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## Life Support

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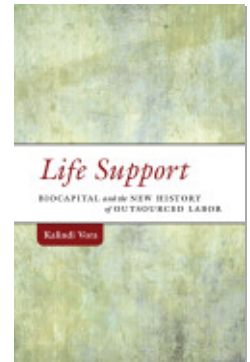
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## Limits of Labor

### *Affect and the Biological in Transnational Surrogacy and Service Work*

This chapter traces a colonial history of biological and affective labor to provide the necessary foundation for understanding how exploitation operates in Indian transnational contexts like call centers and commercial surrogacy. In conversation with feminist critiques of labor, the imperial legacies at work in transnational Indian labor suggest a new lineage for the study of the effects of racialization and gendering in emerging sites of affective and biological labor. Contemporary forms of work that blur the line between the subject and the work performed, like that found in Indian call centers and surrogacy, but also in sites such as clinical trial participation and the sale of human organs, engage longer imperial legacies of liberal capitalism and trouble the adequacy of labor itself as a framework of analysis.<sup>1</sup>

In both call centers and commercial surrogacy, the distinction between the subject and the work she performs is complicated by the nature of the work itself, the specific technologies of distance communication and assisted reproduction, and their relationship to the embodied subject. Some of the types of work performed by call center agents and surrogates are indexes of new forms of exploitation and accumulation within neoliberal globalization, but they also rearticulate a historical and colonial division of labor. Feminist materialist analyses of the historical differentiation of productive and reproductive labor are an invaluable resource for demarcating the limits of both liberal and Marxist notions of labor, value, and political subjectivity. Yet even as these feminist materialists point to the unwaged, unrecognized reproductive, or even

“maternal,” labors of service, care, and nurture, their analyses do not directly articulate with the exploitation of gendered labor as part of a system that depends on these degraded feminized labors as part of governing through reduction and extension of life, even as it uses them up. To this end, critiques of the racialized nature of domesticity and free labor advanced by feminists based in the Global South, black feminists, and U.S. women-of-color feminists contribute to another history of the dependence of capitalism on both reproduction and the exhaustion of life past the possibility of its reproduction. While arguing that the category of reproductive labor makes visible a type of productivity that is essential yet unseen, this scholarship also provides the grounds to continue to scrutinize which kinds of exchange and subjectivity can even be represented by categories of labor. Such analyses thus lead us to ask what specific stakes are involved in asserting that gestational surrogates, call center agents, and others whose productivity occurs primarily through biological and affective processes are subjects of capitalist labor power.

The affective and biological exploitation and accumulation represented together in call centers and commercial surrogacy depend as much on contemporary technologies that disaggregate and commodify discrete acts as they do on the longer colonial political economy within which human “life” (as free, autonomous, self-willing, and biologically healthy) has been supported in the Global North by the labor and resources of the South. Rereading the undertheorized side of the dual nature of reproductive labor together with contemporary feminist scholarship concerned with race and imperialism is important for understanding the co-constitution of the sexual organization of the heteropatriarchal family and the work of gendered labor to both humanize workers for continued production and provide a source of unmarked accumulation in itself. Structures of race and gender continue to disguise the transmission of vital energy, that is, the value imparted by labor and more, between bodies and communities. In addition to creating value recognizable through exchange, the duality of this labor helps characterize India’s continuing racialized role as a primary provider in the gendered global service economy even as elite levels of Indian society economically outpace nonelites in the United States and Europe.

