

social relations and conditions involving women's everyday life experiences and challenges as they resist their governments, state ruling technologies, continued patriarchal practices, religious hierarchies, and begin to organize for their (our) rights, for justice and for recognition. It is important to note that in this book *gender and woman are not used interchangeably*; by arguing for the specificities of suturing gender and the social relations of women's everyday, I am not being reductionist. Gender is understood as a socially constructed category or a set of social meanings and expectations that the sexed body takes on in any given culture and is relational to other equally relevant categories such as "race" and sexuality.

Heeding the work of Benedict Anderson who reminds us that nation is based on how it is imagined, the question of home, which is closely articulated within the framing of nation, becomes most visible as a way to foreground feminist considerations on exile. Bobb Smith argues that for Caribbean women, their understandings of empowerment and resistance stem from their connection to home; here home is configured beyond the boundaries of place to imagine home as a place in the mind. Such a notion of home is formidable if we think about the ways we carry home with us wherever we are located; home works within the dynamic play of memory, culture, site, pedagogy, and as a way to signal survival. While women emigres often find that they continue to be involved, in some capacity, with issues going on in their "home" country, the fact that they are also participating in the immediate day-to-day movements of their "host" country calls into question the unmistakable relationality, not disjuncture, between home and host; I'm appreciative of Vappu Tyyska's conceptual break with home and host considering instead "excursions that are both familiar and foreign." What is evidenced here is the negotiated anxie-

ties and ambivalence associated with a divided state of being, a state most emigre women bear; it is like living one's life on a tenuous fault line mired by a dual desire. However, it is important to note that home and host become undeniably tied and as such produce a force of one on the other.

Like other feminist fields, emigre feminism is internally contested and fragmented. This, I hope, will create a sonorous line of questioning as a way to further investigate its contentions within and without. Emigre feminism should be lauded for its integrative analysis and grounded approach to theorizing exile which has fastened the personal to the political in a way which has been silenced and marginalized before now. The contributors to this collection have given feminists a "new" language and address known here as "emigre feminist thought." This text is excellent for feminist theory courses, at both the graduate and undergraduate levels and for anyone working on questions of nation, feminism, cultural studies, postmodernism, and anti-racism.

ANTI-RACIST FEMINISM: CRITICAL RACE AND GENDER STUDIES

Agnes Calliste and George J. Sefa Dei, Eds. Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2000.

BY DONNA HARRISON

The contributions in this edition explicate the interrelationship of race and gender in contemporary Canadian society. They draw upon postmodern and post-colonial theory

to examine the multiple and dynamic experience of subordinate and marginalized groups and to point to directions for theoretical and political change. The edition attempts to augment what is indeed a paucity of scholarship on social justice issues conducted by those from the margins of white, malestream North American society. Imperialism and the white settler colonial history of Canada figure as a background for ongoing reproductions of racist discourses and identity formation.

Essays in the text offer an array of issues and concerns: from historical analysis of debates over the immigration of South Asian wives and the ongoing construction of discourses of a racist nationalism in media representations, to black women and men's resistance to occupational segregation and the possibilities and limitations for building a transnational anti-racist feminism. Some contributions are more historical, some more contemporary, but all introduce Canada as a site of struggle over racism inherent in its structures and institutions and within our everyday social relations. As such, it is a fascinating account of the Canadian experience, and an inspiration for anti-racist mobilization.

Some essays open up a critical analysis of whiteness. In their historical overview, Maria Castagna and George J. Sefa Dei encourage a definition of "race" more as a process of racialization—the attribution of certain social relations and signifiers as raced—rather than a static concept rooted in biological essence. This introduces a more fluid and historical approach to "race," one emphasizing its social construction. Whiteness, then, becomes a category to critically investigate and historicize "race" and assess the boundary of self and other. The historical elevation of whiteness corresponded to the racialization of the immigrant, and strengthened colonial discourses.

