surrogate Regina interrupts (quoted in Pande 2009a: 391):

Why not? We all are like fishes in a dirty pond; why let the crocodile take control? I am going to tell her everything. This *Nirmaladidi* takes Rs. 10,000 [$200] from us for getting us to the clinic. We take all the pain and she earns so much money. See, we come here because we are desperate but she has made a business out of this. This shouldn’t be allowed to happen. We surrogates are doing this out of desperation but with sincerity. We have complained to hostel matron *Raveenadidi*. We want to make sure this is laid out in the contract that no surrogate has to suffer like we did. The couple hiring us should pay extra for people like *Nirmaladidi*. This Rs. 10,000 means a lot to us, our children. Why should we have to give it to someone who is not even our relation? . . . *Par devrani to devrani hi hoti hain, kanjoos* [But of course, all sister-in-laws are like her—greedy].

As these remarks show, surrogates living in the hostel develop a sense of collective identity, looking for ways to collectively demand some minimum rights and protection from the exploitation. To consider the geography of the hostel encourages returning to McKittrick (2006: xi), who articulates that “geography is not, however, secure and unwavering; we produce space, we produce its meanings, and we work very hard to make geography what it is.” For the surrogates, the hostel is a “dirty pond” but they are “swimming together” in it (Pande 2009a: 391).

In considering the histories of British colonialism in India as they “muddy” the “pond” of the surrogacy hostel, it is clear that the racialization of intimacy can be used to inform the negotiations present throughout surrogacy experiences. As David Eng’s (2010: 10) work on queer liberalism and transnational adoption examines, the racialization of intimacy brings critical focus on the processes by which race is exploited to consolidate idealized notions of family and kinship in the global North, for instance, through the practice of transnational adoption, the outsourcing of productive as well as reproductive labor, and the importation of
care-workers from the global South. Furthermore, an examination of the racialization of intimacy reveals the political, economic, and cultural processes by which race has been forgotten across a long history of colonial relations and imperial practices, dissociated from or subsumed by other axes of social difference, such that it can only return as a structure of feeling, as a melancholic trace demanding historical explanation. Finally, the racialization of intimacy indexes other ways of knowing and being in the world, alternative accounts of race as an affective life-world within but ultimately beyond the dictates of a liberal humanist tradition, eluding conventional analytic description and explanation.

Recalling Ann Stoler’s contemplations about intimacy as not only existing in and through gendered and racialized colonial relationships but also becoming historicized through colonial archiving, the racialization of intimacy can be considered in relation to transnational surrogacy in India. As a concept, the racialization of intimacy invites an examination of surrogates’ narratives surrounding kinship, the hostel space as a “dirty pond,” and the bonds between surrogates living in the hostel. Read in this way, the racialization of intimacy takes on multiple articulations: with the intended parents, whom the surrogate may or may not meet; in regards to the surrogate’s racialized body and the narrative bonds that frame a form of relationship with a genetically unrelated fetus; with the other surrogates in the hostel; and with the often fraught relationships with both the agent who mediates the surrogacy transactions and the doctors and nurses who participate in the increasingly medicalized procedures involved in gestational surrogacy. In examining these multiple articulations and the intersections of racialized and gendered experiences surrounding commercial transnational surrogacy, the “politics of intimacy offers, not a gloss for a sweetened study of tender interracial contacts, but an opportunity to recognize that the distinctions between the public and the private” (Stoler 2001: 894) and the inevitable collision of these spheres through transnational surrogacy transactions. Moreover, examining
the racialization of intimacy in the historical present through transnational surrogacy is “not to turn away from colonial dominations, but to relocate their conditions of possibility and relations and forces of production” (Stoler 2001: 894). Additionally, the racialization of intimacy also demands definition of race and gender within surrogate transactions, as David Eng (2010: 5) makes clear, “in terms of its enduring social consequences, its ongoing legacies, and its continuing present of substantive inequalities… Indeed, our historical moment is defined precisely by new combinations of racial, sexual, and economic disparities—both nationally and globally—which are disavowed, denied, and exacerbated by official state policies that refuse to see inequality as anything but equality, and by a pervasive language of individualism, personal merit, responsibility, and choice.”

Importantly, however, drawing out the surrogates’ narratives that surround their surrogacy experiences provides a scope of the complexities that shape the racialization of intimacy. As surrogate Raveena (Sama 2012, quoted in Pande 2009a: 384) reveals

Anne [the genetic mother] wanted a girl but I told her even before the ultrasound, coming from me it will be a boy. My first two kids were also boys. This one will be too. And see I was right, it is a boy! After all, they just gave the eggs, but the blood, all the sweat, all the effort is mine. Of course it’s going after me.

As Pande (2009a: 394) crucially notes, this re-interpretation of the sweat (labour) and the blood (substance) that make up “everyday forms of kinship established between the surrogate and the fetus cannot be dismissed simply as illiterate women’s ignorance of Western medicine.” Rather, this re-interpretation demonstrates the kinds of negotiations that take place throughout surrogacy transactions. Reading the surrogacy hostel as a place where colonial and racialized intimacies “gestate” provides the space
to consider, much like Ann Stoler (2006: 4) does, that these intimacies are “first and foremost sites of intrusive interventions.” The narratives of Indian surrogates reveal these “intrusive interventions” to colonial logics through the formation and articulation of everyday forms of kinship. The hostel, too, exists in this way, both mapping the hardships and monstrous intimacies that surround commercial surrogacy in India but also giving new meaning to the hostel itself through these “intrusive interventions” (Stoler 2006: 4).

3.5 Conclusion

Locating a discussion of transnational surrogacy in India means considering not only the “reality of a developing-country setting—where commercial surrogacy has become a survival strategy and a temporary occupation for some poor rural women” (Pande 2009b: 144-45, quoted in Bailey 2014: 32) but also the connectivities of racialized and gendered histories of colonialism and bondage. In this way, I have sought to challenge Western discourses that universalize and simplify surrogacy work as a racialized and gendered experience. Moreover, in engaging with critical race, anti-colonial and black feminist scholarship, this chapter reflects my investment to use what I deem to be, critical and transformative scholarship that highlights the intersections of race, gender, and colonialism within moments of resistance, agency, and (un)freedom. Here, I see the potential for black and subaltern geographies, as McKittrick (2006: 7) suggests, to be

located within and outside the boundaries of traditional and places; they expose the limitations of transparent space through black [and subaltern] social particularities and knowledges; they locate and speak back to the
geographies of modernity, transatlantic slavery, and colonialism; they illustrate the ways in which the raced, classed, gendered, and sexual body is often an indicator of spatial options and the ways in which geography can indicate racialized habitation patterns; they are places and spaces of social, economic, and political denial and resistance; they are fragmented, subjective, connective, invisible, visible, unacknowledged, and conspicuously positioned; they have been described as, among other things, rhizomorphic, a piece of the way, diasporic, blue terrains, spiritual, and Manichean. The complexity of these geographies is found in the ways they reveal how ideas—black and nonblack—get turned into lived and imaginary spaces that are tied to geographic organization.

My hope, through this thesis, is to register twenty-first century transnational surrogacy beyond simply the invention and implementation of assisted reproductive technologies. We can consider instead the ways in which these technologies arise connectively with histories of slavery, colonialism and global capitalism, and exhibit the tactics and negotiations of racialized and gendered resistance to experiences of unfreedom. Recalling Christina Sharpe (2010: 3), unpacking and thinking through the connectivities of histories of slavery, colonialism, and global capitalism, particularly as they exist in, through and around us, often unseen, as monstrous intimacies, means

...examining those [post-slavery] subjectivities constituted form transatlantic slavery onward and connected, then as now, by the everyday mundane horrors that aren’t acknowledged to be horrors. It means articulating a diasporic study that is attentive to but not dependent upon nations and nationalisms and that is linked, in different forms during slavery and into the present freedoms, by monstrous intimacies, defined as a set of known and unknown performances and inhabited horrors, desires and positions produced, reproduced, circulated, and transmitted, that are breathed in like air and often go unacknowledged to be monstrous.