## LEGACIES OF IMPERIAL LABOR

Humanism as a liberal philosophy of the subject, organized through a distinction of freedom from conditions of unfreedom, was co-constituted by the formation of colonial racial categorizations and an international division of labor as they arose together following the abolition of the slave trade within the British Empire in 1807. Lowe explains that “the social inequalities of our time are a legacy of this [liberal] definition of ‘the human’ and subsequent discourses that have placed particular subjects, practices, and geographies at a distance from ‘the human.’”<sup>2</sup> The distinction between enslaved and free labor that became a concern as part of the abolitionist movement functioned to generate a category of mobile workers that complemented an imperial labor reallocation strategy connecting imperial subjects all over the world as “labor” while elaborating their hierarchical relationship and separation through emerging categories of race and gender attached to their labor. In turn, the nature of freedom and free labor became invested with assumptions about gender, race, and class, as these were also embroiled in the instrumental distinction between free labor and slavery that justified the practice of indenture.<sup>3</sup> This instrumentality wrote over the coercive nature of indenture because it was described as contractual by mutual consent and understanding, even in the face of evidence of the lack of understanding or choice on the part of those signing themselves into indenture. Women were recruited under the same contractual conditions not as free labor but rather for the purpose of providing the reproductive labor that made male workers viable, a practice and problem Madhavi Kale says is embedded in the material origins of the category of free labor as an instrument in imperial labor reallocation. This reallocation was in effect the superimposition of a constructed dichotomy of slavery and free labor on the proliferation of less-than-free labor and conditions as part of empire building, whereby “the post-abolitionist fiction of equal status and equal protection for all imperial subjects regardless of race or nation could be maintained by erasing women as political agents”<sup>4</sup>—what Lowe calls a “modern racial governmentality.”<sup>5</sup>

Like the fiction of noncoercion underpinning Indian indenture, in the larger colonial context of the British Empire, a number of gendered, sexual, and reproductive relations existed under the umbrella of “consensual” that

did not even figure as labor.<sup>6</sup> In her study of the recruitment and resettlement of bonded or indentured laborers from India to the Caribbean, Kale argues that empire was the invisible pretext for the constitution of labor as an identity and ultimately as a category of analysis in historiography.<sup>7</sup> Abstract notions of “consent,” “freedom,” “choice,” and “contract” have been produced and unequally distributed by modern liberalism and have been affirmed selectively for some through the disavowal of colonized and enslaved labor.<sup>8</sup> The category of labor continues to function to write over contemporary conditions of force under other names.<sup>9</sup>

These histories, together with the history of the category of free labor itself, mandate attention be paid not only to the particular nature of the work being performed under contract in emerging affective and biological production but also to the particular forms of dependency in operation, because contractual arrangements may contain incomplete or absent information. Consent and, therefore, autonomy are incomplete despite being arranged through a freely entered agreement. For example, the contemporary status of women who take up gestational surrogacy is constructed through Indian law, particularly through legal relations that accord little power to the surrogate. The draft Assisted Reproductive Technologies Bill (2012) currently under consideration by India’s parliament is largely a free-market-promoting document that provides only basic protections to surrogates as underresourced Indian citizens. Unless and until it is finalized as law, the practice of commercial surrogacy is subject only to national guidelines that are not enforceable. The status of women once they enter into a surrogacy agreement is also defined through the translation of human gestation into paid labor; they may receive trimesterly stipends as they proceed through pregnancy, and after delivering the infant, they receive their fees. This means that once they become pregnant, they must complete the pregnancy to receive payment, and as it stands in the draft bill, the surrogate would not have a say in decisions about embryo reduction or abortion. There is currently no legal guarantee of medical treatment for complications arising after the delivery, and there is no formal procedure to follow should anything untoward happen to the woman while pregnant. Her legal status as a particular kind of worker whose body has been engaged

through a contract to perform self-care and nurture with the aim of a healthy pregnancy and delivery does not account for the frequent separation enforced between surrogates and their nuclear and extended families and communities in the interest of the clinic and commissioning parents, nor does it account for any effects of her own separation from the child she bears. There is no socially recognizable or defensible relationship between the surrogate's social world and that of the infant she carries other than the contract, even in the proposed legislation. This separation is figured as natural and commonsensical within the discourses of biological parenthood and property, where intention and gametes on the part of commissioning parents give them ownership of the embryo, fetus, and infant, and as such is endorsed by the clinic. The surrogate has no claim on the developing fetus and is in fact positioned in the current guidelines and proposed legislation as a potential threat to it. Current contracts may also forbid the surrogate from engaging in sexual intercourse with her husband and may effectively mandate residence in surrogate hostels to facilitate surveillance.

