

R.A.C.E. link

SPRING 2007

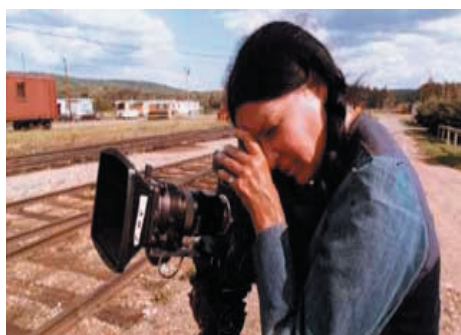


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EDITORIAL

FOCUS FROM QUÉBEC

Yasmin Jiwani

Over the last six months, there have been several high profile incidents in Québec that have garnered considerable media coverage. The common theme running through these incidents is that they have involved direct and indirect allusions to race and racism. For instance, the tragic event at Dawson College in September 2006, drew global media attention to the phenomenon of school shootings. However, the resulting coverage provoked the ire of many in Québec against reporter Jan Wong. Wong, a columnist for the *Globe and Mail*, surmised that Kimveer Gill, the young man who randomly shot at students at Dawson, was a product of an alienated segment of Quebec society – immigrants who had suffered exclusion and racism as a consequence of Québec’s language laws (Bill 101). Her commentary invoked outright condemnation from many of Québec’s elite including premier Jean Charest and set off a storm of public outrage and denial. Then in mid January, *Le Journal de Montréal* published the results of the Léger Marketing survey on racism in Quebec revealing that 43% of Quebecers defined themselves as mildly racist, 15% as moderately racist and one percent as very racist. The survey was vociferously attacked on methodological grounds. But the most interesting disclosure was that 50% of those responding had a “bad opinion” of Muslims.¹

Towards the end of January, the small town of Hérouxville gained international attention and from some quarters, acclaim, for issuing resolutions concerning prospective immigrants, resolutions that specifically prohibited the stoning of women, covering of faces and a host of other such prohibitions all in the name of maintaining their ‘civilized’ culture (see the article by Monika Kin Gagnon in this newsletter). Hérouxville’s actions have incited a debate about ‘reasonable accommodation,’ and the province has appointed a blue ribbon panel to address this rather thorny issue. But things don’t stop there. In February, the case of a young Muslim woman, Asmahan Mansour, who was barred from playing a game of soccer in Laval (although she had played other games before) because of her hijab, hit the news (see the article by Tanisha Ramachandran in this newsletter). Finally, in March, in the last week of election campaigning, André Boisclair, running as head of the Parti Québécois in the present Québec election described Asians as those with ‘les yeux bridé’ – slanted eyes. Just days before the election, the chief returning officer decreed that women wearing the

Niqab would not be allowed to vote. His rationale: safety issues.

His rationale: safety issues. In between these incidents, and at the height of election campaigning, Charest joined the kafuffle declaring that the referee was right in disallowing Asmahan (Azzy) Mansour from playing in the soccer tournament. This was followed by an incident at a cabane à sucre (sugar shack) in Mont St. Grégoire, where one particular cabane had hosted a Muslim clientele and had agreed to serve beans without pork and allow Muslims to perform their prayers. The frenzy of hostility and intimidation that greeted this event signals a widespread siege mentality resulting in what one columnist has described as the resounding success of the Action Démocratique du Québec (ADQ) and its installment as the official opposition.

The dominant media’s explanations of these racist incidents cohere around representations of a society under siege – reacting against the threat of the different Other and the impending dilution if not erasure of the dominant culture. A critical term that has emerged in the public discourse and that subsumes these various incidents is the notion of safety. Yet, safety is rarely defined from the perspective of those who are the targets of these measures of exclusion (see Tanisha Ramachandran’s article). Rather, it is how these Others threaten ‘our’ safety that has become the rationale used to exclude.

On another level, the focus on all these incidents raises the question – is Québec more racist than the

rest of Canada? Or, are these expressions of racism distinctly different from the normative hegemonic forms of racism evident across the country? And can racism be quantified on the basis of overwhelming media attention devoted to these rather than other issues? What is being elided by this heavy coverage?

In the interim, through the listserves and alternative media sites, we learn there has been an ongoing demand for police accountability in their shooting of a Muslim man several years ago. The man was returning from prayer one early morning and was shot by police. To date, there has been scant information revealed by the police. The listserves also reported on a case of police brutality against women peaceably marching at the International Women's Day March and the arrest of well-known activist Jaggi Singh for participating in the march. Alternative media outlets also focused on the Supreme Court decision regarding the illegal use of security certificates, the detention of yet others, and the ongoing saga of the Canadian 'rescue' mission in Afghanistan. These alternative sites reveal the underside of the more highly publicized incidents of racism reported in the media. Thus, while the dominant media engage in fear mongering and fueling hostility towards difference, the alternative media tell us about the racist policies of the State and its various apparatus' of control revealing the brutality of its practices. The two forms of racism obviously work in conjunction – one at the level of 'civility' using the language of 'reasonable accommodation' and the other, at the level of brute force.² In either case, the violence of racism remains at the core.

In this issue of RaceLINK, we attempt to interrogate these incidents contextualizing them in order to shed light on the dynamics that inhere in this 'distinct' province. For the legacy of French colonialism, despite having a similar impetus as British colonialism, has resulted in a different kind of milieu, one which is also marked by the clash between two colonizing groups. Nevertheless, it is worth bearing in mind that both historically and contemporarily, minorities have always been used as a strategic pawn by both sides, each trying to prove the racism of the other.³

On the West Coast: To Reveal or Not to Reveal?

