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Gender in a Global/Local World

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Gender in a Global/Local World critically explores the uneven and often contradictory ways in which global processes and local identities come together. Much has been and is being written about globalization and responses to it but rarely from a critical, historical, gendered perspective. Yet, these processes are profoundly gendered albeit in different ways in particular contexts and times. The changes in social, cultural, economic and political institutions and practices alter the conditions under which women and men make and remake their lives. New spaces have been created – economic, political, social – and previously silent voices are being heard. North-South dichotomies are being undermined as increasing numbers of people and communities are exposed to international processes through migration, travel, and communication, even as marginalization and poverty intensify for many in all parts of the world. The series features monographs and collections which explore the tensions in a 'global/local world', and includes contributions from all disciplines in recognition that no single approach can capture these complex processes.

Previous titles are listed at the back of the book

Body/State

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ASHGATE

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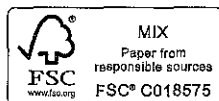
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Chapter 6

Money Bodies

Bill Maurer and Elham Miresghhi

What judgment shall I dread, doing no wrong?
You have among you many a purchased slave,
Which, like your asses and your dogs and mules,
You use in abject and in slavish parts,
Because you bought them: shall I say to you,
Let them be free, marry them to your heirs?
... You will answer
'The slaves are ours': so do I answer you:
The pound of flesh, which I demand of him,
Is dearly bought; 'tis mine and I will have it.
If you deny me, fie upon your law!

The Merchant of Venice, IV.i

Introduction

Outwitted by fair Portia, who challenges him to extract his pound of flesh without spilling one drop of blood, the blood not being explicitly named in the original contract, Shylock remains the literary figure in English most associated with the dense metaphorical and practical linkages between the human body and filthy lucre, and the repugnance – at least on the surface – of attempting to reduce all things, even human flesh, to money. And yet, Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice* is also a morally-motivated character, the one who recalls everyone's common humanity, Jew or Gentile. Portia's clever legal maneuver is, in contrast, an act of exclusion. Denying him blood, she refuses Shylock kinship with his Catholic compatriots who, presumably, all drink from the cup of the blood of Jesus Christ. It is as if the response to Shylock's famous question, 'If you prick us, do we not bleed?' is, from Portia, 'No. As you do not partake of the blood of our Savior, so you do not share in the blood of spiritual kinship, of our policy, of humankind itself.'

Shylock challenges the law's hypocrisy: do not express horror at my attempted extraction of a pound of flesh when you, Christian Venetians, keep slaves as you keep chattel and dogs. In joining human slavery and animal bondage Shylock echoes the etymology of capital – money that reproduces, which so horrified Aristotle because it is contrary to nature for inanimate objects to become fecund like the beasts. The word 'capital' derives from heads of cattle, livestock serving

as measure of wealth, store of value and medium of exchange for ancient and contemporary pastoralists. And while the equation of human bodies with money, the putting of a price on human beings, may remain abhorrent to us today, we live in a world where health insurance companies receive payments based on 'capitation' formulas, measuring out human life and receiving compensation for care 'by the head.' We should not begrudge poor Shylock when monetary calculations of human life and its constituent parts are as commonplace as cash and coin.

Death

Shylock helps us better to see two intertwined histories linking money and body, and the connections between money, bodies, and states. We can think, first, of actual brokers in bodies: from slave economies to the trade in body parts, the body has functioned and continues to carry value as currency. Kevin Bales, author of *Modern Slavery*, estimates there are 27 million enslaved people in the world today (Bales, Trodd and Williamson 2009). Prices for slaves range from US\$40–90 for a bonded labourer to almost \$2,000 for a sex slave. And the initial outlay turns out to be a sound investment, global profits from slavery accounting for an estimated \$91 billion in 2007 (Kara 2008), with a return on investment for a sex slave of over 500%.¹

One need not trade in the body entire, however. There are lucrative markets in parts. Now, if rendered down to its constituent elements, the human body is only worth \$5–10 on the market. Chopped up into more valuable bits – internal organs, arms, skin, cornea – you can fetch a nice sum if done 'legitimately' through medical organizations and nonprofits that assist in organ and tissue donation, or, according to *Wired Magazine* (2003) around \$45 million if done entirely on the international black markets (see also Cheney 2007; Scheper-Hughes and Wacquant 2002).