These conditions engage an imperial history of instrumentalizing consent, freedom and choice, alienation, and sexual and reproductive relations invisible as labor, so that subjects disappear from the identity category of labor through their gendering. Though all biological life represents a site of speculation and potential biological production and accumulation, the legacies of imperialism continue to affect the hyperavailability of racialized and gendered bodies.<sup>10</sup> The concerns raised by the legacies of colonial labor in India also come to bear on the social alienation and constraint of choice among workers in the call center industry and other forms of gendered industrial labor, as these value-producing activities straddle the line of visible and invisible labor, autonomy, and coercion, while engaging interior levels of the subject, self, and personality in their performance.

#### FEMINIST CRITIQUES OF THE LIMITS OF LABOR

Understanding how the production of immediate life through affect and biology on one side of the world can serve to support life elsewhere is aided by an examination of feminist critiques of the type of labor that is often referred to

in Marxist theory as “reproductive.” Marx’s formulation from the first volume of *Capital* defines reproductive labor against productive labor. If productive labor is understood as the investment of (socially averaged) labor time into an object for exchange, then reproductive labor is the energy put into making sure the person doing productive labor was able to return to work each day. It re-creates or replenishes the labor power of the person who works outside the home in the public sphere by providing support to the biological reproduction of the worker’s body and strength as well as a replacement worker in the form of child rearing. In the form of care, love, and nurture, it also reassures the worker of his humanity, allowing him to continue to participate in his own commodification as labor.

Contemporary materialist feminists and women-of-color feminists have critiqued the limits of our understanding of labor on the basis of different historical examples of gendered labor. Materialist feminists extended the understanding of reproductive labor by redefining it as productive in itself, as producing immediate life and not just supporting the masculine worker who earned the means to immediate subsistence.<sup>11</sup> Women-of-color critiques of Marxist feminism have noted the limits of the capacity of labor to fully encompass the accumulation made possible through racialized and gendered dispossession. As a result of this history of the feminization and racialization of work that reproduces life, work that often involves a service rather than a physical object as its commodity, service and care also remain undervalued in public labor markets. Service, care, and attention work are considered unskilled because they originated in a gendered division of labor that did not require the identification of skills to secure a contract, as this was covered in contracts of marriage and servitude.<sup>12</sup> At the same time, a growing percentage of jobs, particularly those performed by people marginalized in a given society or within the international division of labor, are these very jobs of care and service, and they are being taken up primarily by minority and Global South women workers.

Affective and biological labors differ in kind from the productive labor that Marx presumes and analyzes in volume 1 of *Capital*; that is, the labor of the worker who weaves linen or sews a coat meant for exchange is different than that of the call center worker or the surrogate, in that the latter workers engage

in both productive *and* reproductive labors. Activities of service, care, and nurture engage the biological use of their bodies and lives as well as labor, and the requirements of such work intrude on the laboring subject in ways that radically compromise any sense of “autonomy” or “separation of spheres” presumed by both liberal and Marxist discussions of workers within Western societies. Biotechnology together with globalization (and its colonial past) is the condition that makes the selling or renting of one’s biological function and parts possible, a process that is qualitatively different than the commodification of the labor that the biological body performs.

