

However, the real reason for the visit is for advice on Will and Louis' love relationship. By moving to Medicine River, Will is able to associate with elders like Martha Oldcrow and the storytelling elder. Will learns from these elders and is then able to lead a more fulfilling life. He remembers Martha Oldcrow's words about two people caring for each other and goes on to develop a serious relationship with Louis.

The last step for the person is to return to the traditional religion. The Indian religion requires that people live the good life and respect others as well as animals. The person must understand nature and the spirits of the trees and lakes. He or she must be able to get along with these spirits. Also according to the religion, there are certain ways to heal the sick (McClelland 1987).

Will is also finding his way back to the traditional Indian religion. He is a funny, a kind, and a gentle man. He

is finally finding a place in life, at Medicine River. He owns a photography shop, participates in community sports, and is building a family with Louis Heavyman and her daughter South Wing. The last sentence in the book indicates Will's desire to return to the spiritual beliefs of his culture and to nature. He says: "I could see that the winter sun was out now and lying low over Medicine River. Later that afternoon I went for a long walk in the snow."

In conclusion, *Medicine River* portrays a subtle approach to the issue of the Native Indian people being dominated by white society, being culturally repressed and forbidden self-expression. The examples that were used from the Yukon represent all the other areas occupied by Indian people in Canada. Despite the cultural transition the white society has imposed, Native Indian people are slowly tracing their roots back to their land, to their elders, and to their religion.

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FEMINISM AND THE POLITICS OF DIFFERENCE

Sneja Gunew and Anna Yeatman, eds. *St. Leonards, NSW, Australia: Allen and Unwin, 1993* (Canadian Distributors: Fernwood Press, Halifax).

by Shirin Kudchedkar

The politics of difference are explored in a variety of ways in this wide-ranging set of studies. While difference has been seen as stigma (by marginalized groups) or as threat (by dominant groups) it needs rather to be seen as plenitude. The studies focus by and large on Australia and on Canada and distinguish between the multicultural composition of these nations on the one hand and the multicultural policies of the state on the other. For Sneja Gunew multicultural writing is an expression of a multicultural reality, a manifestation of the desire of groups of varied ancestries—immigrant as well as Native—to preserve their own cultures and celebrate their differences rather than eliminate them in the interests of an "Australian tradition." For Efi Hatzimanolis the state policy of multiculturalism is an intervention in unequal relations of power. She quotes Bhikhu Parekh's warning, "Liberalism has always remained



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assimilationist; others must become like us, my present is your future," to counter the assimilationist form that the multicultural project takes when it presents a unified, synchronized future for the nation. As an instance of this she reproduces a cover picture from a report published by the Australian Office of Multicultural Affairs entitled *The People of Australia*. The picture at first sight seems unexceptionable. It shows a group of children of different ethnic origins, many smiling, some with arms round each other; it is labeled "Sharing our Future." Hatzimanolis points out, however, that the photograph leaves out of account social relations of power.

Sneja Gunew and Anna Yeatman in their introduction to the book posit a post-structuralist framework for the better appreciation of difference. Since post-structuralist theory defines all knowledges as situated ones, "it is possible to admit difference, not simply as the self-confirming other, but as the admission and recognition of incommensurabilities." They warn against both universalism and identity politics. Universal models may appear benign but work ultimately to confirm old power structures, for the universal exists only as it is particularized and this particularization is always interested. Yeatman in another essay considers the relationship of emancipatory movements and the politics of difference. Gunew takes up the issue of identity and points out that while it may be insisted that without identity you cannot have agency or a program for social and political change, on the other hand the post-modern problematizing of identity is an enabling condition for the dismantling of hegemonic categories. Migrant writing (this appears to be the accepted term in Australia for groups of non-British origin other than Aboriginal peoples) gives alternative versions of history. The self is conditioned by operating in more than one language, by having to negotiate a new symbolic in a new language.

The problem of the first genera-

tion immigrant who already has another language is explored by Smaro Kamboureli in a Canadian context, using the tropes of the 'black angel' and the 'melancholy lover'. The black angel is the foreigner in ourselves whom we seek to silence, who takes the form of exiled speech. The melancholy lover is ourselves when we are nostalgic for our origins. "To exceed the melancholy condition of the ethnic, we must submit our imported certainties to the unreadability of ourselves." This, Kamboureli demonstrates in a sensitive reading of two of his stories, is what the Indian-Canadian writer Ven Begamudré achieves.

Several essays give us readings of work by writers situated on the 'borderlands'. This is in fact the title of a work by the American Gloria Anzaldúa, discussed by Annemarie Jagose in terms of the border as slash and as suture. Hatzimanolis discusses *The Harbour Breathes* in which the Australian Anna Couani negotiates different subject positions in mapping her relationship to the city. Margaret Jolly scrutinizes two texts by colonizing women who were based in the Pacific Islands in relation to stereotypes of them as 'memsahibs'. Laleen Jayamanne offers a reading of the film *Night Cries* by the Australian Aboriginal woman film-maker Tracey Moffatt, which explores cultural hybridization and assimilation. A quite unusual subject of study is Japanese male homosexual comics intended for girl readers; the account is by Midori Matsui.

The remaining essays examine the politics of difference from varied perspectives. Trinh Minh-ha writes about the prescriptive expectations of film critics and spectators when addressing Third World film-makers, their insistence on clear communication and their inability to think symbolically. Jackie Huggins draws on oral history to give us the story of her mother and the organization for which she worked, OPAL (One People of Australia League). Wendy Lerner estimates the likely impact of the process of economic globalization on the

lives of working women of Pacific Islander descent in New Zealand. Vicki Kirby critiques feminist ethnography while Daiva Stasiulis raises important issues concerning authenticity and appropriation, taking as her starting-point the dispute in the Women's Press, Toronto on these issues. Roxanna Ng's essay on "Sexism, Racism and Canadian Nationalism" is also included in this volume.

Canadian readers will find this a valuable book, corroborating as well as extending their experience of difference.

BITTERSWEET PASSAGE: REDRESS AND THE JAPANESE CANADIAN EXPERIENCE

Maryka Omatsu. Toronto: Between the Lines, 1992.

by Winnie Lem

In the forward to *Bittersweet Passage*, Ed Broadbent refers to the systematic persecution suffered by Japanese Canadians at the hands of the government during the war years as, "...not a nice moment in our history." Indeed, it has become axiomatic in progressive circles to assert that much of Canada's past has been configured by those "not nice moments." Increasingly, both the history and experiences of racism in Canada are coming to light, as considerable energy is being committed to recovering the voices of the hitherto silent and silenced sufferers of bigotry and racial intolerance.

Maryka Omatsu joins the ranks of those no longer silent by shedding light on the experience and history of the Japanese in Canada, through her book *Bittersweet Passage*. This is a book about the tortuous but ultimately victorious path of the struggle for redress undertaken by a group of Japanese Canadians whose lives were in one way or another profoundly shaped by the monstrous government campaign in the 1940s to subdue an