Doing so means examining reproductive tourism through a politics of eugenics and white supremacy. It means confronting (un)freedom and choice talk. It involves
confounding the notions of agency and resistance as tactics and negotiations under particular conditions. The contributions of black diaspora scholarship to my work are immense. However, these contributions serve to encourage an understanding of (un)freedom and monstrous intimacies in specific historical locations to the histories of violence and legacies of transatlantic slavery. Indian surrogates exist in distinctly different locations, geopolitically as well as in relation to histories of British colonialism in India from black diasporic materialities, and yet this chapter has attempted to consider the question of how the transformative scholarship of black diaspora scholars can support alternate ways of thinking through present colonial realities. But it also asks: at what point and how do racialized and gendered histories converge and diverge? As Ann Stoler (2006: 11) informs, but also questions,

> these are political issues grounding in epistemological ones: how we know and the basis of that knowledge “suspend” some histories and make others hard to think, frame, or tell.

Still, our analytic quandaries over the comparative treatment of imperial formations may also lie elsewhere: not only in the compartmentalization of knowledge in the archives or historiographies but in an analytic vocabulary inadequate to the task of making these comparisons. If reasoning is impossible without comparison, as Hume argued, and if comparisons are always theory driven, as Wittgenstein claimed, then how do we understand a pervasive vocabulary of race and reform, of inclusion and exclusion that cuts across the globe without being “global,” that was consolidated by colonial polities but not confined to them, and that displays a durability and portability that exceed colonial empires and their exemplary cases? Macropolitics may share in technologies of rule that work through people’s bodies and hearts in recognizably similar ways without necessarily sharing the same grids of intelligibility that make common sense of those practices.

Throughout this chapter, the notion of intimacy runs through tactical negotiations with resistance, agency, and (un)freedom. In considering the racialization of intimacy
as “so implicated in the exercise of power” the conceptual tools that framed this chapter “provide strategic nodes of comparison, unevenly laced with state effects” (Stoler 2006: 15) for implicating “histories in the disquieting present” (Stoler 2006: 20).

Transnational surrogacy involves thinking not only about the transactions and the medical procedures but also considering that, as Kalindi Vora (2010-2011, quoted in DasGupta and Dasgupta 2014: xiii) states,

the reformulation of the surrogates’ bodies as empty spaces that can be cultivated to re-produce Western society and Western lives recapitulates the colonial epistemology of land as property, where resources, including native labor, were used to sustain the metropole. This contemporary racialized and gendered political economic relationship rests upon a biopolitical order undergirded by access to technology, in this case reproductive technology.

This access to technology also exists in the realm of social media, as will be the focus of Chapter 4. What remains to be considered in Chapter 4 are the ways in which Twitter becomes a colonial network that perpetuates a Westernized, commodified, and popularized view of transnational surrogacy, even as Indian surrogates “interrupt” these colonial discourses and expose the “oppositional geographies” that are made in and through surrogacy experiences in India.
Chapter 4

#giftoflife

The coloniality of Twitter and the transnational surrogacy industry

Body as text
Body inscribed
On text
On body

To interrupt
Disrupt
Erupt
The text of the new world

Is a text of
A history of

Inter/uptions

Of bodies...

4.1 Introduction

Faceless images of sari-clad “belly-shots” dot by Twitter feed accompanied with tweets promising the “gift of life” for those “deserving” couples through surrogacy. These tweets stand in stark contrast to the vehement claims that surrogates are #notavessel. At times, these trending tweets, and others like them, obscure the negotiated realities of the gendered and racialized subjects that register within the colonial archive of the social media platform Twitter. Here, not only the “silence” of Indian surrogates on Twitter, but the persistent racialized and gendered tropes of the “Third World woman” invoke a colonial genealogy of transnational surrogacy; yet they also necessitate further examination of the potential for “interruptions” within and among the colonial narrative that imbue Twitter data on surrogacy, surrogates, and contract motherhood in India. As a contemporary archive of colonial tropes projected upon Indian surrogate bodies, Twitter provides a platform from which to expose the ongoing colonial histories and narratives contextualizing transnational surrogacy in India. In the remainder of this chapter I will explore Twitter as a colonial archive, not only as a source to consider the current conversations around surrogacy in India but also from the perspective of Twitter in what Ann Stoler (2002b) calls the “archive-as subject.” Thus, Twitter becomes more than a database from which to extract information around transnational surrogacy; in its form it exposes the coloniality that undercuts Twitter as a social media site and transnational surrogacy as a multi-billion dollar industry in India. Finally, taking up a conversation with Gayatri Spivak’s (1993) “Can the Subaltern Speak?” I present some initial considerations on the possibilities of subaltern “interruptions” to colonial narratives, as their narrative structures persistently invest in constructing and speaking for specifically subaltern
women.

My account begins with an initial visual representation of the keyword “surrogacy” that demonstrates the patterns and scope of the Twitter data extracted, coded and compared using NVivo 10 qualitative coding software. Visualizing the data, I broadly illustrate the ongoing colonial “logic” and narratives that pervade the global surrogacy industry, which include the supremacy of mainstream news media within the majority of generated tweets, legal and legislative debates, and the correlation between debates emerging around commercial surrogacy and those around transnational (often termed “overseas”) surrogacy. Next, I illustrate narrative frameworks on Twitter by reading surrogacy-related discussions through the coding of “top tweets.” Here, we encounter the pervasive silence of Indian surrogates among the several tweets on the surrogacy industry in India that have trended on Twitter. Merely identifying the silences of Indian surrogates on Twitter, however, risks ‘extracting’ a unified silenced subaltern voice that only perpetuates, as Spivak warns, the unknowable and silenced subaltern subject. As such, the analysis and discussion presented here does not seek to ‘uncover’ nor ‘save’ subaltern women. Rather, in conversation with Spivak I am thinking through as well as troubling the narrative ‘interruptions’ that do exist. In so doing, I also consider the hauntings of colonial histories and complex racial that proliferate online and, more materially, through transnational commercial surrogacy transactions.

By examining the intersections of colonial tropes, narratives and power relations in the contemporary archive of Twitter, I balance recognition of the potential for cyber democracy on Twitter with the lack of such evidence in the data on Twitter related to the global commercial surrogacy industry. The Twitter platform centered the
narratives of Western, primarily white commissioning parents, as well as those with interest in using and navigating both domestic and transnational surrogacy industries, who expressed the concerns and potential difficulties that arise when commissioning commercial surrogacy services. Drawing on critical race theory, postcolonial, feminist and subaltern studies scholars that have framed this project up to this point, I consider the complexities of writing or not writing, of speaking or maintaining silence and of the space of the “interruption” that exists in and through language. As traced throughout the previous chapters, these negotiations become folded into processes of modernity and, with this, encourage recognition of the persistence of colonialism, racism, sexism and capitalism. Trinh Minh-ha (Minh-Ha 1989: 52) writes “power, as unveiled by numerous contemporary writings, has always inscribed itself in language. Speaking, writing, and discoursing are not mere acts of communication; they are above all acts of compulsion... Power therefore never dies out: tracked, pursued, worn out, or driven away here, it will always reappear there, where I expect it least. And language is one of the most complex forms of subjugation, being at the same time the locus of power and unconscious servility.” Building on Minh-ha, the interlocking workings of racial violences constituted in and through modernity become knowable when unpacking the colonial discourses embedded on Twitter.