Both commercial surrogacy and call center work produce recognizable commodities in exchange for a monetary sum (stipend/fee and wage, respectively). They also produce a number of other use values, including feelings or affects, forms of sociality and humanity, and the valorization of those forms among their consumers. Occurring in the domestic–nonpublic realm and producing commodities that do not line up with a physical model, elements of domestic work have often not been visible as productive or even as labor to mainstream political economic labor analysis, nor to liberal philosophies of labor, which privilege an autonomous individual as the subject of capitalist labor. As a result, domestic work and reproductive work in general, as well as the subject who performs it, get represented, at least in part, as nonvalue.<sup>13</sup> To address this problem, Fortunati has identified a dual nature within capital’s appropriation of labor power, a dualism that is within labor power itself. Reproductive work, a category in which domestic work is a large component, has a dual nature under capitalism because it represents itself and its subject-bearer as nonvalue, yet it simultaneously functions to siphon the value it produces into capital through the ability of the “productive” worker to return to work each day.<sup>14</sup> Fortunati’s understanding of reproduction as inherent but unmarked in the value of labor power is a very different approach to that of earlier feminist models of domestic work as either productive labor deserving of a wage or reproductive labor coerced by patriarchy. Approaching affective labor in this way allows us to see its essential role of compensating and rehumanizing the worker as more than a commodity, “creating the illusion that he is an individual with unique characteristics and a real personality.”<sup>15</sup>



The draining of vital energy in service of the rehumanization of the worker within the economy of the household becomes visible as a relationship across divides of class, race, and nationality once the domestic sphere as a privileged space is problematized. For example, Angela Davis critiques the Marxist feminist focus on housework as invisible labor supporting capitalism, arguing that the destruction of the family unit and its domestic roles has also been essential to capitalist growth.<sup>16</sup> The abolition of the international slave trade created dependence among slave owners and the slave-based economy on women's reproduction to increase the domestic population of slaves,<sup>17</sup> and the separation of women unrecognized as mothers and their infants was a regular practice.<sup>18</sup> Grace Hong also marks how dispossession of property has been as important as property ownership in maintaining the bearing of rights and property as sequestered for white middle-class enjoyment in the United States, or "differential access to property rights."<sup>19</sup> The system of property and chattel-dom separated women slaves from notions of gendered propriety and occupation tied to women's roles as housewives and mothers developing at that time.

Commercial surrogacy, because of its social location in mothering labor and the cultural economic weight of the household-family economic unit that comes with that location, together with its imbrication with the bodies of producer and consumer, complicates the surrogate as a capitalist worker-subject. The feminist theories briefly engaged here explain ways that the subject of labor power relies on a host of supports that originate in the vital energy of others, supports that do not appear to be labor or behave like it. The historical structure of the Protestant heteropatriarchal household with its wife, children, and servants has played a role in this process, as have colonization, indenture, and slavery—obscuring subjects of value-producing labor in support of the subject predicated by labor power in the capitalist market. Janet Jakobsen argues that "the autonomous individual is not just any particular human being but a particular way to understand and inhabit human being—a subjectivity in which the individual understands himself to be free when he acts without the assistance of others,"<sup>20</sup> an understanding of autonomy that obscures the support labor of those on whom this autonomy depends. For this reason, Jakobsen argues that sexual relations within the Protestant heteropatriarchal

family are relations of production that produce both the autonomous individual and this particular variety of human subject.<sup>21</sup> Indian gestational surrogacy falls into this sexual mode of production as the privatized labor of reproduction and childbirth. It is also crucial to note that when surrogates insist that their role exceeds that of gestational carrier, they are challenging the individuality, freedom, and private quality of this mode of production<sup>22</sup> as well as revealing the work that goes into supporting it through contracts, legislation, and assumed norms of sociality and kinship.

