

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.

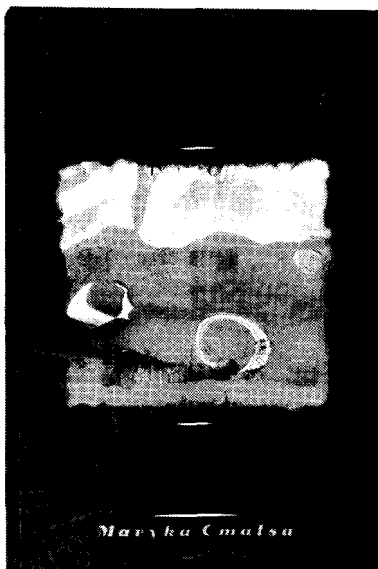
Maryka Omatsu joins the ranks of those no longer silent by shedding light on the experience and history of the Japanese in Canada, through her book *Bittersweet Passage*. This is a book about the tortuous but ultimately victorious path of the struggle for redress undertaken by a group of Japanese Canadians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

enemy that existed only in the paranoid imaginations of some very powerful white Canadians. Considered and classified as enemy aliens living within our national borders, Japanese Canadians were forcibly relocated into deserted communities, and interned in work camps; they suffered losses of property and endured emotional and psychological humiliation at the hands of a country they considered their own. *Bittersweet Passage* is a record of how honour and dignity were seized from Japanese Canadians, but were ultimately restored through the determination of those who dared stage a public battle against official racism.

Omatsu offers us a highly personal account of her own involvement in the National Association of Japanese Canadians' (NAJC) project of negotiating a redress settlement package with the Mulroney government in the 1980s. She begins her book on a triumphant note, with a rather humorous and lively description of the events surrounding the final acceptance by the NAJC of a negotiated settlement in 1988. However, the real point of departure for this story of struggle begins with Omatsu's personal struggle to understand her past Japanese identity and especially her father's silence about the 1940s. Troubled by his secrecy, by how her parents and the Japanese community in general put up so little resistance to their mistreatment, Omatsu embarks on a voyage of cultural discovery to find clues to explain this passivity of many of the *issei*, the first generation of Japanese Canadians. She concludes that the "traditionalist" orientation of the *issei* and adherence to the precepts of Confucianism which demand respect for all forms of authority, whether it was "the Emperor, his consul, or the government of Mackenzie King" underpins their acquiescence to their plight during the wars years. She traces this tendency to the existence of an "old guard" among the contemporary Japanese who represent the values of resignation and restraint. They are criticized by Omatsu for not fighting for their

rights and for being content to accept the rather meager offerings from the Canadian government as redress for its heinous acts during the war.

While learning the "lessons of the bamboo" (bend with the wind and you will not be broken) may have prevailed, the history of the Japanese in Canada, so Omatsu discovers, has also been punctuated by many moments of rebellion against the hatred and the bigotry of the white majority.



The story of the repulsion of racist ruffians in Vancouver's Little Tokyo in 1907 is recalled, as are the stories of women and men involved in union and feminist politics in the first part of the century. Omatsu presents such stories as a kind of historical charter for the attempts made by the Japanese "new guard" to challenge the structures of authority by pressing on for a greater settlement, one which would be more commensurate with the magnitude of the losses suffered. The "new guard", then, demanded individual compensation, funds established for anti-racist organization, as well as an official recognition of wrongdoing, all considered to be too much by the "old guard". In writing of these schisms and conflicts among the Japanese, Omatsu reminds us that by virtue of sharing the same ethnic identity, a "community" is not automatically a unified political voice. It is divided by age, gender, class and

different political interests. There were then many struggles within the Japanese "community", as well as outside it. The forging of consensus and the NAJC's claims to be representative of the Japanese "community" had to be established through hard-fought battles.

In essence, *Bittersweet Passage* is a personal chronicle, yet it is generously sprinkled with vignettes, portraits and biographical episodes from other people's lives. Taken as a whole, then, it makes an impressive contribution toward deepening our understanding of many individual lives that comprise the Japanese experience in Canada and it fills in some gaps in the making of Canadian history itself.