Prior to proceeding with the interventions that frame this chapter it is imperative to acknowledge the important work that is being done by critical race scholars on race and cyberspace. Specifically, scholars such as Beth Kolko, Lisa Nakamura and Gilbert Rodman (2000) are engaging in a critique of cyberspace that confronts the popular utopian rhetoric of colourblindness on the Internet. Moreover, these scholars (Kolko 2000; Kolko, Nakamura, and Rodman 2000; Nakamura 2002, 2008) expose the
pervasiveness of “default whiteness” that not only shapes online identity formation, but also informs the pursuit of “racial passing” online. Thus, racial and racist discourses are quite literally coded online. To fully unpack this racial and racist coding as well as to begin to consider how to subvert this coding, Nakamura (2002: 48-49) looks at discourses about race in cyberspace as a computer bug:

A bug interrupts a program’s regular commands and routines, causing it to behave unpredictably... Programmers routinely debug their work because they desire complete control over the way their program functions... Discourse about race in cyberspace is conceptualized as a bug, something an efficient computer user would eradicate since it contaminates her work/play. The unexpected occurrence of race has the potential, by its very unexpectedness, to sabotage the ideology-machine’s routines. Therefore its articulation is critical, as is the ongoing examination of the dynamics of this articulation.

Through Nakamura’s insights it becomes apparent that the figurations and fantasies of cyberspace as a utopic “raceless place” exist as a form of “debugging” of race online. Exposing and confronting the racist “debugging” that exists online is an urgent and necessary project. As a potential contribution to literature on the racial mapping of cyberspace, my work on Twitter makes the specific intervention of interpreting Twitter as a colonial archive and through this thinking through subaltern silences that exist online in conversation with Spivak. My focus in this chapter brings together the various conceptual, historical and methodological frameworks used throughout this project so as to situate how modernity, including contemporary practices of “record-keeping” imagined through Twitter, and histories of racial violence provide a way to attend to the nuances of gender, race, online technologies and contemporary surrogacy practices.
4.2 An emerging Colonial Archive: Visualizing Surrogacy on Twitter

![Surrogacy Keyword Text Search Tree](image)

**Figure 4.1:** Surrogacy Keyword Text Search Tree
The above word tree in Figure 4.1 represents an initial visualization of the Top Tweets Twitter data. Doing a text search for tweets related to the keyword surrogacy demonstrates some of the broad overarching themes and considerations that frame surrogacy-related discussions on Twitter. As a case study, this image not only presents some early themes from which to develop relevant codes but also guides the reading of the Twitter data. What becomes apparent are the pro or con dichotomous debates surrounding surrogacy, which include: the rights of the child in surrogacy transactions; the “monopoly of the rich over poor”; anxiety for clients of surrogacy arrangements specifically in international markets; issues surrounding DNA testing and the anxiety of genetics, which was addressed in Section 3.4 of Chapter 3; ethical considerations; reference to the worrisome ‘nightmare surrogacy cases’; anti-surrogacy advocates and the #notavessel trend. Other themes that emerge involve LGBTQ* debates and equal access to surrogacy; the need for regulation and a legal framework to manage surrogacy markets; the cost of surrogacy; the trending Thailand and baby Gammy debates; information surrounding the difference between traditional and gestational surrogacy; mention of different surrogacy markets, including India and Thailand; unequal gender right surrounding surrogacy and the sale or donation of other reproductive materials (ovum and sperm); and overarching mentions of scandal, controversy and anxieties that frame surrogacy-related debates on Twitter.

In examining the word tree it becomes clear that the concerns of the clients, including potential would-be clients, of surrogacy arrangements take precedence. Moreover, these concerns include the rights of the child, with an underlying anxiety surrounding the need for evidence of the genetic relatedness through DNA testing can be identified. Further, the debates surrounding regulations of international commercial markets as
well as issues pertaining to who has access to surrogacy services are also included in the Twitter data. As the word tree reveals when exploitative and unequal power relations that often frame particularly commercial surrogacy and can be exacerbated in transnational cases, are mentioned in tweets it is done in a limiting binary manner, which will be developed in the sections “Narrative Frameworks on Twitter” and “Confronting the Colonial Archive: Reading narrative interruptions in and through subaltern silences.” Still, from the outset it becomes overwhelmingly apparent that there exists an absence of critical and nuanced discussion around the racialization of commercial surrogacy transactions for both domestic and transnational arrangements. As it will be discussed below, this erasure of the racialized aspects that frames many commercial surrogacy arrangements intersects importantly with David Eng’s (2010) notion of the racialization of intimacy. Overall, whether the Twitter data is being examined with a broad-brush, as is the case here, or through a series of specific tweets, which make up Section 4.3 entitled “Narrative Frameworks on Twitter,” it becomes evident that the majority of the surrogacy-related discussions and debates on Twitter exist in relation to a Western, capitalist, client-focused discourse. As it will be discussed and theorized this discursive framework not only has significant implications for how surrogacy networks are conceptualized online, but also allows for considerations of the continuities of Western colonial ‘pasts’ enduring in the historical present.

The “top tweets” examined in this section were collected for coding on August 20th, 2014 using the NCapture feature available through NVivo 10. In total 1,339 number of tweets were collected using the following keywords: #surrogacy; #surrogate; #surrogates; Surrogacies; Surrogacy; Surrogacy #india; Surrogacy India;
Surrogate; Surrogate #india; Surrogate India; Surrogates (see Table 4.1). For the purposes of this study, only “top tweets” were collected for thematic coding. “Top tweets” are tweets that many Twitter users are interacting with and sharing via retweets, replies, and the ‘favourites’ feature. “Top tweets” are selected using an algorithm that identifies the tweets that are trending on Twitter (Twitter 2014). These tweets automatically refresh to show popular retweeted subjects based on the “top tweet” algorithm; however, some older tweet results may also be highlighted if they are determined to have a high value for the query. For the scope of this chapter, I used data from “top tweets” to provide a sample of the recent Twitter trends surrounding surrogacy.

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<th>Keywords</th>
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<tr>
<td>#surrogate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Surrogacy India</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surrogate India</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surrogates</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,339</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1: Top Tweet Keywords and number of tweets collected.

When the Twitter data had been imported into NVivo 10, I completed the first round of auto-coding based on pertinent characteristics of the tweets, such as Twitter username, hashtags, type of tweet (i.e., tweet or retweet), number of retweets, date and location. From here, selecting only the original tweet (that is, excluding retweets),
the content of the tweets was manually coded. Table shows the codes and subcodes, called nodes and subnodes in NVivo 10, as well as the number of coded references. For brevity, however, the focus will be on the most frequently coded themes (highlighted by the asterix symbol in Table 4.2), although mention will be given to two of the least coded themes, surrogate rights and race (highlighted by the dagger symbol sign in Table 4.2), as the coding infrequency of these themes is pertinent when considering the narrative focus of the Twitter data.