Housewifization, colonization, dispossession through the gendered and racialized right to property, and the global elaboration of these and other legacies in “flexibilization” are part of the history that leads to the present-day understanding of commercial surrogacy.<sup>23</sup> Bringing gendered labor, with its ties to property and patriarchy, under the umbrella of labor remains the most effective way to gain protections for a variety of subjects. For example, feminists in India have historically conducted efforts and continue to push the government toward a future that opens up opportunities for women with regard to reproductive technologies and equality of representation and access to rights over property, progeny, labor, and their own bodies.<sup>24</sup> In this context, organizations like Sama: Resource Group for Women and Health in New Delhi, a national research and advocacy group, have introduced the issue of transnational surrogacy.<sup>25</sup> Amrita Pande suggests that, despite the obstacles to surrogates’ realization of worker consciousness, the demand for labor protections and the model of labor organization are the most immediate and pressing needs and strategies of women working as surrogates.<sup>26</sup> The model of “ownership” of the body is an important step toward guaranteeing basic and necessary protections for women entering surrogacy agreements, but the problem of the devaluation of women’s bodies, particularly the maternal body, under patriarchal property-based systems where “the bodies are just the space in which the genetic material matures into babies” remains, and if the body is believed to contain the property of someone else, owning her body is not enough to ensure the maternal subject’s civil liberties.<sup>27</sup>

The woman acting as a gestational surrogate, much like the colonized laborer, the housewife, and the worker outside of labor protections, is partially

a subject of labor who is “free” to sell labor to buyers but is also occluded as a subject in the service of what Mies, Fortunati, Hong, and others have identified as ongoing primitive accumulation. Lacking definition as true income-generating activities because of their gendering, intentional actions that transmit life-supporting energy and the reaffirmation of humanness can create value through commodities but also directly support life in other bodies, communities, and locations. Technology has played an important role in separating the pregnant body as a productive machine from the subject, freeing the work of gestation and nurture to circulate as a commodity. However, examination of the history of slavery and indenture in India itself and as part of British colonial labor allocation in the colonies adds an additional and important layer for considering the content of labor that is understood to be produced by a free, liberal subject, a tension that complements the analysis of the dual nature of reproductive labor, where part of what is produced necessarily remains outside the reach of recognizing the subject of such work as a subject of labor.

#### VITAL ENERGY ACCUMULATION FROM CALL CENTERS TO SURROGACY

Bharati, a college graduate in urban India, represents the typical call center agent in New Delhi. After being hired, she was trained to neutralize her accent, given a new moniker more user-friendly and culturally familiar for the consumer, and exposed to the popular culture and idioms of the U.S. location she would be calling. After the initial excitement of her first professional job wore off, she began to feel the toll of her nighttime work schedule and found herself increasingly disconnected from her daytime social world, family, and friends.<sup>28</sup> She quit her job, but having gone directly into a call center after college, she soon found that her only job skills, including a neutral accent and her knowledge of U.S. geography, work processes, and people, were of no use to any other industry. Within six months, she joined another call center.<sup>29</sup>

Sujata-ben, a lower-middle-class homemaker from a small town in northern India, shares much in common with other women who, like her, have been or are in the process of becoming a gestational surrogate for a foreign family.

She signed a contract with a medical center to become a gestational carrier for a couple in the United States with fertility concerns. After going through the medical process of hormone administration and embryo transplantation to become impregnated, she moved to a hostel for gestational carriers in northern India. In comparing her two prior pregnancies with her own children to her pregnancy as a surrogate, she remarked on the regular medical care she was receiving and the much higher level of care and attention she paid to herself as a surrogate. She had been employed as a maid for the better part of both of her previous pregnancies, whereas as a surrogate, she lived apart from her husband, children, and family duties and spent her days passing the time with other women who shared her condition, alternating between affects of boredom and camaraderie, depending on the context. Like other surrogates, she had signed a contract that she would not receive any money other than a maintenance stipend if she did not successfully complete her pregnancy.<sup>30</sup>