In the meantime, on the other side of the country, the Pickton trial has captured national and international media attention. However, we hear little about this in the English language press here in Québec, even though the Montreal Gazette is part of that chain of papers owned by Canwest Global, the Asper media empire. But the case itself has spun off in a different direction – one which the media have capitalized on insofar as it sells paper and makes them appear to be guardians of democracy, sensitive to the needs of the population. Here, the media – notably the *Global and Mail*, and the CBC – have been asking their audience whether in fact they should report on the horrors of the revelations articulated in the trial or refrain from such. This is an interesting debate though one which deflects attention from the root

causes of how and why women are killed so frequently and which women are killed more than others. It necessarily shifts the attention from patriarchal, racist violence to one where the issue becomes defined as a question of reporting the gore or safeguarding public sensitivity. By sanitizing the coverage, do we really get a sense of what these missing and murdered women have gone through? Does such sanitization remove our sense of responsibility and complicity? Or alternatively, does it simply highlight the efficacy of the criminal justice system in dealing with 'pathological individuals' who do the unthinkable, all the while evacuating any notion of patriarchal power? Does the reportage of horror make it more real or does it fuel voyeurism of the kind capitalized on by the horror film genre, thereby making it unreal? It is too early to come to a judgment at this point but the terms of the debate have been set so as to occlude the real causes of patriarchal violence, to elide and erase from the public imagination, the ongoing violence perpetuated against those who are seen to be expendable and disposable – bodies, which Judith Butler points out, are not considered worthy of grieving: in short, bodies that don't count.⁴ Which bodies have rights and which are allowed the right to have rights?

These are all issues worthy of examination as we individually and collectively attempt to make sense of the shifting language of race and racism that marks this postmodern and postcolonial landscape. We invite all those who are interested to engage in these and related debates at the 7th

Annual Critical Race Studies conference.

1. 59% of Quebecers say they're racist: poll. CBC News - Canada ^ | January 15, 2007 <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1768716/posts>
2. Goldberg, David Theo. "'Killing Me Softly': Civility/Race/Violence." *The Review of Education, Pedagogy and Cultural Studies* 27 (2005): 337-66.
3. Todd, Sharon. "Veiling the 'Other', Unveiling Our 'Selves': Reading Media Images of the Hijab Psychoanalytically to Move Beyond Tolerance." *Canadian Journal of Education* 23, no. 4 (1998): 438-51.
4. Butler, Judith. *Precarious Life, the Powers of Mourning and Violence*. London and New York: Verso, 2004.

7th Annual Critical Race Conference on
Transnational Racism.

TRANSNATIONAL RACISM AND
"THE RIGHT TO HAVE RIGHTS"
MAY 3-4, 2007

The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of
the University of Toronto
252 Bloor Street West, Toronto, ON



MAKING (NON)SENSE OF L'AFFAIRE HÉROUXVILLE

Monika Kin Gagnon

For those of us struggling to make sense of race politics and dynamics in Québec, l'Affaire Hérouxville, as it has come to be called, offered yet another baffling example of the ostensible

complexity of the Québec race/culture equation, with its versioning of colonial histories, its linguistic divides, and oppressive religious legacies. Swirling around these troubling events, was the January *Journal de Montréal* survey claiming that 59% Quebecers self-identified as slightly-to-strongly racist (compared with 47% elsewhere), while the recent election campaign climate was contaminated with racist xenophobia, from Parti Québécois leader, André Boisclair's reference to Harvard classmates with "les yeux brides" (or *slant eyes*), and the directeur general des elections du Québec, Marcel Blanchet's accommodation, then retraction (following death threats), that Muslim women wearing the *niqab* (or full-face veil), would not have to identify themselves by removing their veils at polling stations in order to vote. The terms of debate have been distorted and disorienting, and the repeated defense that these racist behaviors are simply *aberrations* is beginning to wear grossly thin. Given this climate, it appears that it is people of colour in Québec who have been stoically tolerant of the shockingly racist behavior of its fellow citizens and public figures.

On January 25, 2007, the small municipality of Hérouxville located 160 km northeast of Montréal, with a population of 1338 residents, adopted a resolution regarding "les normes de vie" (or living norms) at its municipal meeting, a document destined for "aux immigrants éventuels" (eventual immigrants), and sent to six Quebec ministers, amongst them, Relations Internationales, Immigration, and Famille, Aînés et Condition Féminine, as well as Foreign Affairs Minister Peter MacKay and Secretary of State, Helena Guergis. The resolution outlined modes of behavior that were deemed "acceptable" for new immigrants by the municipal council, and was largely shaped by the counselors' strange fantasies and outdated stereotypes of Muslim culture. By early February, the international media was focused on this small town, and the media was then blamed within Québec for over-exaggerating and sensationalizing the issue, as if the declarations were not already sensationalist and obscene in themselves. "Don't stone women to death, burn them or circumcise them, immigrants wishing to live in the town of Herouxville in Quebec,

Canada, have been told,” announced the headlines for BBC News on January 29. While as far away as New Zealand, the *New Zealand Herald* declared, “You can stay in Canada as long as you don’t stone your women” (Feb 1 2007). Thankfully, the French newspaper, *Libération*, brought some critical perspective, and referred to a “croisade xenophobe” (xenophobic crusade). While in Canada, national and local papers tended toward reporting so-called facts, wherein town councillor André Drouin announced that the declaration was not racist: “Bien sûr, nous avons voulu choquer en parlant de lapidation ou d’excision, mais il était temps que quelqu’un mette ses culottes et regard plus loin que le bout de son nez. Si on s’adapte à tous les nouveaux immigrants, qu’advient-il de notre culture québécoise dans 10 ou 20 ans?” (*Le Devoir*, 17 février 2007) (“Certainly, we wanted to shock people in speaking of stoning and female circumcision, but it was time we ‘put on our pants’ and saw beyond the end of our noses. If we adapt to all new immigrants, what will become of our Québec culture in 10 or 20 years?”)