The results for the content analysis portion of this inquiry were calculated by tabulating the number of references per code. From here, the intersecting of multiple themes was considered as a way of detecting and weaving together a cohesive narrative of the Twitter data. Use of a variety of mapping features available with NVivo 10 provides visual representations of the results and thematic analysis. Table 4.3 shows the overlap between coded data related to intersecting themes. I have also included a word cloud below of the top 1000 most frequently used words to demonstrate the overarching trends related to surrogacy on Twitter (see Figure 4.2). An examination of the word cloud illustrates the trend surrounding surrogacy debates in Thailand,
specifically related to the Baby Gammy case. \footnote{The case of Baby Gammy became internationally publicized incident in July 2014 when a Thai surrogate, Pattaramon Janbua, sought to raise money for her surrogate child diagnosed with Down syndrome. Janbua had been the gestational surrogate for an Australian couple, David and Wendy Farnell. Reports suggest that when ultrasound results seven months into the surrogate pregnancy indicated not only that Janbua pregnant with twins but that one of the twins had Down syndrome (BBC News 2014). When the Farnells requested that Janbua terminate the pregnancy, Janbua refused, opting instead to care for the child (named Gammy) on her own (BBC News 2014). The Farnells returned to Australia in December 2013 with baby Gammy’s twin sister Pipah with them (BBC News 2014). Since this story broke, there has been increased debate about the ethical questions surrounding gestational surrogacy. Moreover, in response to these events the Thai authorities have reportedly banned surrogate babies from leaving the country with their intended parents. The legality of commercial surrogacy is also under debate, with policy makers considering making commercial surrogacy a criminal offence in Thailand (Al Jazeera 2014).}

From the results presented in the tables and figures, as well as the figure above, several important themes emerged. Among these, the frequency of news media-related tweets illustrates a significant aspect about the data. Specifically, Twitter users are reading news articles about surrogacy and clicking the Twitter icon on these webpages to post a pre-generated tweet about the article. Further, while the articles being tweeted about are being read from a variety of news sources the articles themselves are not original pieces but, rather, are materials republished from the Associated Press. This is especially important when considering “who speaks” on Twitter and the narrative structures around surrogacy that are trending on Twitter.

Next, the node “Legal, Legislation, Policies” also topped the most-frequently-coded list. As the subnodes show (see Table 4.2), the most frequently referenced subcodes include Rights for Commissioning Parents/Clients, Visa and Immigration and Regulation. As will be discussed in the next section, the infrequency of referencing the Surrogate Rights subnode contributes to an understanding of the role Twitter plays in framing trending discussions about surrogacy. That is, when we examine the
trends on Twitter related to surrogacy, it becomes apparent that Twitter updates about the rights of the clients as well as legislative restrictions, policy changes and legal support that effect both domestic and transnational surrogacy markets revolve around client access and client satisfaction with surrogacy services (see Table 4.3). Herein, the rights of the surrogates, if considered at all, are an afterthought, or they are presented in such a manner as to make clear the surrogate’s obligation to deliver to the commissioning parents.
Table 4.2: NVivo 10 Nodes and Subnodes.

<table>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>Advertising *</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agency *</td>
<td>169</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Offering</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seeking</td>
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<td>Celebrity</td>
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<td>Debates</td>
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<td>Atrocity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class</td>
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<td>Commercial Surrogacy *</td>
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<td>'Designer babies’</td>
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<td>India</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Commercial Surrogacy</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race †</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexuality</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transnational, Overseas Surrogacy *</td>
<td>747</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

109
The data illustrated an important correlation between the subnodes Commercial Surrogacy and Overseas, Transnational Surrogacy (see Table 4.3). In showing the overlap between these two subnodes, the data represents a thematic trend, namely that not only do tweets about commercial surrogacy and those about transnational surrogacy intersect, but these tweets also represent a trend on Twitter. Moreover, when the Domestic Surrogacy subnode appeared, it was also often associated with commercial surrogacy, although there were a few cases in which the Non-Commercial Surrogacy subnode intersected with the Domestic Surrogacy subnode. Also important were the relative parameters of what constituted domestic surrogacy. In all cases, “domestic” referred to a Global North nation. Again, this demonstrates the Westernized focus that encompasses surrogacy debates on Twitter.

From here, other points that require mention and will be unpacked in the sections that follow include the prevalence of advertisements for surrogates, particularly as they intersected with tweets related to India; the polarization of moral and ethical arguments for “surrogacy as empowerment” and “surrogacy as exploitation”; and the lack of discussion surrounding race as it relates to surrogacy on Twitter. To unpack these portions of the Twitter data, I will use critical discourse analysis and incorporate specific tweets. Together with the content analysis and visual mappings of the coded Twitter data, I will use considerations of Spivak’s “Can the Subaltern Speak?” to elucidate the tactics and negotiations that frame both online and material realities related to transnational commercial surrogacy.
Table 4.3: NVivo 10 Node Matrix - Thematic Coding Overlay.

In considering the points presented in the third section, “Confronting the Colonial Archive: Reading narrative interruptions in and through subaltern silences,” I observed a broad-brush picture of the Twitter data begin to take shape. Tweets often fell into the one or all of the following categories: news media, commercial surrogacy, transnational surrogacy and legal debates (including all subnodes but surrogate rights). Broadly speaking, then, the Twitter data supports a largely client-focused
Westernized discussion of transnational commercial surrogacy backed by Western news media sources (see Table 4.2 and Table 4.3; Figure 4.3). In locating the trends related to surrogacy on Twitter, it becomes possible to conceptualize Twitter as a colonial archive.

![Twitter screenshot](image)

**Figure 4.3:** *Navigating Surrogacy? Working with Western legal frameworks.*
4.3 Narrative Frameworks on Twitter

Figure 4.4: Surrogacy Client ‘Reveals’.
Figure 4.5: Agencies and clients tracking their surrogates’ progress.
Figure 4.6: *Choice Talk & Altruism.*

![Twitter screenshot](image1)

*Strong Families @StrongFams · 8h*
RT @TheShanelleM: My Body. My Choice: A Couple’s Journey Into Surrogacy + IVF elixher.com/my-body-my-cho... via @tamara_angelaDC & @sociallynept

![Twitter screenshot](image2)

*The Surrogacy Source @SurrogacySOURCE · 9h*
"[Surrogacy is] the most intimate leap of faith and trust you can take."
#surrogacy newsnet5.com/entertainment/

![Twitter screenshot](image3)

*BioNews @BioNewsUK*
Oct 3
Happy stories about #surrogacy in @DailyMailUK ow.ly/ps2KA good to see positive news of surrogacy in UK after #Houseofsurrogates

![Twitter screenshot](image4)

*Arts Infinite @ArtsInfinite*
6 Dec 2011
Inside India’s surrogacy industry: Poverty makes Indian women happy to bear children for infertile western coupl... bit.ly/rvL1gp

![Twitter screenshot](image5)

*Jocelle Arthur @JocelleSkinProd*
16 Sep 2011
#FITNESS: Best Surrogacy Agencies in Mumbai - People from all over the world are opting India as the prime destinati... ow.ly/1etYH

Figure 4.7: *More “happy” surrogacy tales.*
Figure 4.8: Normalizing Surrogacy.

Figure 4.9: Essentializing the ‘surrogate’.
Figure 4.10: Reproductive Tourism.
Figure 4.11: The ‘Rights’ of the Child.