The preceding vignette about Bharati is taken from the portrait of a composite call center agent produced by sociologist A. Aneesh from interviews conducted in the New Delhi industrial suburb of Gurgaon.<sup>31</sup> The story of Bharati's necessary alienation from social relations and her social world, resulting from the temporal and cultural isolation of call center work from other industries and work schedules, combined with her access to a job only through the work of affect that reproduces an alternate version of herself, engages the concerns of feminist analyses of labor. It also raises questions about the specific content of the call center agent's labor, which includes supporting a projected persona who occupies an alien world that the agent must learn and then inhabit through fantasy. Agents also do the work of managing the emotional reactions, expectations, and communication between depersonalized entities, such as brands or corporations, and individual people, reassuring them of their worth and existence as human beings. The blurring of the line between the subject and the work performed lends call center work to analysis as reproductive and gendered labor, which is distinguished by tasks and contexts in which it is difficult to discern the line between the body and subject of the worker and the work performed. Such tasks and work contexts point to the complexities of assuming autonomy when work involves affective and biological participation

and alienation and gesture toward the vast range of activities that fall into the “production of immediate life” that Maria Mies forefronts as the necessary core concept of a feminist theory of labor.<sup>32</sup>

The second vignette, excerpted from ethnographic observation and interviews conducted in 2008, takes place at a residence hostel in a small city in the Indian province of Gujarat, where women in different stages of pregnancy and postdelivery as contracted gestational surrogates live for nine months to a year while working with Manushi fertility clinic.<sup>33</sup> The context of surrogacy varies from clinic to clinic in India, as there are only elective national guidelines for commercial assisted reproductive technology practice, but most clinics mandate or heavily encourage surrogates to live in designated hostels. Many, including Manushi, only accept married women who have borne at least one child to prove the viability of their uteruses and to work against their possible attachment to the fetus or infant. The latter requirement has also been written into draft legislation.<sup>34</sup> Sujata-ben’s narrative describes self-care, concern, caution, and attention, which exemplify some of the affective labor and commodities produced by a surrogate while pregnant. These and the breastfeeding and nurturing of the newborn she may be asked to provide generate health and therefore yield future life opportunities for both the infant and its parents.

The call center agent’s performance of affective labor blurs the line between the subject and the work performed. An important part of becoming a call center agent, where practical training occurs after hiring but before paid work begins, is the acquisition of fluency in the foreign culture he or she is calling, so that an agent may react appropriately and credibly to customers in their own cultural context. For example, agents must acquire the habit of showing culturally authentic emotions on the phone, such as performing empathy for a customer who relates a misfortune or keeping a smile on his or her face during the conversation. These efforts translate into the production of value for the call center’s employers in the form of increased customer trust and loyalty to the company or brand. In addition to the affective work of producing their caller personas, the time difference between India and North America means that call center agents are required to do the daily work of managing

the friction created by waking up late in the afternoon when others are winding down their days and missing social engagements, religious rituals, and the other everyday interactions that constitute sociality.

Gestational surrogacy as a paid service also complicates the line between the subject and work performed and links the historical complexity of women's reproductivity *as* labor to imperial labor practices that relied on control of working and living conditions to realize profitability. As a paid service, commercial surrogacy is imagined in the context of the clinic as the contractual usage of a woman's otherwise unused uterus as a space in which to gestate a fetus that is understood as someone else's property and progeny. On one hand, surrogacy is a contracted agreement of payment for the gestation of a fetus created through in vitro fertilization and the delivery of an infant. However, the custodianship and intentional continued gestation of the fetus lend themselves in practice and in proposed legislation to the need to protect consumers by mandating that a woman submit herself to technologies and routine surveillance that is meant to protect the well-being of the fetus, sometimes more than that of the surrogate herself. The surrogacy fee, which is highly attractive for surrogates but much lower than what commissioning parents would pay in their home countries, reflects a "lower cost of living" in their different spheres of life. The fee is also attractive to India's urban "transnational capitalist class,"<sup>35</sup> who share a similar earning differential with surrogates. Surrogates describe the unparalleled earning opportunity surrogacy represents as providing a sum that could actually change their material circumstances. Owing to their lower incomes and access to resources, surrogates often do without many necessities that commissioning parents would not do without, including basic health insurance, medical privacy, reliable electricity, clean and reliable water, a permanent home or residence, the ability to seek and find another job when one is lost, access to a variety of foods or the ability to grow them (requiring land and water), and so on. This disparity of conditions and access to resources is not accurately reflected in the argument that Indian surrogates' fees are low because of the lower cost of living of the women who become surrogates. Transnational surrogates in India hired by distant commissioning parents provide an opportunity for commissioning couples to continue to live

at home, maintain their paid work, and build their careers in lieu of childbearing, even as surrogates themselves relocate and give up their other work to provide this opportunity.

