

sciousness-raising groups in the women's community and the development of a critical consciousness began. I was forced to think anew about my relationship, my life and my place in the world. The alienation and isolation I had experienced at school, university, work, and in my everyday world could be explicated by existing social relations and social order: the disadvantaged on the periphery with the advantaged in the centre. I was beginning to understand that I was living in a world organized to differently benefit race, class, gender, and sexuality interests. That my parents were afraid of losing their cultural heritage is hardly surprising when fear, control, and containment of those who are different from the dominant group is the order of the day.

My mother has lived with patriarchal values (colonialism supported and even promoted the subjugation of Indian women by Indian men) that have ensured a repression of her self. I, too, am a product of that culture, but I am in the process of understanding the world from a feminist perspective. In 1988, I defied my parents' wishes and married a non-Asian. Unlike my father who did not allow my mother an authentic expression of herself (and my mother did not demand this as her right), my partner empowers me in my search for my own voice. There is a mutuality of recognition in our relationship. For the most part, we have found sources of energy that speak to the best of what we can be for ourselves and each other. In challenging my parents and living with a non-Asian, there

are losses to bear. I am becoming increasingly aware of these losses as I continue to live in Canada, away from my family. I miss family traditions, rituals, and ceremonies that provide a connection to my family, my people, experiences in a different language that cannot be adequately articulated. However, the onus is on me to create new rituals to satisfy my soul born of eastern roots.

I think that my lived experiences, the contradictions, and struggles informed by a feminist discourse, have guided me in the development of a critical consciousness. In telling my story, my intent is to define my own reality and to suggest how I think selfhood for women like me is mediated: how our female invisibility results from our marginality in a male-dominated culture. I understand this work to be making a contribution to the subversion of dominant social relations and practices that have the effect of homogenizing experiences rather than critically supporting differences.

This paper is dedicated to the memory of my dear and cherished sister Niru, who passed away tragically on May 21/93 after struggling with her health for some twenty years. She sacrificed her own desires and was the dutiful and virtuous daughter of my parents that I never could be.

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Postcards from the Middle Kingdom

The Middle Kingdom is the period in Ancient Egyptian history between the First Intermediate Period and the Second Intermediate Period. It is said to have lasted between the years 2000 and 1786 (B.C.E.).

In a newspaper editorial, a reader writes that in the "Dark" Ages, the Middle Kingdom referred to women's genitals.

But these postcards are from another Middle Kingdom not found in history books or newspapers. Here, it refers to the place we inhabit when we leave our homeland, and settle in another land. This place is not outlined on a map, although it resonates with geography, history and physiology. It's the cartography of genealogies.

This Middle Kingdom renders us strangers in our distant homelands, and distanced in the lands we cannot call home. In this Middle Kingdom, "home" is an impossibility.

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