Based in part on a peculiar survey undertaken in mid-December 2006, in the region of Mékinac, in which 196 residents responded to 19 questions (ranging from “Would you define yourself as a racist person? And “Can a woman walk alone in a public place? To “Do you think we should reserve a space for prayer in schools?”), the declarative resolutions, when combined with the gendered expression uttered by Drouin, “mettre ses culottes,” or putting on one’s pants in order to take a strong (manly) stance, reveal the interlocking discourses of racism, paternalism, and sexism that are at work in these events. Hérouxville’s website offers downloads of most of the documents pertaining to the resolution, as well as its coat of arms, a recent issue of the magazine, *Les immigrants de la capitale* (the voice of immigrants in Québec), a letter from Grand-mère Chayer entitled, *Je me souviens*, reflecting on the oppressiveness of the Roman Catholic Church, particularly regarding gender equality, as well as a template letter to Premier Jean Charest, requesting amendments to the Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms regarding “reasonable accommodations.”

Human rights and immigration lawyer, Pearl Eliadis, speaking on CBC Radio’s *Cross-Country Check-up* on the subject of “How do you avoid cultural conflicts in a multicultural society?” (February 25, 2007), clearly summarized the peculiarity of “reasonable accommodation” as a term for debate on this issue. She stated that what is Canadian human rights law, in the Canadian Charter of Human Rights (wherein section 15.1 declares, “Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability”), has morphed from pure legal rule, to a social discourse in Québec. Characterising the debates of the preceding three months in Quebec, Eliadis said:

“I think the debate in Quebec has become a strange social phenomena of what is actually a very well-known legal concept in Canada. The concept of ‘reasonable accommodation’ has existed in every single province, including Quebec, for decades. What it means, is that if there is someone who runs up against an established rule and they are trying to exercise their religion, or get into a building because they have a disability, that the person on the other side of that request is obliged, under Canadian human rights laws, to respond to that reasonably. What has happened in Quebec, is that has appeared, like a social virus, and jumped, from a pure legal rule, to a social discourse about expressing preferences. The general comments I want to make, is that we live in a liberal society, where we need to start with, ‘You get to do what you want to do, you get to live the way you want to live, you get to express the preferences that you want to express, without needing permission first.’ That is what our culture and society is built on. The strange thing that has happened in Quebec—and I’m thinking of the Hérouxville example, which is a small municipality which has done a code of conduct in rural Québec—is that this has now become a debate about how you are going to live, and almost needing permission if you are going to engage in a kind of conduct that is different from the majority. And that is behaving like a social virus that has leapt over the wall from a legal rule that has been around for a long time, to almost needing permission if you are an immigrant to live the way you want to live, and I think that is the wrong way to go about it.”

Meanwhile, the Muslim Council of Montreal, continues to issue conciliatory press releases and do damage control. And in early February, nine women from the Canadian Islamic Congress bravely visited

Hérouxville for a two-hour meeting with town residents, to dispel myths of the Islamic faith and to confirm and affirm their equal status as Québécois.

But equally distressing to the Hérouxville events themselves, perhaps, is the now recognizable mantra in Quebec, that these expressions of racism are simply isolated incidents. In these particular debates, polarizations and distanciations have also been made between *les régions*, or the rural municipalities, and the cosmopolitan, multicultural urban centres of Montréal and Québec City. Six surrounding municipalities in Mékinac have declared their solidarity with Hérouxville, as other regions attempt to distinguish themselves (in often equally racist, if slightly different terms), while Charest continues to tout these as 'isolated' and aberrant positions. In doing so, one downplays and dismisses such racist behavior and expressions. It also marginalizes the need to responsibly address and analyze the violence of such gestures and the hostile social climate it creates. Premier Jean Charest's response? That Quebec is a tolerant province, followed by the formation of a Study Commission to investigate reasonable accommodation, headed by philosopher Charles Taylor, and historian, Gerard Bouchard, due in March 2008.

All translations are my own.

Hérouxville: <http://municipalite.herouxville.qc.ca/>
Muslim Council of Montréal: <http://www.muslimcouncil.org/en/archives.html>

CBC Cross-Country Check-up: <http://www.cbc.ca/checkup/archives.html>

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
<http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/Charter/index.html#garantie>

Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms:
<http://www.cdpdj.qc.ca/en/commun/docs/charter.pdf>



ENDANGERING THE SAFETY OF CANADIAN VALUES

THE CASE OF HIJAB, AN ELEVEN YEAR-OLD GIRL
AND A SOCCER BALL

Tanisha Ramachandran

On February 25th, Asmahan (Azzay) Mansour an eleven year-old Muslim girl was banned from playing in an indoor soccer game in Laval, Quebec after refusing to remove her hijab. The decision not to allow Mansour to play was made by a Muslim referee, who reasoned that the head scarf posed a danger to other players in the tournament. In response to the referee's decision, Louis Maneiro, the coach of the Nepean Hotspurs and the rest of the team withdrew from the tournament in protest, as did four other teams belonging to the under- 12 girls soccer league. The hijab had not been an issue in games prior to this tournament, or in the Laval tournament itself, as Mansour had played the day before without incident illustrating the precarious definition surrounding the issue of safety, and who or what is being protected. It became apparent in the media and political storm that followed that this event concerned more than the physical safety of 11 year-old girls, but involved the protection of a "Canadian" identity. Islam and its practices seem to form the basis of the debate over "reasonable accommodation", that has been one of the major issues in the Quebec election. Between the *cabane à sucre*, Hérouxville and allowing women wearing a Niqab to vote, the rights and freedom of Muslim women are at the crux of this debate.