To profit from the body, you need not go into human trafficking, trading in whole bodies or specializing in specific parts. There are numerous experiments going on around the world that seek to employ the body as a form of currency. Since money is a mere sign, a convention set by the social contract or the state, depending on one's philosophy, people could come to an agreement to use specific signs made by the body to index value kept in a vault somewhere or recorded electronically in the ether of interconnected computer databases. Biometric currencies can link an identifiable person and his parts (retinas, fingerprints) to his bank account. Pay by pressing your finger on a point-of-sale terminal. Withdraw by getting your eye scanned. Technologists and interaction designers come up with science fiction-like ideas for sign-language moneys (Maurer 2010) while state governments deploy biometrically encoded smart cards for banking transactions (for one such experiment in Ghana, see Breckenridge 2010). The Government of India is in the

1 This estimate is based on Kara's calculations for income generated by a sex slave, and the assumption that the slave's room and board is equivalent to 10% of her yearly earnings.

process of creating a Universal ID for its 1.25 billion people. Each will receive a biometric smart card. Among its other intended functions, the scheme will solve, it is hoped, financial institutions' and banks' need to verify their clients' identities and thus provide financial access to millions who currently cannot open an account due to their lack of identity documents (UIDAI 2010).

Besides brokers in bodies and the use of the body in brokering, Shylock's fate points to another history of money's embodiments. In 1278 there was a massacre of Jews in London accused of being coin-clippers, debasing the King's currency by adulterating its metallic content (Prestwich 1988). Many were killed and Jews throughout England were rounded up and imprisoned. Though the accusations were the product of political hysteria, the punishment was not an unusual one for counterfeiters or debasers, Jewish or otherwise.

The English literary canon, especially in the Elizabethan era, is full of references to clipped coins, often yoking money (debased or not) to sovereign power (legitimate or not). Christopher Marlow's *Doctor Faustus*, first performed in 1604, contains a memorable scene in which Wagner secures the servitude of the Clown, first by offering him money. The Clown refuses, believing guilders to be 'girdirons,' the shackles worn by the condemned in Hell (and about to be metaphorically thrust upon the Clown after he is terrorized by the demons Wagner summons). Wagner then offers him French crowns, which the Clown mocks as worthless tokens, as the coins were associated with counterfeits and debased currencies in Elizabethan England. French crowns figure in Shakespeare, too: he often employed the French crown in puns linking them to venereal disease and impotence (e.g., *Measure for Measure*, Act I, scene 2). The French currency was doubly dangerous: either it was debased, and thus worth less than its putative value, or it was a mark of French power in a sovereign England. Thus royal decrees at the time urged the English to bore holes in the French coins in order to reduce their circulation and their threat to the body of state.

Corporal and capital punishment frequently befell counterfeiters and debasers. The American Coinage Act of 1792 levied the death penalty on debasers who would take from the body of the coin any fraction of its intended weight of gold or silver. Populists and revolutionaries exercised the flip-side of this punishment, tarring and feathering the tax collector or excise man, as in the Boston Tea Party. Though not fatal it was still a torturous punishment effected upon the body of the agents of state revenue collection. Both counterfeiters and tax collectors have from time to time been branded by mobs bearing hot irons tipped with metal coins, their bodies being stamped with the mark of their offence, or their desire.

Life

Branding with coins is a live practice even today, but for different purposes. From the late 1980s through the early 2000s, doctors and nurses in the Boston area and around Orange County, California, noticed that patients brought into the

doctor's office or emergency room for unrelated ailments were seen to have been scraped or branded with coins. (We doubt anyone assumed they had been visited this punishment for counterfeiting). They were mainly recent Vietnamese or Cambodian immigrants. It turned out that they were not victims of abuse but rather had been treated with a traditional healing practice called *cao gió* in Vietnamese and *kor kchoal* in Khmer which is believed to draw illness from the body (see, e.g., Ready 2001). Public health officials today provide cultural sensitivity training to hospital staff on this and similar traditional therapies.

