

Citizenship and Identity in the Age of Surveillance

Pramod K. Nayar





CAMBRIDGEUNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge House, 4381/4 Ansari Road, Daryaganj, Delhi 110002, India

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107080584

© Pramod K. Nayar 2015

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2015

Printed in India

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-107-08058-4 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.





Acknowledgements	v
1. Vulnerability, Safety, Surveillance	1–34
Constructing the vulnerable citizen	12
Constructing safety	25
Surveillance	28
2. Bodies and Biosurveillance	35-67
Surveillance and corporeality	36
Biosurveillance and biobanks	48
Surveillance, sorting and citizenship	51
Vulnerable bodies, consuming bodies and the rise of	62
the surveilled self	
3. Data and Data Subjects	68–105
The data age	70
The personal information economy and the data subject	75
The vulnerable data subject	80
The responsible surveilled subject	101
4. Spaces of Surveillance	106-137
Splintering urbanisms and the spaces of surveillance	114
The rise of 'defensible space'	120



Contents

Cultural trauma, vulnerability, social splitting Surveillance and the subject afraid of difference	123 135
5. Performative Surveillance and the Witness-Subject	138–171
Objectification, self-surveillance and the new regimes of the self	140
Performative surveillance	143
Witnessing and dissident surveillance	158
The rise of the witness-subject	169
6. Surveillance and Global Witness Citizenship	172-200
Witnessing	174
Witnessing memory	180
Global witness citizenship	187
Surveillance, global witnessing and compassionate cosmopolitanism	194
Bibliography	201
Index	215







This book owes its origins to informal exchanges with Debjani Mazumder. From preliminary back-and-forth over some months, we moved on to discussing the possibilities of a full-length book, disagreements about titles and scope, mode of writing, etc. Fortunately, these disagreements were productive, and the result is right here. Thank you, Debjani, my editor for many years, and now a friend and advisor on most matters in publishing.

Anna Kurian expressed enormous enthusiasm for the project alongside concerns. With her characteristic passion for all – okay 'most' – of my projects, she read chapters, as we argued endlessly about loyalty cards, AADHAR, witnessing and compassionate cosmopolitanism. Once more, my gratitude to you, Anna: for shaping my thinking–writing (also my apologies for crenelated prose in parts!)

I am indebted to V. Premlata for sending me vast amounts of material on surveillance (more than I could handle at times!).

Thanks are due, as usual, to Saradindu Bhattacharya for sourcing essays and Neeraja S. for chipping in when necessary.

Nandana Dutta objected, with her usual grace and charm, to several arguments in the chapter on witness citizenship, and the chapter is better for her interventions, and the book, overall, to her warm friendship. Thank you, ND.

Sections of the chapter on participatory surveillance appeared as 'Smile, You are On Camera: The Rise of Participatory Surveillance', *Rupkatha* 3.3 (2011), while the Wikileaks sections of the same chapter had its origins in 'WikiLeaks,



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

the New Information Cultures and Digital Parrhesia' in *Economic and Political Weekly* xlv. 52 (25 December 2010): 27–30, and the longer essay *Cabling India: Wikileaks and the Information Wars* (DC Books, 2011). I am grateful to Tarun Tapas Mukherjee for inviting me to write the first, the referees and editors of *EPW* for the second, and to Saraswathy Rajagopalan of DC Books for her sustained interest in the third.

Sections of the chapter on bodies appeared as essays or parts of books: 'Cultures of Surveillance: Biological Citizenship and the Rise of the Surveilled Subject' Literary Paritantra 3.1-2 (2013): 34-52 (Thank you, Premlata, for inviting me to write the essay for LP); 'I Sing the Body Biometric: Identity, Identification, Surveillance and Biological Citizenship, 'Economic and Political Weekly XLVII.32 (2012): 17-22; 'A Sting in the Tale', Economic and Political Weekly XLIX.22 (2014), web exclusive http://www.epw.in/web-exclusives/ sting-tale.html; 'A New Biological Citizenship: Octavia Butler's Fledgling', Modern Fiction Studies 58.4 (2012); Posthumanism (Cambridge: Polity, 2013) and 'From Bhopal to Biometrics: Biological Citizenship in the Age of Globalization', in S. Swarnalatha, Scott Slovic, Vidya Sarweswaran (eds) Ecoambiguity, Community and Development: Toward a Politicized Ecocriticism. (Lanham: Lexington, 2014. 85-98). Thanks are due to the Swarnalatha for inviting me to write for the volume and the anonymous reviewers for suggestions. R. Radhakrishnan invited me to write on biological citizenship for the special issue of Modern Fiction Studies, for which I am indebted, just as I am for the referee report from the journal. *Posthumanism's* manuscript referees enabled me to sharpen my arguments, and rethink several.

Sections of Chapter 5 were delivered as the Keynote address at the National Conference on Trauma, organized by St. Thomas College, Kozhencherry, Kerala, 5–6 September 2013. I am grateful to Febu George for inviting me to the conference and to my interlocutors there, specifically Meena Pillai and Josy Joseph. The arguments about the shift from surveillance to witness citizenship were first unleashed in the form of a keynote talk at the National Seminar on 'The Practice of Everyday Life in the Northeast: An Interdisciplinary Approach', Department of English and Foreign Languages, Tezpur University, March 2014. I am grateful to Prasanta Das for inviting me. Some parts of the main themes of surveillance constituted sections of my talk on 9/11 cultures at the Refresher Course in English, Calcutta University, January 2014. Thanks to Sinjini Bandopadhyay and Sanjukta Dasgupta for having me over.





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I also record here my thanks to Ron, for lovely exchanges, punny and pithy, Molly, a.ka. 'Chechu', for being interested and for your constant goodwill; Soma Ghosh, Ajeet D, Saraswathy Rajagopalan, Vasudeva Rao, Bella Rao, Ibrahim Ali, Neelu (of the Famed Forwards), Niyati Dhuldhoya, Rita Kothari, inhabitants of my small social world; Narayana Chandran, for good humour, advice, astonishing bibliographic references flung out at random, subtly concealed approval, and for making the workplace interesting beyond measure; The staff of the American Library, Chennai, for their superefficient services that enable work to flow seamlessly.

My support system that allows me the space, time and energy to work has withstood my projects (and me) for years now. To the loyal members of this system, my immeasurable gratitude – my parents and parents-in-law, Nandini and Pranav (and Pranav, this book is *not* on postcolonialism, so have addressed your complaint!).

Finally, I would like to thank Ranjini Majumdar and Qudsiya Ahmed of Cambridge University Press for all that they did for this book.