In a most interesting contribution, Kerstin Roger, psychotherapist herself, examines the construction of

the white female health care professional (psychotherapist) and how her position as an elite authority, as health care “knower,” contributes to the normalization of racialized social relations. This normalization, this institutionalization of difference, is enacted particularly through the use of empathy. Empathy is most successful as a healing and educational tool when the class and gender backgrounds of the clients are similar to her own, and success is undermined when difference makes empathy more difficult and less convincing. The result: “the majority of people are regulated out of psychotherapy by the very nature of empathy.” And in this way, the privilege and domination of whiteness is simultaneously reinforced. Roger’s solutions, however, are less insightful and are familiar to liberal thought. She encourages the anti-racist education of health care professionals so as to disrupt the sense of white normativity. In addition, she urges that more non-white, cultural, and racial “others” be present in the health care professions so as to challenge the historical racism in these professions. Acknowledging that this may seem naïve, but arguing its necessity anyway, Roger offers little encouragement for deep structural change. As such, Roger may simply help to reinforce a sense of white guilt for hogging the upper end of the system.

Other chapters provide analyses of racial segregation in occupations. In a fascinating account of resistance to segmented labour markets, Agnes Calliste joins historical material (on railway porters) with contemporary example (nurses) to explore both men’s and women’s experiences in anti-racist struggles. She emphasizes the linked ideological processes of sexism and racism to legitimize and normalize labour market segmentation, both between and within occupations. Resistance, which took the form of class action suits in some cases (CN railway porters) and pressuring management and filing of official complaints in others, came at

high emotional, psychological and financial cost to those engaged in the struggle. Compensatory packages were too low and sometimes too late. Calliste therefore encourages racial minority nurses today to take more overt political action in an effort to transform the social and economic institutions of capitalist society.

In “The Case of Émile Ouimet” Helle-Mai Lenk studies the re-inscription of racist nationalism in media coverage of an “event” in Quebec—the expulsion of a (white) student for wearing an Islamic head scarf (*hijab*). In her detailed account of French and English press coverage of the story, Lenk suggests that the incident drew attention not so much because of the *hijab* itself but because of the implications for a burgeoning Québécois nationalism. (The incident, by the way, occurred during a provincial election campaign). In a new form of nationalist racism where “race is coded as culture,” Émile Ouimet highlights the constructedness, the very fragility, of such an a-historical nationalist project, rooted in imperial notions of racial purity, and highlights the exclusivity of that discourse. Lenk concludes with little confidence that the press will provide a locus for paradoxical discourses on representation and nationalism. She does not, alas, suggest ways and means by which that discourse can be promoted.

In “The Hindu Woman’s Question,” Enakshi Dua traces the history of the debate surrounding the migration of South Asian wives into British Columbia after the turn of the century. Here the “imagined” whiteness of a burgeoning Canadian nation helped to institutionalize what Agnes Calliste in her essay has labelled gendered racism. The arguments for the migration of these wives reinscribed notions of gender superiority and racism, in that a sexually serviced Asian male need not prey on the population of white females. Nation-building was fundamentally gendered, and as much as Asian women were constructed as wives for

the servicing of the male South Asian community, the debate helped to constitute white women as mothers of the nation and confined and contained their sexuality as well. Dua stops short of analyzing how capital was also “serviced” in the process.

Generally, as a classroom text, *Anti-Racist Feminism* offers an excellent opportunity to introduce students to anti-racist critique. It is, however, something of a mixed blessing. It is a profoundly historical text that encourages examination of the imperialist roots of Canadian nation-building. Individual contributions provide useful insights into the changing contexts of “race” in Canada, but the introductory and concluding chapters which summarize these perspectives tend to be convoluted. More problematic, however, is the lack of attention to issues of class politics in some (but certainly not all) of the contributions and to the adhesive possibilities inherent through class struggle. More attention to this matter would have made this work more exceptional. In addition, more emphasis on racialization of masculinity would strengthen the justification for the “gender” subtitle.

READING RIGHTS: A WOMAN’S GUIDE TO THE LAW IN CANADA

Rahat Kurd. The Canadian Council of Muslim Women. Kingston, Ontario: Quarry Women’s Books, 1999.

BY SUSAN MURPHY

Reading Rights is not about our right to read but about “empowering” women through legal rights education. Sponsored by the Ottawa chapter of the Canadian Muslim Council