Images of women in hijabs, burqas or chadors are the ubiquitous signifier, to the Western world, of the oppressed Muslim woman. Challenging this stereotype would result in the questioning of the colonial- missionary impulse of rescue and liberation. The FIFA rulebook states: "A player shall not use equipment or wear anything (including any kind of jewelry) that could be dangerous to himself

or another player.” Apparently the headscarf worn by Asmahan (Azy) Mansour, the 11 year-old at the centre of the media, political and water cooler debates, clearly violates the FIFA rule. It is, as in the case of Law 4 of the FIFA rulebook, a matter of perception and interpretation. The hijab worn on the soccer field by a Muslim girl poses an immanent danger not only herself, but to the attitudes and stereotypes held by Canadian society of Muslim women. The hijab is supposed to be worn by oppressed women in worn-torn countries who are the victims of their highly patriarchal religions and cultures – thus, the danger to herself. They are the reasons why wars are fought, so that we may rescue and liberate by bestowing upon them, all the rights and privileges enjoyed by women in the Western world. The indicator of women’s liberation is imaged as an unveiling, paralleling the pinnacle of western women’s liberation – the right to show her body. But what happens when this equation is challenged by an 11 year-old Muslim girl who wants to play soccer with a head scarf – the danger to others, who have to question their notions of how liberated femininity is represented. Mansour does not conform to the images of veiled women portrayed by the news media; rather she appears to defy the stereotype of the hijab and oppression. In that site of implicit contestation, her hijab poses a danger to the binaries of colonially inscribed logic. To wear the hijab and play soccer appears to be an untenable contradiction that complicates and devitalizes existing regimes of truth concerning representations of women, culture and liberation. Not only do such contradictions work to rupture, though momentarily, the patina of ‘tolerance’ that seems to characterize the self-representation of Quebec society, but throw into relief the colonial-missionary rhetoric of “saving brown women” from their culture. These fissures highlight the reality that discourse surrounding debates over reasonable accommodation pertain to protecting the hegemonic structure of Canada from “the other”.



THE 7TH ANNUAL CRITICAL RACE
STUDIES CONFERENCE
OF
RESEARCHERS AND ACADEMICS OF
COLOUR FOR EQUALITY (R.A.C.E.)
MAY 3-4, 2007
The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
of the University of Toronto
252 Bloor Street West, Toronto, ON

TRANSNATIONAL RACISM AND “THE
RIGHT TO HAVE RIGHTS”

From First Nations, to migrants and refugees, Muslims and Arabs detained as terror suspects, Palestinians, Haitians, Iraqis, Afghanis, homeless groups, youth of colour and many others, today’s neoliberal world marks many groups as excluded from humanity. Such groups are also evicted from political community. They become communities of people without “the right to have rights” (Arendt) and live in areas where violence may be directed at them with impunity. All such excluded groups are racialized, that is, understood as being a lower form of humanity than people of European origin.

Conference format:

Thursday May 3, 12-4 p.m.: Workshops for graduate students and new faculty of colour.
Thursday May 3, 6-9 p.m.: Opening address and launch of books in critical race theory.
Friday May 4, 9-4: Paper sessions
Friday May 4, 4-6: Plenary session: the future of critical race research in Canada

Conference Fees: Students: \$30 ; Faculty \$60.

FILMS: THROUGH THE LENS
DOCUMENTING VIOLENCE(S), CELEBRATING STRUGGLES

compiled by Ezra Winton



THEY CALL ME MUSLIM

DIANA FERRERO

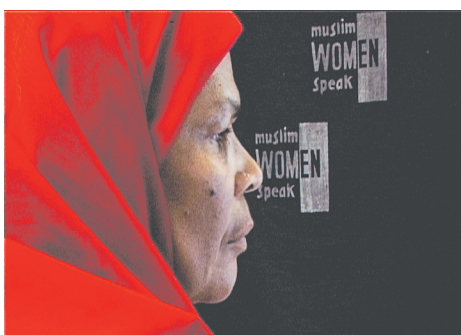
ITALY/FRANCE/IRAN / 2006 / 27 MIN

In popular Western imagination, a Muslim woman in a veil – or hijab – is a symbol of Islamic oppression. But what does it mean for women’s freedom when a democratic country forbids the wearing of the veil? In this provocative documentary, filmmaker Diana Ferrero portrays the struggle of two women – one in France and one in Iran – to express themselves freely. **THEY CALL ME MUSLIM** highlights how women still must struggle for the right to control their own bodies – not only under theocratic regimes, but also in secular, democratic countries where increasing discrimination against Muslims and sexism intersect. http://www.mediarights.org/film/they_call_me_muslim.php

THE NOBLE STRUGGLE OF AMINA WADUD

ELI SAFARI

THE NETHERLANDS/US / 2006 / 29 MIN



On March 18, 2005, Amina Wadud shocked the Islamic world by leading a mixed-gender Friday prayer congregation in New York. **THE NOBLE STRUGGLE OF AMINA WADUD** is a fascinating and powerful portrait of this African-American Muslim woman who soon found herself the subject of much debate and Muslim juristic discourse. In defying 1400 years of Islamic tradition, her action caused global awareness of the struggle for women’s rights within Islam but also brought violence and death threats against her. Deeply engaging, this film offers rare insights into the powerful connections between Islam, women’s rights, and racial justice. <http://www.wmm.com/filmcatalog/pages/c699.shtml>



WHAT IS SAID ABOUT ARABS AND TERRORISM

ISSAM SALAMEH

USA / 2006 / 120 MIN

This is a multi-faceted research and documentary project on Arabs and Terrorism. It is unique in its breadth and scope: researched in 6 languages and filmed on location in 11 countries, with 120 experts/politicians and hundreds of street interviews in the United States, Europe, and the Arab world. It examines the dominant discourse on

terrorism in the United States and Europe and offers critics an opportunity to respond. The research component is available on this site as a resource, and the documentary component is available for viewing in a variety of ways, including on television/DVD, in theatres/festivals, and as part of a made-to-order screening and lecture tour involving the director and crew.

<http://arabsandterrorism.com>

WE

ANONYMOUS (OR "ANON")

WEB-BASED FILM / 2006 / 64 MIN

We is a fast-paced 64 minute documentary that covers the world politics of power, war, corporations, deception and exploitation. It visualizes the words of Arundhati Roy, specifically her famous Come September speech, where she spoke on such things as the war on terror, corporate globalization, justice and the growing civil unrest. It's witty, moving, alarming and quite a lesson in modern history. We is almost in the style of a continuous music video. The music used sets the pace and serves as wonderful background for the words of Ms. Roy and images of humanity in the world we live all in today. We is a completely free documentary, created and released anonymously on the internet.