Figure 4.12: Surrogacy as unbecoming consumerism?
The above selection of tweets represents a series of broad narrative frameworks that come to encompass surrogacy-related discussions on Twitter. Grouping these tweets together particular thematic patterns emerge, revealing an associated Western, capitalist, colonial narrative surrounding surrogacy-related discussions on Twitter. The tweets shown in Figure 4.4 through Figure 4.12 pertain to surrogacy agencies’ narrative focus on the commissioning couples ‘journey’ to parenthood. Within these tweets that conceptualize the journey through surrogacy are images that demonstrate the particular focus of medicalized discourse and representations associated with assisted reproduction. Moreover, even though the surrogates are named it becomes apparent that their labour as surrogates is explicitly linked in and through the commissioning couples. Figure 4.6 contains two tweets that frame the rhetoric of choice talk, altruism, and trust that pervades discourses of surrogacy online. Through this rhetoric, the monetary exchange, medical interventions, and colonial networks that make up surrogacy transactions is obscured. Instead, there is an investment in the affective ‘goodness’ of surrogacy, thus underpinning the conditionality associated with the promise of happiness. As Sara Ahmed (2010: 56) outlines in The Promise of Happiness,

statements on the conditionality of happiness—how one person’s happiness is made conditional upon another’s—ensure that happiness is directive... It might seem that what I am calling ‘conditional happiness’ involves a relationship of care and reciprocity: as if to say, I will not have a share in a happiness that cannot be shared. And yet, the terms of conditionality are unequal. If certain people come first—we might say those who are already in place (such as parents, hosts, or citizens)—then their happiness comes first. For those who are positioned as coming after, happiness means following somebody else’s goods.
Through this it is revealed, as Ahmed (2010: 11) makes clear “the face of happiness... looks rather like the face of privilege. Rather than assuming happiness is simply found in ‘happy persons’ we can consider how claims to happiness make certain forms of personhood more valuable.” In framing commercial surrogacy transactions as the journeys to family and therefore “happiness” and surrogates as those who “women are able to give the gift of life” (Figure 4.7 and Figure 4.8; Fertility Miracles 2014), not only does a happy life achieved through surrogacy become a regulation of desire (Ahmed 2010: 37), but any of the contentions and unequal power dynamics that ultimately make up surrogacy arrangements are more easily concealed, or even ignored.

As evidenced in the above tweets, surrogacy becomes associated with an altruism that is distinctly gendered. As American surrogate blogger who goes by the blogger handle “BabyBaker” aptly reveals, the “truth” behind her decision to become a surrogate: “I do it because I can, and because there are deserving people that want a child. I like being pregnant, its [sic] usually pretty easy for me” (Tryston 2014: para. 1, Figure 4.9). Not only is there the pressure surrounding the assumption if one can one should, which becomes gendered through surrogacy arrangements, but the prevalence of these tweets from primarily Western, white women as surrogates conceals the racialized, classed, and global capitalist processes at work in and through surrogacy arrangements. Indeed, the tweets in Figure 4.10 only further render the complicated realities of commercial surrogacy arrangements, specifically, and the commercial surrogacy industry, more broadly, indiscernible. Advertising the “stress-free” support, including the potential for financing and legal support, that comes with accessing commercial surrogacy services through an assisted reproduction agency alongside the
romanticized rhetoric of retreats and vacations to warm destinations demonstrates how surrogacy-related tweets can be less about the complexities of the moral and ethical debates surrounding surrogacy and more about the privileged access to reproductive tourism markets.

Importantly, however, Figure 4.11 and Figure 4.12 incorporate a more critical ‘voice’ around surrogacy debates on Twitter. Still, the narrative focus of Figure 4.11 is about the rights of the child in surrogacy arrangements. Again, surrogates, their labour, and intersections within surrogacy arrangements are either dismissed, or at least rendered less important than the rights and welfare of the child, which fundamentally places the surrogate mother at odds with the commissioned child. That being said, Figure 4.12 poses an interesting question: “Is commercial surrogacy bringing the worst of consumerist logic into the womb?” (The Week 2014). While this notion of the ‘womb’ remains ‘faceless’ and ultimately unknowable, there exists space to question this idea of ‘consumerist logic’ and to potentially develop a critical conversation beyond merely the capitalist, consumer dimension of commercial surrogacy and towards an intersectional, nuanced analysis that considers the mutual construction of racialized, gendered, globalized, colonial, classed networks, discourses and representations of transnational surrogacy commercial online.

4.4 Confronting the Colonial Archive: Reading narrative interruptions in and through subaltern silences

In working towards an intersectional, nuanced analysis of transnational commercial surrogacy online I return to Stoler to assist me in conceptualizing Twitter as a
colonial archive. Importantly, Stoler (2002b: 87) positions the practice of archiving as a process, thus considering not only the content that makes up archives but also the particular “and sometimes peculiar form” these archives take. Moreover, Stoler (2002b: 87) unpacks the ways in which colonial archives become “transparencies on which power relations were inscribed and intricate technologies of rule in themselves.” In approaching Twitter in these ways, there remains the potential to consider the “archival turn” as a “rethinking of the materiality and imaginary of collections and what kinds of truth-claims lie in documentation” (Stoler 2002b: 94). Thus, Twitter provides insights into some of the “legitimating social coordinates of epistemologies” (Stoler 2002b: 95). Specifically, we come to see, through pre-generated tweets, retweets, trending and use of hashtags how people envision what they know and which “institutions validate that knowledge, and how they do so” (Stoler 2002b: 95).

Considering Twitter as a colonial archive means confronting not only the institutions that “fashioned histories as they concealed, revealed, and reproduced the power of the state” (Stoler 2002b: 97) but also sites of anxiety in the imaginary that contribute to what becomes “known” and the persistence of colonial logics that hinge on an emotional economy. Tweets surrounding surrogacy bring this emotional economy comes into focus. As Twitter registers what is trending and what becomes known as a “top tweet,” algorithms become part of legitimating particular narratives, thus revealing the mechanics of an ongoing colonial logic surrounding narratives of transnational surrogacy on Twitter.

The prevalence of tweets coded as News Media illustrates distinctly how some information is recorded, validated and doubly legitimized through the tweeting process.
These pre-generated tweets with links to the same articles not only framed the discussion around transnational surrogacy as one that concerns the clients of surrogacy arrangements, but also produced most of the “top tweets” through Western capitalist and legal frameworks (see Table 4.2). Headlines and tweets included, “Thai surrogacy crackdown: Thailand’s military ruler raid surrogacy clinics, causing anxiety for parents worldwide” (Gamble 2014); “Thailand says it will be lenient to those already in the process after #babygammy triggers crackdown on #surrogacy” (Sunita 2014); and “Surrogacy from the parents’ perspective: The story of baby Roman” (Gattrell 2014). Here, affirmation of Western newsmedia conglomerates as sources of “truth” and “information” reproduced a Western subject and cultural register. Twitter, in tracking social trends, then can be read to expose “how an explanation and narrative of reality was established as the normative one” (Spivak 1993: 76) in context of the establishment and perpetuation of colonial narratives.

Several examples reinforce an analysis of the coloniality of Twitter. The binary logic of empowerment or exploitation frames the moral and ethical debates of surrogacy on Twitter. The erasure of a critical discourse of racialization and surrogacy invests in the white racial privilege that underpins colonial surrogacy narratives. As well, the prevalence of embedded advertising in the form of tweets by international surrogacy agencies—posts that are considered “top tweets” in any query specifically related to surrogacy and India—thus expose the maintenance of “the international division of labor [that] serves to keep the supply of cheap labour in the comprador countries” (Spivak 1993: 83). Taken together, the Twitter data surrounding surrogacy becomes part of a colonial network and provide evidence of Spivak’s presumption that the subaltern (specifically the subaltern as female) does not speak through the
platform’s measurable silences. While this contention will be interrogated below, a broad-brush analysis of Twitter data reveals the silences produced by narrative structures that speak for Indian surrogates.

