

or find themselves reacting to being coded as Muslim women. The thrust of this chapter is that in spite of the fact that these women disavow Islam, they do not, in their various experiences, necessarily encounter less sexism or discrimination. In fact, the disavowal of themselves as Muslim places them in double jeopardy: they frequently face ostracism from their families and communities, in addition to the exclusion they encounter from the dominant culture. The outcome for them, the author argues, is emotional ambivalence, despair, and disorientation.

Chapter Four, titled "Negotiating the Ambivalence," discusses the narratives of eight of the case study subjects. These women, Ayesha, Iram, Karima, Kausar, Mussarat, Nabia, Rabia, and Zahra, apparently subscribe to Islamic religious and cultural observances but find that they cannot subscribe to ideas of perceived authenticity for Muslim women for a variety of reasons, including, among others, their own rejection of the sexism embedded in Islamic practices, and the exclusionary status to which they are relegated in Canadian society. Implicitly, the contradictions in the category "Muslim woman" produce a structured ambivalence to which these women respond with emotional dissonance. As they try to negotiate the ambivalence, they never totally escape the impact of these contradictions on their lived experiences. The author captures their dilemma aptly: "In terms of being a Muslim woman, they are "in" but not in, and "out" but not quite out. Their narratives suggest opposition as well as nonoppositional positions to their discursive locations."

The last chapter, "Selecting What to Believe," profiles the narratives of three women, Donna, Manal, and Tuzeen. These women not only accept their linkage with Muslim identity but they go further than that: they critique the contradictions, notably the sexism they encounter in Islam. In their attempt to resolve this

contradiction, they make selective judgments of the Islamic tenets, focusing instead on what they believe to be the intent of the message of Islam and rejecting what they consider the sexist interpretations of the Islamic legal code or Shari'a.

Muslim Women draws attention to Muslim women's struggles for agency and identity as "a site for both affirmation and disorientation." Also it draws attention to the fact that the location of Muslim identity is shifting and contradictory. The author convincingly argues for the idea of moving beyond stereotypes of "ascriptive identity based on predetermined religious or ethnic characteristics," as well as the homogenization of Muslim women. She engages the term Muslim as a process through which women who position themselves as Muslim or are positioned as such craft a North American identity in light of their experiences relating to immigration, racialization, devaluation, and labour market disadvantage. The book provides valuable insight for the understanding of the struggles and experiences of immigrant Muslim women in Canada.

WOMEN AND ENVIRONMENTS INTERNATIONAL

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BY SHERILYN MACGREGOR

The latest issue of *Women and Environments International*, titled "Healthy Communities Through Women's Eyes," provides a much needed response to the recent proliferation of policy documents, plans, books, and organizations that use

the language of "healthy communities" as a short cut for describing the kinds of places that are environmentally sustainable and socially just. Since feminist and gender-related concerns tend to get left out of this discourse, the editors felt it was high time to ask women to comment on what they feel would make their communities healthier places in which to live. The diverse range of visions make it an interesting and readable collection with many ideas for action.

The concepts of "health" and "community" are contested ones, open to many different interpretations. It is therefore not surprising that different contributors envision "healthy communities" in different ways, depending on their social, political, economic, built, and natural environments. For example, while community may mean a specific geographical place to many, it can also mean creative space to artists, such as those described by Suzanne Farkas in her article on women's art projects. One transnational project called "Women Beyond Borders" involves over 500 collaborators whose creative expressions challenge conventionally-held notions of space and place. Other articles in the issue illustrate how community can also describe women's sharing of physical and social challenges such as HIV/AIDS, environmental illness, and unemployment. This shows, in turn, that "health" can mean a variety of things from bodily well-being (as seen in articles about occupational safety projects in India and women's reproductive problems in rural Uganda) to the viability of local economies. An article by Kathryn Gow reports that women in developing countries have revitalized their communities and improved the health of their families with the help of Grameen-styled micro-credit loans.