<http://www.weroy.org/>

HIP HOP: BEYOND BEATS AND RHYMES

BYRON HURT

USA / 2006 / 61 MIN

Hip Hop: Beyond Beats & Rhymes provides a riveting examination of representations of manhood in hip hop culture. Director Byron Hurt, former college quarterback, gender violence prevention educator and longtime hip hop fan, pays tribute to hip hop while challenging the rap music industry to take responsibility for too often perpetuating destructive, deeply conservative styles of manhood that glamorize sexism, violence, and homophobia. Taking his camera from the street to the recording studio to the corridors of industry power, Hurt elicits fascinating insights into hip hop masculinity from ordinary kids, aspiring rappers, music mogul



Russell Simmons, rap stars Mos Def, Fat Joe, Chuck D. Jadaakis and Busta Rhymes, and prominent cultural critics such as Michael Eric Dyson, Kevin Powell and Beverly Guy-Sheftall. The film is at once gripping and educational in its fearless, unflinching engagement with issues of race, gender violence and the corporate exploitation of youth culture.

<http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/hiphop/>

UP THE RIDGE

NICK SZUBERLA AND AMELIA KIRBY

USA / 2006 / 60 MIN

Up the Ridge is a one-hour television documentary produced by Nick Szuberla and Amelia Kirby. In 1999 Szuberla and Kirby were volunteer DJ's for the Appalachian region's only hip-hop radio program in Whitesburg, KY when they received hundreds of letters from inmates transferred into nearby Wallens Ridge, the region's newest prison built to prop up the shrinking coal economy. The letters described human rights violations and

racial tension between staff and inmates. Filming began that year and, though the lens of Wallens Ridge State Prison, the program offers viewers an in-depth look at the United States prison industry and the social impact of moving hundreds of thousands of inner-city minority offenders to distant rural outposts. The film explores competing political agendas that align government policy with human rights violations, and political expedencies that

bring communities into racial and cultural conflict with tragic consequences. Connections exist, in both practice and ideology, between human rights violations in Abu Ghraib and physical and sexual abuse recorded in American prisons.

<http://www.appalshop.org/h2h/film/>



WHEN THE LEVEES BROKE: A REQUIEM IN FOUR ACTS

SPIKE LEE

USA / 2006 / 6 HRS

As the world watched in horror, Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans on August 29, 2005. Like many who watched the unfolding drama on television news, director Spike Lee was shocked not only by the scale of the disaster, but by the slow, inept and disorganized response of the emergency and recovery effort. Lee was moved to document this modern American tragedy, a morality play witnessed by people all around the world. The result is WHEN THE LEVEES BROKE: A REQUIEM IN FOUR ACTS. The film is structured in four acts, each dealing with a different aspect of the events that preceded and followed Katrina's catastrophic passage through New Orleans.

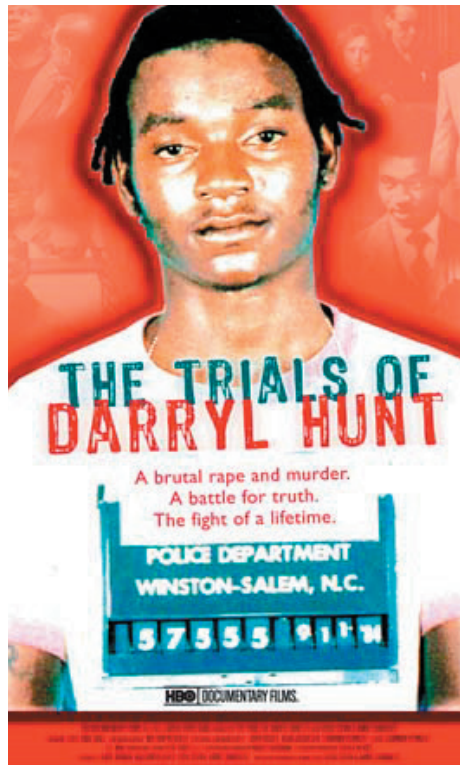
<http://www.hbo.com/docs/programs/whentheleveesbroke/>

THE TRIALS OF DARRYL HUNT

ANNIE SUNDBERG AND RICKI STERN

USA / 2006 / 90 MIN

In 1984, a young white newspaper reporter, Deborah Sykes, was raped, sodomized and stabbed to death just blocks from where she worked in Winston-Salem, NC. Based on an ID made by a former Klan member, a 19-year-old black man, Darryl Hunt, was charged. No physical evidence linked Hunt to the crime. Hunt was convicted by an all white jury, and sentenced to life imprisonment. In 1994, DNA testing cleared Hunt, yet he would spend another ten years behind bars. The film chronicles this capital case from 1984 through 2004. With personal narratives and exclusive footage from two decades, the film frames the judicial and emotional responses to this chilling crime - and the implications surrounding Hunt's



conviction - against a backdrop of class and racial bias in America. This unique look at one man's loss and redemption challenges the assumption that all Americans have the right to unbiased justice. <http://www.breakthrufilms.org>

WOMEN IN AN INSECURE WORLD

BARBARA RADY-RUPF

SWITZERLAND / 2006 / 82 MIN

Violence against women and girls transcends the bounds of culture and religion, race, age, geography and wealth. Violence affects women everywhere, in private and public spaces, during peacetime and in wartime. Women in an Insecure World is the work of acclaimed Swiss filmmaker, Barbara Rady-Rupf. Filmed in Moldova, Switzerland, France, Ethiopia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and India, with further footage from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sierra Leone, it highlights the myriad forms of violence against women, in particular: trafficking for forced prostitution, domestic violence, female genital mutilation, rape during armed conflict and female infanticide.