Tweets that were coded under Moral and Ethical Debates overwhelmingly served to characterize surrogacy arrangements and, by extension, functioned to “speak for” the surrogates’ experiences, as being either entirely empowering or entirely exploitative. As evidenced through the narrative frameworks presented throughout the previous section, “Colonial Narrative Frameworks on Twitter,” in the erasure of nuance that exists in and through surrogacy arrangements specifically and the transnational surrogacy industry more broadly, a colonial logic is propagated: surrogates appear either as impoverished victims, or as virtuous women who not only give the “gift of life” but also work their way out of poverty through surrogacy, while their contributions as surrogates are said to usher them into the realm of “global sisterhood.” Moreover, an element of ownership appears when Western couples tweet about their surrogate (see Figure 4.4 and Figure 4.5). This is particularly apparent when commissioning parents comment over Twitter about their surrogate’s progress and include details of her doctor’s appointments and ultrasound images (Figure 4.4, Figure 4.5 and Figure 4.13). Indeed, as Sayantani DasGupta and Shamita Das Dasgupta (2011) reveal from their research on surrogacy, “e-motherhood” and the blogosphere, the ultrasound images separate the gestating surrogate both from herself and from fetal embodiment. More than this, the commodification of these images runs alongside the objectification of the Indian surrogates, as the surrogates become unknowable in the ultrasound images.
These dynamics are extended when Western surrogacy clients post their surrogate’s gestational experiences as their own (Figure 4.5 and Figure 4.6). Racial and gendered complications become particularly apparent when Western white surrogacy clients post pictures of their “bump” (Figure 4.4 and Figure 4.14). DasGupta and Das Dasgupta (2011: 294) discuss the “belly shot” posted by one commissioning couple, Amani and Bob, not only as part of the “visual economy” but also as perpetuating Orientalist images of Indian surrogates. Amani and Bob posted an image of the belly of their surrogate “swathed in a sparkling white, silver and pink sari” (DasGupta and Dasgupta 2011: 294). This Orientalist trend has been featured in magazines like Marie Claire, in which an article on Indian surrogacy was published featuring a photograph of a group of sari-clad, headless, expecting brown bellies (DasGupta and
As DasGupta and Dasgupta (2011: 294) argue, “such images encourage in the viewer a gaze pregnant with Orientalist possibilities, in which the faceless body of the pregnant surrogate is very literally unable to look back.” While there are tweets that proclaim the opposing but no more nuanced narrative of the victim-status of surrogates, on the whole it appears that the visual economy of Indian surrogates’ fragmented bodies takes up significant space on social media and in the blogosphere. The cultural capital of the belly shot serves as a legitimating force for the ongoing racial, colonial and gendered power relations that exist between surrogacy clients and their surrogates.

Figure 4.14: Representations of the surrogacy industry in India: Faceless, sari-clad “belly-shots.”
The sari-clad, faceless belly shots have become normalized, even expected online occurrences as part of the documenting of the surrogacy journey (see Figure 4.14). The discourse of ownership and cultural capital embedded in these online occurrences exemplifies non-white erasure, all under the gaze of the politics of colourblindness and individualism. As David Eng (2010: 9) argues, the politics of colourblindness seek “to manage racial contradictions in both the national and the international arena by making the centrality of race for an ever-increasing global system of capitalist exploitation and domination.” Moreover, Western imperialist neoliberal multiculturalism relies on portrayals of “racism as nonracialism and neoliberalism as the key to a multicultural, post-racist world order of freedom, opportunity, and choice” (Eng 2010: 9). This sentiment is prevalent in the notion of the global sisterhood that transnational surrogacy facilitates. All the while, the racist and Orientalist images of nameless, and often faceless, Indian surrogates on Twitter become features of the surrogacy clients’ Twitter accounts and international surrogacy agencies, who use these images to advertise the “joys of surrogacy.” And with this, as racism becomes further embedded in these online spaces, it also becomes harder to detect. Laced in the rhetoric of choice and empowerment,

the neoliberal language of choice now helps to reconfigure not just the domestic but indeed the global marketplace as an expanded public field to which private interest and prejudices are free to circulate with little governmental regulation or restriction. As such, we need to ask how neoliberalism’s rhetoric of choice works in tandem with a domestic politics of colour blindness precisely to subsume race within the private sphere of family and kinship relations. Such efforts to isolate and manage the private as a distinct and rarified zone out of capitalist relations and racial exploitation, as well as dissociated from its domestic and global genealogies, express... the “racialization of intimacy.” (Eng 2010: 9-10)
As the racialization of intimacy becomes relegated to the private sphere, “top tweets” on surrogacy represent a contemporary example of the forgetting of race. Furthermore, as Eng (2010: 95) contends, the forgetting of race, as part of the politics of colour blindness, is not the suppression of difference but rather “the collective refusal to see difference in the face of it.” As such, the idea of surrogacy clients claiming ownership of their “bump” suggests not only Western imperialist entitlement but also denial and concealment of the complex racial implications involved in transnational commercial surrogacy transactions.

The complexities of racialized transnational surrogacy arrangements also reveal themselves in the ways in which Twitter has become an arena for embedded advertising by international surrogacy agencies. Of particular importance here are the Twitter trends related to the following keywords: “surrogacy India,” “surrogate India,” “surrogacy #india” and “surrogate #india.” In the tweets coded thusly the majority contained advertisements by surrogacy agencies. This is significant, as it demonstrates the prevalence of advertising beyond other popular surrogacy-related Twitter themes. Tweets like those shown in Figure 4.8 remove surrogacy experiences from their material realities. Importantly, advertisements aimed specifically at recruiting Indian women as surrogates remain mostly obscured on Twitter. However, those to potential clients maintain the messages of low-cost, romanticized getaways prevalent throughout the global medical tourism industry. Other advertisements include “See Taj Mahal by the moonlight while your embryo grows in a Petri-dish”; “IVF and surrogacy with talented/UK-trained doctors, clinics with excellent sanitation and modern facilities, and full legal support” (Pande 2014b: 8); and “clean and luxurious bed and breakfast accommodations in a posh local of town, transportation,
a mobile phone while in India and sight-seeing tours” (Pande 2014b: 88). Colonial narratives present in these excerpts, as India holds the Orientalist wonders promised during the height of Raj, and as explicit statements of Indian doctors’ “UK-trained” credentials legitimize the technological and medical supremacy of the Global North. Yet on Twitter, the ongoing racialized, gendered and colonial relations that frame the transnational surrogacy industry get reduced to sound bites like “Wombs for rent on the rise” (FOX 4 News 2013; see Figure 4.15). Necessarily, sounds bites like the ones above obscure

the story of capitalist expansion, the slow freeing of labor power as commodity, that narrative of the modes of production... Yet the precarious normativity of this narrative is sustained by the putatively changeless stopgap of the “Asiatic” mode of production, which steps in to sustain it whenever it might become apparent that the story of capital logic is the story of the West, that imperialism establishes the universality of the mode of production narrative, that to ignore the subaltern today is, willy-nilly, to continue the imperialist project. (Spivak 1993: 94)