Coins and money on the body for life or health is a recurrent theme in the world's monetary cultures. Women frequently adorn themselves with objects that serve as a store of wealth – gold jewellery, precious stones, silver – often bequeathed to them by their kin or provided by the family of their groom at the time of marriage. There is a lucrative market in gold jewellery in every South and Southeast Asian immigrant community, primarily for weddings as well as remittances to the home country. If faith forbids the wearing of gold by men (as with Islam in many parts of the world), then women can become the bearers of this commodity. Such practices hark to longstanding traditions of exchange at marriage: bridewealth, whereby the groom's family gives gifts to the bride's family; dowry, whereby the bride's family makes prestations to the groom's; or brideservice, whereby the groom contributes labor to the bride's family for a period of time before the marriage (see Collier 1988).

Such marriage exchanges point toward the larger issue of 'wealth in people' frequently noted in the anthropological literature as at the origins of state formation and/or in contradistinction to liberal capitalist states. In contrast to the institutions of slavery, in which humans are commodified as chattel, wealth in people refers to 'the accumulation of social relations' frequently figured as a gathering of social debts, kinship, or religious or political clientelism (Guyer 1995: 86). From Melanesian 'big men' who accrue fame and followers by giving things away, to African chiefs whose power is consolidated through transactions at the interface of people and things; wealth in people indexes a world of multiple and overlapping currencies and their diverse articulations to the mechanisms of power and state. The complexity itself can be staggering. Guyer provides an example:

In Southern Cameroun *akuma* – conventionally translated as wealth – consisted primarily of wives, indigenous currencies and livestock, while *biem* – currently meaning 'things' – covered trade goods, including both the ivory traded out and the imported goods brought in. Items we think of as things, in the sense of being inanimate, fell into both categories (Guyer 1995: 88).

While it may sound exotic to contemporary Western industrialized or post-industrial ears, the concept is not alien and the law is rife with examples where the interface between wealth in people, wealth in goods and wealth in money becomes a fraught zone of regulatory, moral and economic conflict. Much of what international non-governmental organizations and multilateral bodies consider 'corruption' would fall under the heading of the traffic between wealth in people

and capital accumulation. Transparency International's definition of corruption as the 'abuse of entrusted power for private gain' (http://www.transparency.org/news_room/faq/corruption_faq) begs the question of how and by whom such power has been entrusted, what the boundaries of the private might be, and how to measure gain. Political favoritism and graft, when mapped onto kinship, chart the shifting lives of social relationships, wealth in people mapped onto the networks of power constituting the modern state and its interstices.

Bribery, extortion, political corruption, 'money politics:' this returns us to the question of the lifeblood of society, the body of state, the spiritual community, the substance denied Shylock by Portia. Blood money is restitution for a life taken, but it is also a term used to refer to the hit-man's pay. When Judas brought his blood money to the temple, the priests purchased with it the potter's field, the place for the poor and foreign who die outside society's orthodoxy, thus, according to some, bringing the outsiders into the light of salvation. Civic authorities in the United States and elsewhere today maintain 'potter's fields' for the burial of the indigent and unclaimed, bringing them in their final resting place into the kinship of the state, a final citizenship.

Blood money like kinship itself thus awkwardly unifies both death and life, and, if anything, extends life through the presumption of durability and extensibility of kin, citizenry and state into the indefinite future. Life and health insurance proceed from similar logics, and likewise awkwardly straddle the line between commodification of the human body, its life-force, and a membership-making compensation, at once guarding family and loved ones against loss as well as creating and acknowledging common membership in a polity. The ideologically pitched debates in the United States at the start of President Barack Obama's administration over universal health insurance and the populist horror fantasy of 'death panels' – bureaucrats making life or death decisions over the care of the aged and incapacitated – were struggles over the definition of the citizenry and the obligations of the state to its people, specifically, the demarcation of the boundaries of peopleness.