As explained in an article by leaders of the Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition, participatory processes are a central part of women's

roles in the growing Healthy Community movement. And participatory research is proving to be an effective way to fill in the gaps in our understanding of what healthy communities mean for women. Recognizing the importance of this kind of research, the magazine includes a section on innovative research projects that ask us to "listen to the missing voices." For example the Hitting Home Team is an interdisciplinary Canadian research project that is asking women care-givers about the implications of the growing trend toward community care. An innovative project in Vancouver involves women living with HIV/AIDS as peer-researchers in the development of strategies for improving sexual health and reducing the risks of HIV infection among women.

The issue also contains a section called "In the Field" that profiles several innovative projects and organizations in countries around the world. Included is an article about three women who took on the urban planning establishment in order to build an energy efficient and cooperatively owned straw-bale house in Mississauga (a suburb of Toronto); an article on Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan, a rural women's collective that addresses environmental justice issues in Gujarat, India; and a piece on a grassroots organization in the Pacific Island region that promotes and protects women's traditional knowledge of medicinal plants. There is also a short and informative article on the World March of Women, and international project that is giving voice to women's demands for the elimination of poverty and violence against women. The "Textspace" section includes short and very readable reviews of recent books that are relevant to the healthy community theme and "WE Surf," a new feature, lists over 20 interesting websites that readers can visit for more information on the topics covered in the issue, among others.

"Healthy Communities Through Women's Eyes" contains both excit-

ing success stories about how women have contributed to the movement for healthier communities as well as some caveats against thinking that the New Jerusalem is on the horizon. Although women have had a big hand in designing and leading local community initiatives that are improving the quality of life for many people, it would be a mistake to let these local successes take our minds off the persistence of global "isms" like (hetero)sexism, racism, and neoconservatism as well as increased ecological destruction and corporate control of democracy. Given that so many governments and international institutions have adopted the discourses of healthy communities and sustainable development, women must be ever vigilant not to get duped into serving the profoundly unhealthy and unsustainable agendas of the powerful.

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BODY IMAGE

Sarah Grogan. New York: Routledge Press, 1999.

BY CHERYL
VAN DAALEN-
SMITH WITH
STACEY
MORTIMER

In *Body Image*, British scholar Sarah Grogan seeks to integrate theory and data from psychology, sociology, women's studies, and media studies in order to understand how both

women and men experience body shape, weight, and subsequently develop body dissatisfaction. She quickly asserts that not only is body dissatisfaction (BD) in women normative in western culture, but that body image (BI) is much more than a mere cognitive construct.

Grogan's initial discourse is essentially rooted in malestream psychology and sociological theory. The rooting is clearly Grogan's attempt to make evident her most fundamental argument: that while BI is a psychological phenomenon, it is significantly affected by, if not always determined by, social factors. In reading her work, this initial goal is, in our view, a correct assertion on which to base a text. Unfortunately Grogan's leanings towards traditional psychological theory ultimately pull her away from a structural situatedness of human struggle back to the individual psyche and personality makeup.

To start then, Grogan begins by inviting her readers into a discussion of western culture and the idealization of slenderness. She walks us through the development of body shape ideals including a discussion of the power of insurance companies to dictate so-called healthy weight charts. Grogan then takes us further back to the history of the portrayal of the female body as a clue to the evolution of body-shape preference. Readers can enjoy some of the lush French and Dutch Renaissance paintings, depicting beautiful women reveling in both their own and each others' bodies.

Despite these glorious illustrations, it was at this point that we grew somewhat frustrated. We had not only hoped that this text would be about women's body image, but finally and comprehensively include a thorough analysis of the intersecting impacts of race, age, ethnicity, class, (dis)ability, and sexual orientation. Instead, Grogan builds in—rather adds in—a discussion regarding men's BI, a discussion which is not analogous to women's body image: in western culture, the experiential