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/iwd/2007/>

<http://www.dcaf.ch/women/dvd/women-in-an-insecure-world.cfm>

LOVE, HONOUR AND DISOBEY

SAEEDA KHANUM

UK / 2005 (RELEASED IN N.A. IN 2006) / 61 MIN

This powerful documentary combines chilling testimony

from those abused with a forceful analysis of the issues that make domestic violence an even more difficult experience for minority women, who generally wait longer to report abuse and seek help. Also astutely examined are the roles of culturally sensitive policing, religious fundamentalism and the attitudes of minority communities themselves in continuing to endanger the lives of many women. **LOVE, HONOUR, & DISOBEY** reveals the issues around domestic violence in Britain's black and ethnic minority communities through the eyes of the Southall Black Sisters, a small group of women who have been working to combat abuse for more than 25 years.
<http://www.wmm.com/filmcatalog/pages/c689.shtml>

ESTRELLAS DE LA LINEA (THE RAILROAD ALLSTARS)

CHEMA RODRIGUEZ
SPAIN / 2006 / 90 MIN

Valeria, Vilma, Mercy and their fellow workers dream of being treated with dignity and the end of the violence they suffer on a daily basis. They are Guatemalan prostitutes, two-dollar-a-trick prostitutes. They work La Línea (The Line), beside the railway tracks which cross the capital. In order to draw attention to their problems (police harassment and murders which go unpunished), they form a football team, train for weeks and sign up for a local tournament, from which they are expelled because of their way of making a living. Their expulsion generates a lively debate in the country, a mixture of rejection and

support which is set to change their lives overnight. This is their story.

<http://www.lahiguera.net/cinemanía/pelicula/2570/>

WHAT'S RACE GOT TO DO WITH IT?

CALIFORNIA NEWSREEL
USA / 2006 / 49 MIN

What's Race Got to Do with It? chronicles the journey of a diverse group of students participating in a 15-week intergroup dialogue program at U.C. Berkeley. As the students share personal stories, debate hot topics, and confront one another about the role race plays in their lives, they make discoveries about their preconceived ideas and assumptions, and in so doing, help us begin to disentangle our own. The film goes beyond identity politics, celebratory history and guilt trips to help viewers "see through" achievement myths and create a safe space for open, honest exchange, particularly within educational environments.
<http://www.whatsrace.org>

LA HAINE (RE-RELEASE, CLASSIC VERSION)

MATHIEU KASSOVITZ
FRANCE / 1995 (RE-RELEASED 2006) / 97 MIN

When he was just twenty-nine years old, Mathieu Kassovitz took the international film world by storm with *La haine* (Hate), a gritty, unsettling, and visually explosive look at the racial and cultural volatility in modern-day France, specifically in the low-

income banlieue districts on Paris's outskirts. Aimlessly whiling away their days in the concrete environs of their dead-end suburbia, Vinz (Vincent Cassel), Hubert (Hubert Koundé), and Saïd (Saïd Taghmaoui)—a Jew, an African, and an Arab—give human faces to France's immigrant populations, their bristling resentment at their social marginalization slowly simmering until they reach a climactic boiling point. A work of tough beauty, *La haine* is a landmark of contemporary French cinema and a gripping reflection of its country's ongoing identity crisis.

<http://www.criterionco.com/asp/release.asp?id=381>



LE PLAFOND DE VERRE
YAMINA BENGUIGI
FRANCE / 2005 (RELEASED IN 2006) / 104 MIN

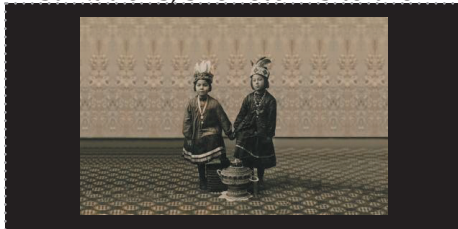
A documentary on racism in the workplace that director Yamina Benguigi hopes will spur an affirmative action movement in France. The quota system does not yet exist in France due to its views on how equality should be handled. The film's called *Le Plafond de Verre* (Glass Ceiling), and it follows the frequent discrimination faced by France's immigrant communities, mostly black and North African Arab, when job hunting. And Benguigi, who was born in France of Arab-Algerian parents, is marketing the film in a unique way--she's holding

her own weekly screenings sessions in a Paris theater. http://www.allocine.fr/film/fichefilm/gen_cfilm=109379.html

WABAN-AKI

ALANIS OBOMSAWIN
CANADA / 2006 / 104 MIN

Yvonne M'Sadoques rocks forward in her chair. She's lived in the Abenaki community of Odanak for over a century - and has no shortage of stories to tell. "The priest would march into our home and order us to stop dancing. We were going to the devil, he said." She pauses, a humorous glint in her eye. "But you know - I don't really believe in the devil. Do you?" M'Sadoques is in conversation with Alanis Obomsawin, another of Odanak's proud daughters - and one of Canada's leading documentary filmmakers. Obomsawin's illustrious career comes full circle with Waban-Aki: People from Where the Sun Rises. Having dedicated nearly four decades to chronicling the lives of Canada's First Nations, she returns to the



village where she was raised to craft a lyric account of her own people.

<http://citizen.nfb.ca/onf/info?did=561>

UNREPENTANT

KEVIN ARNETT
CANADA / 2006 / 90 MIN

UNREPENTANT chronicles Canada's "dirty secret" - the planned extermination of aboriginal people in church-run Indian Residential Schools - and a clergyman's struggle to document and make public these crimes. For the first time since its release in New York last November, this ground-breaking film will be screened before audiences in central Canada. UNREPENTANT is an intensely human story based on the first-hand testimonies of aboriginal survivors of Canada's "residential schools", where more than 50,000 children died between 1890 and 1984. Their passionate accounts are interwoven with former United Church minister Kevin Annett's own story of how he faced firing, "defrocking", and the loss of his family, livelihood and reputation because of his efforts to help residential school survivors and bring out the full truth of the murder and torture that occurred in these schools. <http://www.hiddenfromhistory.org/>