Ironically, perhaps, despite the death panel moral panic, the standard insurance practice of capitation endures in many parts of the Anglo-American world, and is likely to continue. Payment 'by the head' rather than by the cost of care governs medical insurance's money transfers, incentivizing fewer medical interventions and rationing healthcare. Where 19th century reformers worried that insurance would commodify personhood, gambling against death and usurping the role of God in providing divine protection (Zelizer 1983: 73), few in the early 21st century remark on the fact that capitation reflects a wager based on the law of large numbers and the gospel of economic efficiency.

Compensation

Elsewhere, of course, states figure bodies through different monetary practices and logics. The Islamic Republic of Iran provides a case of a no less bureaucratized, no less formalized, but differently monetized configuration of bodies, specifically, for the compensation required for bodies damaged. Mandated by the Iranian Islamic Penal Code, *diyeh* is the financial compensation a person must pay when he or she inadvertently causes physical injury to another.² If the bodily damage was premeditated, the injured person may request *diyeh* instead of corporal retribution (i.e. an eye for an eye), as can the kin of the murdered victim, in lieu of execution. *Diyeh*, which is often translated as 'blood money,' predates Islam, but was inscribed with Islamic legitimacy by the Quran and the Prophet Mohammad's endorsement. Surah Nisa of the Quran says:

Never should a believer kill a believer; but (if it so happens) by mistake (compensation is due): if one (so) kills a believer, it is ordained that he should free a believing slave, and pay *diyeh* to the deceased's family, unless they remit it freely... (Chapter 4, Verse 92)

It has been reported that the Prophet Mohammad said to his son-in-law. 'Ali ibn 'Abi Talib: Oh 'Ali, verily 'Abd al-Muttaleb established five traditions during the 'jahiliya'³ that Allah continued in Islam...he established the tradition of 100 camels for murder and Allah continued that in Islam (Hurr al-'Amili 1982, cited in Heydari 2004: 169).

The consensus among Shi'i and Sunni jurists is that 100 camels is the proper *whole diyeh* ('*diyeh-e kamel*') mandated in the case of homicide, though several other hadith suggest equivalents in other livestock, as well as inanimate commodities (Karimi 1999). These traditions have been literally realized in the Iranian Islamic Penal Code. Article 297 stipulates six forms of compensation from among which the culprit can theoretically choose:⁴

1. 100 healthy, flawless and not too lean camels
2. 200 healthy, flawless and not too lean cows
3. 1000 healthy, flawless and not too lean sheep
4. 200 articles of clothing made from the 'helleh' of Yemen
5. 1000 flawless, pure gold coin dinars, where every dinar is one 'mesqal' weighing 18 'nokhod'⁵

2 Islamic Penal Code, Book Four 'Diyat,' Part One, Articles 294-296.

3 Jahiliya or the 'state of ignorance' refers to the condition of pre-Islamic Arabiya.

4 From the official web journal of the Judiciary Branch of the Islamic Republic of Iran, www.dastour.ir

5 One mesqal is equivalent to 4.608 grams.

6. 10,000 flawless, pure silver coin dirhams, where every dirham weighs 12.6 nokhod

Whether or not originally intended to avoid commensurating the body with a singular thing ('Abedi et al. 2007: 21), or easing payment for the cow and sheep herder or for the merchant devoid of camels, *diyeh* in contemporary Iran is paid in cash. Based on the market value, and the opinion of 'experts,' the Justice Ministry announces specific values for 100 camels, 200 cows and 1000 sheep that escalate with inflation. For the year 2010 (solar hejri year 1389), the amounts were announced respectively as, 450, 550, and 900 million rials⁶ (approximately US\$43,000, \$53,000 and \$86,000, respectively).