As emerging case law in a number of countries permitting transnational commercial surrogacy has begun to illustrate, the social relations and understandings of kinship outside the medical and legal definitions of the surrogacy contract are not as simple as represented in the agreement of nine months of gestation and childbirth in exchange for a set fee. In fact, surrogates themselves insist on the continuing obligation and duty commissioning parents should feel toward them and their families beyond the terms and time limit of the contract, arguing that the act of giving a child to a wanting couple is incommensurable with any fee. Even in the face of evidence that commissioning parents rarely keep up correspondence or support of a woman and her family after the surrogacy contract has ended, many describe the expectation that this should be so, given the relative power and resources of commissioning parents and the nature of what surrogates have given them in bearing their children.<sup>36</sup> The call of such a duty or responsibility doesn't transmit between the surrogate and the commissioning parents because of the organizing rubrics of the liberal, individual subject and the contract-based relationship that describes the responsibility of each party in terms of fee and services rendered.<sup>37</sup> These expectations also point to a disagreement about the value of surrogacy as labor and about its content, which exceed what can be understood in terms of value and the autonomous, liberal individual subject.

The requisite adjustments to the mode of living and attention and care of the self that Bharati and Sujata-ben undertook to earn a living are indicative of vastly different yet parallel shifts in the conditions and valuation of new forms of labor. Whereas call centers are thought of in the United States as a sign of outsourcing and often as a mark of a shift in industrialized economies to post-modern, flexible production, commercial surrogacy is not often considered labor in the same way. However, for both call center work and gestational surrogacy, the category of labor becomes essential for making visible the types of value-transmitting activities that subjects undergo for the benefit of those who consume them.

Attending to these forms of labor also allows for the continued political project of tracking their accumulation and exploitation. What call center work and commercial surrogacy have in common is the labor of producing and transferring human vital energy directly to a consumer, through the work of affect and the intentional or dedicated use of bodily organs and subjective processes. The work of producing vital energy through biological and affective labor is distributed unequally at the level of international exchange, as are opportunities for its consumption. In performing this labor with its transnational transfer of value, racialized and gendered bodies or subjects become the bearers of colonial legacies and neoliberal restructurings that create an opportunity to expand as well as think outside of current ways of conceptualizing labor. Examining these new forms of labor also provides an opportunity to reevaluate the role of race and gender in relation to subjectivity and humanity, forms of ownership and property, and technology as part of capitalist expansion and territorialization.

The production of a persona as an instrument to communicate attention and service in call center work and the commercial surrogate's allocation of time, attention, and care to her body and well-being as an instrument in producing a child by contract evoke an image of the expanding commodification of subjects and humanity, and as such, it is useful to think about how they also complicate a strictly labor-based analysis of this production. The geopolitical and structural location of this production, occurring in India but accumulated by consumers in the Global North, including the middle and upper classes in hyperdeveloped spaces and the transnational capitalist class and growing middle class in India, also invites connection to questions of use-value, constraint, and autonomy raised by the history of imperial labor in India.