Importantly, then, the unpacking of colonial narratives on Twitter must be part of a broader anticolonial project to challenge the Western imperialist narratives that reify capitalist expansion and individualism, and perpetuate Global North-Global South international labour divisions (See Figure 4.16).
Engaging with a broader anticolonial project necessarily means confronting the ways Twitter, as a colonial space, serves to contain and reduce Indian surrogates to
the archetype of the monolithic “Third World woman.” Tweets that address transna-
tional surrogacy in India portray surrogacy as an industry, with the surrogates as
exploited features of this unregulated enterprise (see Figure 4.17). Even in these
tweets that attempt to expose the exploitative and problematic dynamics of transna-
tional surrogacy in India, the lived experiences of Indian surrogates remain invisible.
Any mention of Indian surrogates as exploited or “underpaid and uncared for” (dna
2013, see Figure 4.18) on Twitter comes to reflect Spivak’s (1993) warning that the
subaltern does not or cannot speak through narrative structures that predict her si-
lence or need her to be saved. With Twitter often framed as a seemingly boundless
space for ‘information’ to circulate, here too it becomes apparent that, working from
Derrida, “the question of the politics [and coloniality] of the archive is our permanent
orientation” (Derrida 1995, quoted in Arondekar 2009: 2). Clearly, then, the absence
of Indian women narrating their surrogacy experiences on Twitter is tied intimately
to ongoing colonial histories in which Indian women are seldom the focus of colo-
nial archives. Yet this does not mean that they are entirely absent. As Arondekar
(2009: 4) explains, “to read [the archive] without a trace, following Spivak, is not
a mandate against archival work, but rather a call to interrogate, without paralysis,
to challenge, without ending the promise of the future.” Thus, even in the glowing
reports on Twitter of white Western surrogates who have given the “gift of life” (see
Figure 4.19), Indian surrogates can still be seen to mark Twitter as a colonial space.
Here, Indian subaltern surrogates haunt colonial networks online, despite the fact
that on Twitter they do not “speak” about their embodied experiences as colonial
subjects of transnational surrogacy.
Figure 4.17: Producing babies to order?

Figure 4.18: Transnational surrogacy as commodified ‘motherhood’?
Archival work of popular materials surrounding surrogacy debates, such as those derived from Twitter, often involves measuring the silences that exist around Indian surrogates’ embodied experiences. As Jenny Sharpe (2003: 123) explains with respect to the complexities of the silences that structure slave narratives,

Toni Morrison reminds us that it is equally a record of what must be forgotten about slavery as it is of what must be remembered: “In shaping the experience to make it palatable to those who were in a position to alleviate it, they [slaves] were silent about many things, and they ‘forgot’ many other things.” She places the word “forgot” in quotation marks to emphasize how it was an active forgetting or self-imposed silence.

Sharpe recognizes the complexities of seeking to “recover” the black slave’s voice. Sharpe (2003: 126-127) unpacks this further, reflecting on

how an articulation of moral agency in the slave narrative screens those aspects of black women’s culture that were in response (but not reducible)
to the conditions of slavery. In drawing attention to the political demands of the antislavery movement that shaped Prince’s narrative, I do not mean to suggest that she was merely an instrument of the abolitionists or that fugitive slaves were unable to disrupt the conventions of the genre. Nor do I negate her use of the testimony as a powerful tool for gaining a voice in a society in which black people were marginalized. Rather, I focus on the narrative restraints placed upon the slave woman who told her story in order to disclose the academic recovery of a black female voice.

Similarly, Spivak (1993) warns of the difficulties of attempting to “recover” a unified subaltern voice. Yet there exists the potential to read these measurable silences as hauntings, and, by extension, this complicates the notion of the “interruption” of colonial narratives. This is not to suggest that the subaltern surrogate effectively “speaks” on Twitter, but interruptions can be read to exist in many forms.

![Figure 4.20: Sama Study: Birthing A Market.](image)

From the silences, there are moments in which the interruptions to colonial narratives on Twitter become more knowable (see Figure 4.20). This can be seen in the 2012 study done by the New Delhi-based NGO, Sama, on surrogacy in India,
mentioned in Chapter 3. Although this study did not achieve great note on Twitter, by “reading [the archive] without a [significant] trace” (Arondekar 2009: 3) this study found its way into my research. Incorporating responses from surrogates on their experiences navigating through their employment as surrogates, the Sama study *Birthing a Market: A Study on Commercial Surrogacy* contributes to the still underdeveloped scholarship on Indian surrogates’ narratives. Importantly, as Spivak warns, the narratives of Indian surrogates in this study, as well as other similar scholarship, are still mediated through legitimized political structures and discourses. Thus, as Spivak (1993: 70) considers, two understandings of representation are being brought together:

> Representation as “speaking for,” as in politics, and representation as “re-representation,” as in art or philosophy. Since theory is also only “action,” the theoretician does not represent (speak for) the oppressed group. Indeed, the subject is not seen as a representative consciousness (one re-presenting reality adequately). These two senses of representation—within state formation and the law, on the one hand, and in subject-predication, on the other—are related but irreducible discontinuous… *Because* “the person who speaks and acts…is always a multiplicity,” no “theorizing intellectual…[or] party or…union” can represent “those who act and struggle” (FD 206). Are those who act and *struggle* mute, as opposed to those who act and *speak* (FD 206)?

While I am not offering an answer to these complex questions, ruminating on these problems means grappling with what constitutes as an “interruption” to colonial narratives. In asking, “Do the tweets about the Sama study constitute an ‘interruption’ to the pervasive colonial narratives on Twitter?” I must consider whether the narratives of Indian surrogates in this study can be heard even if the subaltern still does not “speak.” This question is ongoing for me and for this project: in seeking out the “interruptions” to these colonial tropes and in recognizing the heterogeneity and
multiplicity of Indian surrogates’ experiences, we may attempt to break through what Spivak (1993: 613) calls the “skeletal and ignorant account(s)” that we see currently on Twitter (see Figure 4.21).

Figure 4.21: “Skeletal and ignorant accounts” (Spivak 1993: 613).

The lived realities of surrogacy in India and the colonial narratives present on Twitter both serve to demonstrate how racialized women become associated with and used for their productive and reproductive capacities. As Spivak (1993: 102) aptly describes, “between patriarchy and imperialism, subject-constitution and object-formation, the figure of the woman disappears, not into a pristine nothingness, but into a violent shuttling which is the displaced figuration of the ‘third-world woman’ caught between tradition and modernization.” Considering these relations to power in and through Twitter and within in this unpacking of Twitter in its form as connected to the realm of colonial archiving, Stoler (2002b: 107) observes that
to understand an archive one needs to understand the institutions that it served. What subjects are cross-referenced, what parts are re-written, what quotations are cited, not only tell us about how decisions are rendered, but how colonial histories are written and re-made. Information out of place underscores what categories matter, which ones become common sense and then fall out of favour. Not least they provide road maps to anxieties that evade more articulate form.

Thus, viewing Twitter as intertwined with colonial networks of contemporary transnational surrogacy allows for an understanding of the deployment of technologies of race in controlling the information, conversations and silences as well as the movements and activities of the contracted surrogates, all for the alleged benefit of white consumers. The material conditions that encourage women in India, as well as those elsewhere around the globe, to seek womb work suggests that it is framed as an attractive form of employment that also further ties these women’s bodies to modes of control and surveillance. Through transnational surrogacy networks, the raced body of the surrogate is ultimately read as a text that marks her liminality, both socially and legally.
Chapter 5

Conclusion

Faced with the dialectically interlocking sentences that are constructible as ‘White men are saving brown women from brown men’ and ‘The women wanted to die’, the postcolonial woman intellectual asks the question of simple semiosis—What does this mean?—and being to plot a history.


This thesis has set out to demonstrate the ways in which contemporary assisted reproductive practices and technologies are structured by persistent colonial power relations and by colonial narratives of race, gender, class and sexuality. I have aimed to inspire different narratives that recognize the complexities and multiplicities of modernity and colonialism, by working against what Paul Gilroy calls “the closure of categories” and towards “inescapable hybridity and intermixture” (Gilroy 1993, quoted in Eisenstein 2004: 46). In asking, as Spivak (1993: 93) encourages, “what does this mean?” I have considered the ways in which reading the historical colonial ‘past’ lends itself to contemplating the contemporary colonial ‘present’. Gendered and racialized archives of the sexual and reproductive economies of concubinage in
colonial India, ruminations on agency, resistance and (un)freedom, and discourses of transnational surrogacy on Twitter have become evidence of the assemblages of modernity, as particular bodies, in this case, Indian women’s bodies, come to be tied to the technologies of race in the most ‘intimate’ of ways and reflect that to be a ‘modern’ subject is to be a colonial subject.