The Islamic *diyeh* system does more than determine a payment for slaying; a host of rulings lay out the compensation for particular parts, arms, legs, ear lobes, eye-lashes, nipples; even the right testicle is differentiated from the left.⁷ The decreed amounts vary according to severity and are calculated in terms of proportions to the whole *diyeh* (for the whole body). Injury is based on both functionality and 'cosmetic wholeness' (Sachedina 2009). One might not fathom eyebrows to hold any necessary bodily function, but as an ornament of the face, their ruin can warrant up to half a whole *diyeh*.

Classical jurists agree that body parts are roughly divided into four different types: 1-those that are unique (such as the tongue, nose, penis, and bladder), 2-those that come in pairs (such as ears, eyes, eyebrows, arms, legs, feet, and lips), 3-parts that come in more than pairs (such as fingers, eyelids, toes, and teeth), and 4- non-countable parts (such as skin and hair) (ibid, see also Haji-Dehabadi 2004). In addition to the hierarchy of parts, a hierarchy of gender and religion differentiates the *diyeh* due to a woman and a man, and a Muslim from a non-Muslim. The whole *diyeh* of 100 camels halves for women (Article 300), and only a fraction is due to the non-Muslim (though in 2004 the Iranian Islamic Penal Code was modified to match the *diyeh* of recognized religious minorities⁸ with that of Muslims).

Two rationalities of calculating compensation, however, based on two different understandings of the body are conjoined in the contemporary Iranian *diyeh* system. In Sharia-inspired *diyeh* calculations inscribed in the Penal Code, one unique body part metonymically stands in for the entire body. In this way of figuring compensation, if a unique body part loses its functionality, for example a tongue is severed, or the capacity to speak is lost, the *diyeh* amount is equivalent

6 Sazman Qazayi Niroohay-e Mosallah [Judicial Organization of the Armed Forces] www.Imj.ir http://www.imj.ir/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1268:--1389&catid=284:-1389&Itemid=469

7 The *diyeh* for the left testicle is 2/3 of the whole body, while the *diyeh* for the right one is 1/3 (Iranian Islamic Penal Code, Article 435).

8 Iran recognizes Zoroastrians, Jews, and Christians as religious minorities. Bahai's are notably excluded and receive no compensation.

to the whole body, not just the whole tongue. Similarly, if an arm is severed or severely harmed, so as to lose its functionality, the diyeh is equal to half the body, as is the case for other body parts that come in pairs (such as eyes, ears, legs). The diyeh for a single finger is one-tenth the whole body, given the victim originally possessed all ten digits. Also, removal of a man's beard, such that it permanently halts its growth entails the full diyeh, and if it grows back, one-third the full-body diyeh, and the removal of a man or woman's head-hair entails full-body diyeh, if it leads to permanent baldness (Iranian Islamic Penal Codes, Arts. 294–301).

Now, the Islamic edicts detail only a limited number of physical harms, which do not include those less visible to the eye, such as lacerations on the diaphragm (1% of the full diyeh), epiphora of the eye (excessive tear-production) (2%), or mental illness. Wherever the diyeh system is silent, there is the *arsh* system, the particulars of which are devised in part by forensic scientists and medical practitioners. A key reference, *Pajuheshi dar naqs-e ozvi va arsh (An Investigation of Physical Impairment and Arsh)* (Abedi et al. 2007) explains that permanent injuries consisting of anatomical damage, functional damage, or damage to beautifying structures, as well as temporary injury (such as bruising on the skin) are assessed individually and separately and summed up for a final diyeh amount to be determined. It is possible for this amount to exceed one full diyeh. There are complicated mathematical formulae and indices to determine the extent of physiological trauma and probability of survival, including methods first promulgated by the American Association for Advancement of Automotive Medicine.