500 YEARS LATER

OWEN 'ALIK SHAHADAH
UK/USA / 2006 / 91 MIN

500 Years Later represents a fresh, unapologetic African narrative on the crisis and legacy of enslavement. The film not only embodies the story of the African Diaspora, but also carries the culture of our people in its subtext. The single most compelling factor in the making of 500 Years Later was an overwhelming desire to produce a single body of work that summoned up, chronicled and addressed the critical issues facing

Africans globally - one which spoke in positive reaffirming terms to African people in the Diaspora. This film also serves as a reference point for our generation and future generations. The techniques employed did not rely on emotions to build the case from an African standpoint. We dealt with facts over emotion and truth over everything. So the film also re-examines our own failings - I believe this makes it unprecedented.

http://www.africanholocaust.net/500_flash/Flash/500_flash.htm

A CRY IN THE DARK

HAOBAM PABAN KUMAR
INDIA / 2006 / 52 MIN

At the beginning of June 2004, film-school student Paban Kumar returned to his home in Manipur for the holidays. This small Indian federal state had been under British rule from the end of the nineteenth century. It attained autonomy within India in 1947, but was soon occupied by Indian soldiers, who were supposed to fight alleged separatist movements. Nevertheless, this resulted in these forces primarily tyrannising the local inhabitants. On 11 June, however, the entire nation rose up and began demonstrating. Thangiam Manorama, a young woman, had been arrested, raped and tortured to death for no reason. After the mass demonstrations were violently broken up, several students tried to set themselves alight. Among other things, the film documents the extraordinary brutality of the Indian police forces, who are obviously not even deterred by the presence of a camera. Paban

Kumar's documentary records the chain of events that took place up to the end of September 2004, but whose final outcome is still unravelling. For the rest of the world, India is still the largest democracy on earth and the people of Manipur are just an invisible minority.

http://www.jedensvet.cz/ow/2007/index_en.php#

BOY I AM

SAM FEDER & JULIE HOLLAR
USA / 2006 / 72 MIN

An important exploration of issues rarely touched upon by most films portraying female-to-male (FTM) transgender experiences, this feature-length documentary sets itself apart from other recent films on this topic. Because some women in feminists and lesbian communities view transitioning as at best a "trend" or at worst an anti-feminist act that taps into male privilege, in-depth conversations about transgender issues have often been resisted in these circles. Tackling the

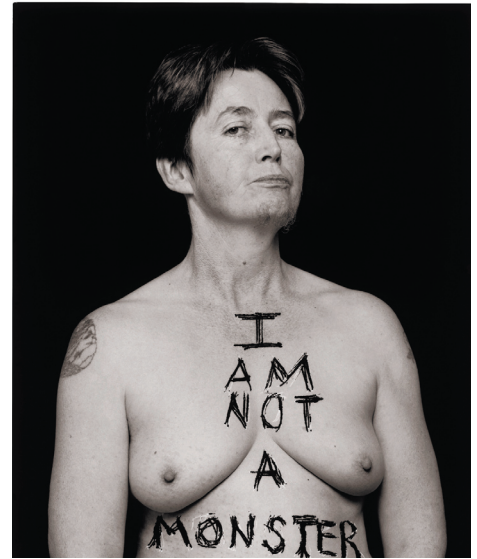
resistance of some women in feminists and lesbian communities who view FTM transitioning as at best a "trend" or at worst an anti-feminist act that taps into male privilege, this groundbreaking film opens up a dialog between the lesbian, feminist, and transgender communities while also promoting understanding of transgender issues for general audiences.

<http://boyiam.mayfirst.org/About.html>

BLACK AND WHITE

KIRSTY MACDONALD
NEW ZEALAND / 2006 / 17 MIN

BLACK AND WHITE shines a sensitive light on a subject that is too often either shunned or sensationalized: the experiences of intersex people (sometimes called hermaphrodites). This beautiful and stylish film artfully explores the potent creative collaboration between Mani Bruce Mitchell and the acclaimed photographer Rebecca Swan. Portrayed



through this lens, Mitchell's story introduces viewers to notions of fluid gender identity, challenging the rigid categories of "male" and "female."

<http://www.wmm.com/filmcatalog/pages/c697.shtml>



REEL BAD ARABS

Yasmin Jiwani

Oily sheiks, lecherous men, provocative belly dancers, bomb wielding terrorists, and women in black: these are the images of Arabs that have dominated the screen since the birth of Hollywood. The Media Education Foundation's recently released *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People* captures the multiple guises in which Hollywood has cast all who are perceived to be Arab. Featuring author Jack Shaheen, the documentary details the consistently pejorative ways in which Arabs have been represented. Shaheen's previous award winning book, *TV Arab* (1984) and his more recent book *Reel Bad Arabs* (2001) form the foundation of the analysis offered.



In the film, Shaheen queries how we have come to a point where these stereotypical depictions are simply taken for granted. He suggests that in part the currency of these stereotypes rests on the bedrock of knowledge accumulated through the European colonization of the Middle East. Travelogues, and other such media, contributed to the mythology of the Orient and Orientalism. This is where 'Arabland' - the mythological space of the Orient first acquired form and infused early Hollywood portrayals of all things considered Arab. Over time,



the inhabitants and character of Arabland became increasingly embellished. The Harem maidens clad in provocative see-through pantaloons, the instant Ali Baba kit, the magic carpet and the snake charmers represent the fantastic in this mythical Orient of Arabland. The contemporary version of Arabland is most apparent in Disney's *Aladdin* where in the original version, Aladdin's sings the following line, "Oh I come from a land, from a faraway place, where the caravan camels roam; Where they cut off your ears if they don't like your face; It's barbaric, but hey, its home."

Through clips from various films, Shaheen demonstrates the myriad ways in which Arabs are vilified: as barbaric others, buffoons, inept and incompetent idiots, lecherous sex maniacs (their insatiable weakness for blonde haired western women being a constant theme), and as greedy, manipulative and conniving people. He argues that historical and current depictions of Arabs parallel those of Jews in Nazi Germany. Arab women, he reflects, were initially represented as highly sexualized belly dancers but have now emerged as terrorists. Most often, they are portrayed in the background as faceless and nameless 'bundles in black.'