This project engaged with critical scholarship that challenges the legacies of violence that exist in and through the histories of racism, sexism, colonialism and global capitalism. Moreover, considering transnational surrogacy in India involved thoughtful attention to the ways in which racialized and gendered colonized subjects are deeply affected, in and through their material and psychic beings, by the legacies of colonialism. In resisting a simplified narrative of transnational surrogacy experiences, this project exists in the messiness, seeking moments of interruptions to persistent colonial narratives, while acknowledging the complexities and struggles in seeking out both subaltern narratives and haunting silences.

Given the intentionally world-traveling and exponential growth of the Twitter archive, my account of this platform with respect to transnational surrogacy in India is by no means complete, nor did I intend it to be. Rather, tracing the colonial legacies undergirding contemporary adjudications of possible life permitted me to situate that portion of this project that addressed the shifting coloniality of Twitter in a way that challenges modernist conceptualizations of time, space and communications. Indeed, since I collected the Twitter data at the end of August 2014, surrogacy-related debates have shifted and altered their focus, yet they remain intertwined with “past” trends. For example, the baby Gammy case, in which an Australian couple abandoned...
a child, who was diagnosed with Down’s Syndrome, born through a gestational surrogacy arrangement in Thailand (see footnote 6 in Chapter 4 for details). The baby Gammy case not only sparked Thailand’s subsequent “shutdown” of its tenuously legal transnational surrogacy industry but the case also exploded over Twitter as #babygammy trending has been throughout the fall of 2014. The publicity and significance of this case has had lasting and expanding effects, including Thai authorities bringing criminal charges against people involved in commercial surrogacy transactions, most predominately it is the Thai surrogates who face charges, but also some Thai doctors; immigration and visa difficulties for commissioning parents entering and then attempting to leave Thailand with their commissioned child; and more broadly, growing international concerns surrounding the legality and regulation of international commercial surrogacy markets worldwide. Since then, another Australian commissioning couple, this time in India, has abandoned a child they had commissioned through an Indian surrogacy agency (see Figure 5.1). As a result, not only has India banned Australian clients from utilizing their commercial surrogacy services (see Figure 5.2 and Figure 5.3), but also the ART bill meant to develop clearer regulations of all commercial assisted reproductive technologies and services, domestic and international is set for renewed debate in the Indian Parliament during the winter 2015 session, after having been tabled since 2010 (see Figure 5.4).
Figure 5.1: “Indian surrogacy saga: Australian couple abandons baby in India” (The Project 2014).
Figure 5.2: Australians banned from Indian surrogacy services.

Figure 5.3: “National inquiry into commercial #surrogacy” (BioNews 2014).
Amidst these rapidly-evolving political, economic, and social circumstances, I sought in this thesis to demonstrate the potential of Twitter as an investigatory and conceptual platform for transnational, intersectional debates. In this way, my work intentionally extends beyond much of the scholarship surrounding surrogacy that was referenced throughout this thesis. Indebted as my work is to the critical conversations by surrogacy scholars, such as Alison Bailey, Sayantani DasGupta, Shamita Das Dasgupta, Amrita Pande and Preeti Nayak, I considered how a historical lens
situated within the colonial continuities of transnational surrogacy in India and of European colonial modernity may push conceptual discussions surrounding twenty-first century transnational surrogacy. Furthermore, my consideration of histories of colonialism, transatlantic slavery and the processes of modernity foregrounded challenging conceptual conversations regarding agency, resistance and (un)freedom that I hope may productively inform scholarship on contemporary transnational surrogacy. As McKittrick acknowledges about Sylvia Wynter’s scholarship, I too seek to recognize her innumerable contributions to these lines of thought:

she not only advances a way to reconceptualise black women’s geographies, she also insists that creatively communicating this reconceptualization formulates geographic options in a way that is more humanly workable; she makes us think hard about what we imagine, what we want to imagine, and what we can imagine for human geographies. It is, then, new forms of life, imagining, expressing, and living geography that puts demands on spatial arrangements, that contest, respatialize, and inhabit the uninhabitable. If “there is no end/to what a living world/will demand of you,” (Butler 1993: 137, quoted in McKittrick 2006: 141) how are we living this present world? If our expressive demands can demonstrate a new worldview, in what ways can ethical human geographies, or interhuman geographies, be mapped? (McKittrick 2006: 141)

The conceptual framework that I have presented throughout this thesis encompasses my thinking around, and subsequent mapping of, transnational surrogacy practices as situated within the historical continuities stemming from South Asian colonialism. Furthermore, the historical continuities that see the modern subject as a colonial subject become knowable when critically reading historical accounts. To do this, Arondekar (2009: 178) states, “we must know and not know the colonial record, not once, but twice. Such a reading radicalizes our understanding of the historical turn by recording the ‘cognitive failure’ at the heart of both our past and present readily
attempts and by making the distinction between success and failure indeterminate. To archive such an account is to record a different history” of the colonial, racialized and gendered framings of intimacy, surrogacy and transnationalism.

In the twenty-first century, gestational surrogacy has become an issue of much feminist debate. However, more limited discussions address the colonial intersections that have come to frame, in particular, contemporary transnational surrogacy practices. As Amrita Pande (2014c: 170) aptly notes

surrogacy in India is undoubtedly one of the clearest manifestations of stratified reproduction, where the fertility, bodies, and reproductive decisions of lower-class women become more valuable only insofar as these women serve as human incubators for their richer sisters. But classifying commercial surrogacy as stratified reproduction is too benign—as if the stratification happens by mere accident. Stratified reproduction in India, with surrogacy being one of its manifestations, is a result of conscious state priorities and an inevitable consequence of the present global division of both productive and reproductive labor.

Furthermore, expanding from Pande’s quotation, stratified reproduction in India exists as part of a longer history of colonial practices and policies that have not only seen the development of sexual, reproductive and domestic economies India but through this various forms productive and reproductive labor extraction from the “Indian colony.” Thus, in seeking to consider the ways in which reproductive technologies continue to be used and refined for colonial aims, my endeavor has been to demonstrate how the on-going histories of those read as ‘post-colonial’ subjects exist as connected pathways that cross linear notions of time, space and place. Furthermore, in bringing together a variety of texts, these too, become part of the conditions that constitute all of us as ‘post-colonial’ subjects within modernity (Sharpe 2010). Through these texts it has become apparent although experienced and expressed differently that
the negotiations and resistance of gendered and racialized subjects does not exist as the binary Other to the broader histories, systems and structures of oppression, but that acts constituted as resistance, agency, and/or subversive occur as complex negotiations that make up the lived realities of racialized and gendered subjects in contexts of limited and/or constrained agency. Thus, to culminate this thesis with an investigation of Twitter, where race is often “debugged” or goes underexamined, is to necessarily position the interlocking workings of racial violence, technology and motherhood as processes of modernity and Western colonialism online, interrupting and challenging the coloniality of Twitter. Here, Twitter is exposed both as a signifier for the trans-locational geographies of colonialism and the enduring violence, but I also necessarily confront the layerings of technologies of the (raced) body as they exist in and through the processes of modernity. Through this, Indian surrogates, who are quite literally impregnated with the (primarily white) children of colonialism, and their narrative interventions that have existed in conversation throughout this text ‘speak’ back to the colonial networks that make up twenty-first century transnational surrogacy.


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