As Sujata-ben's story suggests, the way surrogates compare previous pregnancies to contracted pregnancy through surrogacy, specifically the different orientation to the process and to their bodies, raises the questions of what affective labor is invested into gestation and what resultant commodities are produced by the surrogate's self-care while pregnant. Many women are asked to provide two days of breast-feeding after delivery to give the infant immunity-building colostrum, but occasionally this period is extended for one or two



months for infants whose parents are delayed in their arrival. In addition to expanding the range of subject positions one can inhabit as “mother” and enabling one to perform mothering both as capitalist labor and as excessive to capitalist production, assisted reproductive technologies also create future opportunities for less-wealthy women to step into devalued care labor markets and for more wealthy women to outsource the work of childbearing and child rearing to expand their own ability to pursue full-time careers through their reproductive years, a process that, in the context of transnational adoption, Ann Anagnost calls “just-in-time” reproduction.<sup>38</sup>

Race and gender have historically operated and continue to operate to make some bodies more economically useful as biological entities than as the subjects of labor power. In the context of commercial gestational surrogacy in India, part of the work being done by the distinction between “gestational carrier” and “commissioning parent” in the clinical context is forming a separation between the physical aspects of human reproduction and the social–sexual–affective aspects. Much of the work of the clinic staff is invested in preventing the attachment of emotional meaning to relationships between surrogates and commissioning parents and between the surrogate and the fetus she carries. As a sign within the discourse of genetic essentialism, the gene distinguishes the provider of the service and reproductive space of gestation from the creative “author” of the child—the “biological parents.” Patriarchy—as assumed and affirmed through the state and supporting legal apparatuses, including paternity and property protections at the national level that are built into documents like the surrogacy contract itself—identifies the commissioning parents as the intentional authors of a future child protected as property, though necessarily under the custodianship of the gestational surrogate for the period of gestation.

Scientific knowledge and practices have played a role in erasing bodies from reproduction in surrogacy. For example, in the context of commercial surrogacy, genetic discourse dictates the property-bearing and contract-empowered status of the commissioning parents as the intentional, authorial producers of a child; the embryologist and ob-gyn form a technical team that performs the high-value work of engineering the surrogacy, leaving the surrogate positioned

as performing the passive, merely reproductive and nonauthorial work of gestation. How is a fetus produced? In vitro fertilization involves skills, knowledge, and instruments that require specialized training and education, as does the implantation of an embryo in concert with the administration of hormones to prepare a surrogate's body to become pregnant with the implanted embryo. After this, the surrogate continues the process through to its completion, and her body uses its complex biological and hormonal processes to bring the fetus to term, processes that are influenced by her activities during gestation (nutrition, stress level, exposure to mutagenic substances, physical activity, health or illness, among others). The way these activities are read as being labor or not, and as being specialized or not, is heavily influenced by the assumption that the end product is a form of contract-protected property belonging to the originators of intention and DNA. However, as one representative genetic biologist explains, "first, DNA is not self-reproducing, second, it makes nothing, and third, organisms are not determined by it."<sup>39</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The example of gestational surrogacy is an obvious illustration of how intimate expression, requiring the production of genuine feelings, can be completely alienated from the producer. The time surrogates spend away from their families and communities, which many surrogates describe as the most taxing element of their work, and away from the social and biological activities that produce their own immediate life and life world is invested in the lives of consumers and their environment in immediately observable ways. Bringing call centers together with commercial surrogacy in thinking about the promises and limits of labor as an analytical category suggests a new lineage for thinking about the production and circulation of vital energy represented in the categories of affective and biological labor. Naming the work of producing an alternate self, as well as attention and care, in customer service call centers, "affective labor" connects it not only to the work of surrogacy and service work in general but also to feminist critiques of the failure of labor analysis to account for nonpublic and interior processes that contribute to capitalist accumulation. At the same time, feminist critique has shown that

attention to the devaluing effects of race and gender must counterbalance any approach to analyzing the raced and gendered subject of labor, as these effects present serious obstacles to accounting for the nature of production and accumulation in emerging “service” economies represented by commercial gestational surrogacy. As the history of Indian labor under British imperialism indicates, not all labor is visible as such, and capitalist accumulation is served by exploitation of both proper subjects of labor and those who do not always appear as (liberal) subjects. To accurately follow value’s production and accumulation therefore requires attention to the nature of autonomy in a given production setting.