The *arsh* system elaborated by medical professionals and forensic scientists is thus based on a severity scale of harm to health (anatomical, physiological and mental), whereas the *diyeh* system in the Penal Code is based on a conception of the body as containing microcosms of itself within it. In *arsh*, the body is treated as a collection of individual parts operating cooperatively to sustain life. In portions of the Penal Code directly applying Shari'a rulings, on the other hand, the *diyeh* system takes the body as a whole comprising of whole functions and whole 'beauty aspects,' which are each partible into externally visible segments: ten fingers are considered to comprise a whole, damage to which would warrant a full *diyeh*; damage to a single finger would warrant 1/10 of the full *diyeh*. Damage to a single digital bone in the thumb (a phalanx) warrants 1/20th compensation (since the thumb only has two phalanges), whereas for any other finger of the hand which has three digital bones, damage to one would warrant a 1/30th compensation of the full *diyeh*. Whereas the *arsh* system starts from the presumption of the corporeal and functional wholeness of a body entire, the *diyeh* system figures the body as a set of distinct wholes, each of which is a metonym for the entire body. Put together, the two systems create a bricolage of body-worlds underwritten by law, state, and money.

Weight

The question of compensation brings us back to where we started, with the pound of flesh. Compensation for body parts, as illustrated in the diyeh/arsh bricolage, opens up the question of how we conceptualize the human body itself. Is it a unified whole? Always? What makes it so? Is it the iteration of a series of wholes, each repeated at a different level of scale, such that the hand is to the arm as the two arms are to the whole person, or a similar logic (for a New Guinea example along these lines, see Mimica 1988)? Can that pound of flesh be separated, literally or figuratively, from the blood and sinew and fat that accompanies it, seemingly inseparable from it? This series of questions, in turn, calls forth the mind/body problem: is the body the seat of the mind, or is the mind transcendent, more than the sum of the bloody parts? Is the person properly speaking coterminous with the mind, while the body is merely matter absent that spark of consciousness?

It is significant that many philosophers have asked the same questions of money: Is money a convention of consciousness, or a material valuable in itself? Fiat currencies, created by the state, are worthless paper until the breath of the state animates them with the spark of value. Only then will they circulate from hand to hand in a community of believers, the citizenry of a polity.

The anthropologist Keith Hart (1986) has famously remarked that money is simultaneously both 'heads' and 'tails.' Animated by the head of state, the sovereign, it is a token of political authority and an abstraction accepted by convention and political decree. Yet it is also a commodity measured in units of value, often linked to the weight or tale of precious metals. £1 flesh, 11b flesh. The person as token and tale. Money as capital and currency. Both sides of the coin welded together make money, money. Money is both an idea and an object, Hart reminds us. So, too, the human body, and the body of state. That pound of flesh is dearly bought indeed.

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Chapter 7

Corporeal Capitalism: Invisible Male Bodies in the Global Sexual Economy

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Introduction

The analysis of global sexual economies has emerged as an important part of a wider feminist project to re-imagine the boundaries of what constitutes the 'inside' and 'outside' of globalisation and capitalism. Emphasising the importance of such an agenda, the chapter argues that continued understandings of commercial sex as 'women's work' place male and transgender bodies on the outside rather than the inside of the analysis of global sexual economies. Highlighting the need to address this gap in contemporary theorising and empirical analysis, I offer an illustration of research into male sex work through discussion of fieldwork with male escorts in San Francisco. In so doing, I draw upon and situate myself within feminist scholarship that seeks to 'embody' the study of political economy by grounding it in real human experience: that is, to locate economic and political processes in contextually specific times and places by exploring how real, living human-beings (in this case, male sex workers) try to make sense of the structured contexts in which they find themselves (Youngs 2000a).

The Body in IPE

Given that the body has long represented a central site of enquiry across the social sciences and humanities, it is notable that scholarship within that most 'material' of disciplines (Hooper 2000: 31), International Political Economy, has not historically preoccupied itself with such messy matters of embodiment. As Charlotte Hooper (ibid.) notes, it is 'supremely ironic' that a field so concerned with issues of inequality and poverty – and, as such, with the fulfilment of the material needs of physical bodies – should have been built around abstractions from, not explorations of, embodied social contexts. In particular, as Matthew Watson (2005) has observed, despite its superficial heterodoxy, IPE scholarship has all too often been disciplined by questions about 'states' and 'markets' in which both are divorced from any kind of social setting. As Gillian Youngs (2000: 25) similarly notes, this separation of 'states' and 'markets' from their social context has produced a disembodied picture of the world in which the 'lives and