Redress itself has become, along with persecution during the war years, another highly formative and transformative moment in the historical experience of the Japanese in Canada. A good portion of the book, then, is devoted to detailing the intricacies of the struggle for redress itself. It is a careful documentary of the parties involved, the strategies employed by the NAJC, the different views held by organizations and individuals who supported and opposed the NAJC's efforts, as well as Omatsu's reactions, impressions and insights gathered through her and the NAJC's unwelcome forays into the corridors of power. This is writing "for the record". Moreover, there is an obvious didactic purpose to presenting, in such minute detail, the complexities of political strategy. It potentially offers important lessons to those who wish to contest state power and government authority. Indeed, this written record is in part an expression of generosity extended by Omatsu and the NAJC who wish to share their good fortune with other groups that have been badly treated by the government. Admirable though this desire is, apart from the NAJC acting in a supportive and perhaps consultative capacity, it is not immediately apparent how such a specific struggle, initiated to deal with such a specific history, can help other groups who have experienced rather differ-

ent histories of racism and victimization. Without some clarity over what these lessons might be, the presentation of the particularities of the NAJC's political strategies appears rather belaboured to those outside Omatsu's "community". This portion of the book is certainly less compelling than the life histories and war stories, which have a far wider humanistic appeal. Nevertheless, this is a rather minor objection to *Bittersweet Passage* and does not diminish the book's salutary effects as a chronicle of how women and men acted in concert to reclaim their history, fight bigotry and win in a country that often runs its affairs in a state of complacent denial over the existence of racism.

WEDDED TO THE CAUSE: UKRAINIAN WOMEN AND ETHNIC IDENTITY, 1891-1991

Frances Swyripa. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992.

by *Ameë Sandhu*

Frances Swyripa has written a new kind of history. *Wedded to the Cause* attempts to bridge the gap between immigration history and gender history. In this book, Swyripa has embarked on a journey of perceptions of Ukrainian women held by the greater Anglo-Canadian society. Her main thesis explores the "impact of Ukrainian Canadians' self-image as Canadians and their continued involvement with Ukraine on one segment of the group—women." This study does not do actual Ukrainian women's history in the traditional sense: we are not told a story of these women's lives. Instead, Swyripa uses a "top down" approach to show how Ukrainian women were depicted and what they were thought of by the

greater Anglo-Canadian society and by the different Ukrainian immigrant political factions, the nationals and the progressives.

The first two chapters of *Wedded to the Cause* deal with the negative stereotypes of immigrant peasant women. The peasant woman was viewed as unassimilable, unfeminine, and as the most backward element of the Ukrainian community. These views were held by the dominant culture, the Ukrainian community élites, and the women's rebellious daughters who alienated their mothers even further by rejecting them as well.

The following three chapters follow Ukrainian immigrant descendants as they age, and their attempts to improve Ukrainian women's image and status in mainstream society and in their own community. The Ukrainian mythology of the 'Great Woman' was Canadianized as Ukrainian women attempted to emulate past heroines by throwing themselves into work for Ukrainians in Canada, and in the Ukraine.

The last chapter comes full circle back to the peasant immigrant woman. But this time she is important and crucial to the survival of the Ukrainian community and to the building of Canada itself. She has been reclaimed by Ukrainian women's organizations, by the formal Ukrainian community and at the grassroots level, to represent the struggle and commitment of Ukrainians to Canada. Where once *baba* was a sense of shame and represented the unassimilability of immigrants, she now represents the Others who helped to build Canada.

Swyripa's book has many strengths. She demonstrates a talent for integrating Ukrainian artwork, crafts, photographs and mythology into her history of the immigrants. She traces the groups of women chronologically, a technique reminiscent of Strong-Boarg's *New Day Recalled*, which enables her to show the different circumstances of the successive waves of Ukrainian immigrants.

However, her weaknesses are more substantial. For example, she empha-

sizes the combination of gender and class in her introduction; yet in the text class only applies to the leftist progressives, not to the more conservative nationalists.

By far the weakest aspect of *Wedded to the Cause*, however, is Swyripa's claim in the introduction that in her case study, gender is eclipsed by class and ethnicity. She fails to prove this in the analysis; in fact, she proves the opposite. The reader is struck by the extent to which Ukrainian women were subjected to ridicule by their own community as well the dominant culture. Swyripa does not account for the difference in treatment between the men and the women, even within their own ethnic group. There is material in her book that effectively proves that gender *was* of vital importance to the experiences of Ukrainian women in Canada. For example, a member of the Communist Party of Canada observed that Ukrainian Communist men actively discouraged their wives from joining political organizations, feeling that if they were members, it was enough. This clearly implies that women's experiences were different from men's, and that women were valued less than the men. Perhaps being Ukrainian gave the women admission into the community, but not good seats.

The Ukrainian women possess no agency until the middle of the book. Swyripa's approach to her subjects turns them into passive, voiceless women. They only came to Canada because they were wives and daughters. Even though she claims her book is about Ukrainian women, it only shows what others thought of them, what others wanted them to become and what others rethought of them in the near present.

Even when Swyripa comes full circle at the end of the book, there is still no agency. Did *baba's* rehabilitation have anything to do with *baba*? The book is about what other people thought about *baba*, never what *baba* thought about herself.