One of the strongest points of the documentary is when Shaheen discusses the intimate connections between Washington and Hollywood; both reinforce each other. He suggests that Hollywood's image of the Arab Other changed after WWII as a result of three significant events: the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the Arab Oil Embargo in the 1970s, and the Iranian revolution and hostage taking incident involving Americans in the 1980s. The events of September 11 have galvanized these representations such that even the words Arab and Muslim are now semantically loaded as signifiers of threat, conspiracy and terrorism.

Washington and Hollywood's intimate connections have also determined how cinema has represented Palestinians as the quintessential evil terrorists. Shaheen draws attention to the films produced by Menahem Golan and Yoram Globus through Cannon Productions. Over a twenty-year period, these producers released 30 films that had the most pejorative representations of Palestinians. In these films, Israelis are consistently represented as innocent victims, while Palestinians are portrayed as barbaric Others. Some of these films continue to be broadcast as part of regular television programming. Similarly, Washington and Hollywood's mutually reinforcing agenda has ensured the explicit involvement of the Department of Defense in Hollywood productions resulting in films such as *Rules of Engagement*.

Shaheen concludes that the image of the Arab has not changed much. In effect, the same stereotypes keep circulating despite the complexity of the Arab world, its heterogeneity and the diverse religious traditions that characterize it. Arabs are scarcely if ever humanized. The documentary juxtaposes film cuts showing Arabs as terrorists, lecherous and conniving men with the daily realities of people living in Middle East. Shaheen emphasizes the power of such representations to legitimize



violence, whether it is through war and occupation or in the racist attacks on Arabs in America. Here he clearly argues that the war in Iraq was rendered acceptable and legitimized by the repetitive circulation of negative representations of the Arab Other. Whether it is Arabs in the Middle East or Arab-Americans, the message is the same – Reel/Real Arabs are a threat to be contained if not annihilated.

Although Shaheen concludes the documentary on an optimistic note emphasizing the power of youth to challenge and change existing representations, we are left doubting whether such change is indeed possible without a corresponding change in Washington's political agenda. Without such a change, there is little impetus to alter the way things are. To legitimize domination, one necessarily needs a villain and that villain has to be construed as a threat to be conquered and subjugated, if not eliminated, in the interests of maintaining control.

Reel Bad Arabs is available through the Media Education Foundation. www.mediaed.org



UPCOMING CONFERENCES

INTERNATIONAL FEMINIST SUMMIT - WOMEN OF IDEAS: FEMINIST THINKING FOR A NEW ERA

Website: <http://www.feministagenda.org.au/Summit/summitIndex.html>

Contact name: Coralie McLean

This feminist event is for all those who denounce the escalating violence and oppression, the exclusion and silencing of women, that mark the 21st Century and believe a strong feminist response is essential for creating a fairer future.

GENDER UNBOUND

AN INTERNATIONAL, INTER-DISCIPLINARY CONFERENCE IN THE AREA OF LAW, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY

9-11 July 2007 at Keele University, Staffordshire, UK
Exploring the intersections between gender and sexuality, as well as how other social relations (eg, race, disability) impact on and are shaped by these. The conference includes some sessions in non-traditional formats.

Web address: <http://www.kent.ac.uk/clgs/events/genderunbound.htm>

Sponsored by: The AHRC Research Centre for Law, Gender and Sexuality

MASCULINITY AND THE OTHER:

AN INTERDISCIPLINARY CONFERENCE

This interdisciplinary conference will bring together scholars studying masculinities in a variety of fields, including literature, history, art history, sociology and philosophy, to explore some of the forms of 'otherness' against which ideas of masculinity have been defined over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. By taking an interdisciplinary approach to the question we hope to uncover a fuller and more complex picture of what, historically, socially and culturally, it means to be a man.

Balliol College Oxford on 29th-30th August 2007

Website: <http://masculinityandtheother.googlepages.com>

Contact name: Heather Ellis

SUMMER INSTITUTE

Website: <http://www.whrn.ca>

Contact name: Susan Dixon

This event will provide a forum for knowledge translation and exchange and the creation of new and innovative collaborations in women's health and gender and diversity research. Join us at Cecil Green Park House at UBC on June 7-8, 2007.

Organized by: Women's Health Research Network

EMPIRE: THE HUMAN CONDITION SERIES

17-19 May, 2007

Barrie, Ontario

Website: <http://humancondition.wordpress.com/>

Contact name: Darlene Forrester

The series - The Human Condition - is an international, multidisciplinary conference that seeks to address the current state of the human condition. The naturalizing project of Empire, itself, is an unlivable human condition.

TEACHING GENDER IN THE 21ST CENTURY 29 JUNE 2007

London, United Kingdom

Website: http://www.c-sap.bham.ac.uk/events/new_event.htm?id=121

Contact name: Frances Worall

This one-day conference seeks to explore how the issues of 'gender', 'sexual divisions' and 'sexuality' are currently taught in the social sciences in Higher Education. Key note speakers are Profs. Angela McRobbie and Jeffrey Weeks.

Organized by: British Sociological Association & C-SAP (Higher Education Academy)

MULTICULTURALISM, PLURALISM AND GLOBALIZATION

4 to 5 October 2007

La Crosse, Wisconsin, United States

Website: <http://www.uwsp.edu/history/WIPCS/WIPCS1.htm>

Contact name: Dr. Deborah Buffton

We invite proposals for individual papers and entire panels for an interdisciplinary conference on multiculturalism, pluralism, and globalization. Papers and presentations from all disciplines and time periods are welcome.

Organized by: The Wisconsin Institute For Peace And Conflict Studies

WORLD WORK 2008: 11TH INTERNATIONAL

**CONFERENCE: DOORWAYS TO
DIVERSITY: FINDING A HOME IN
THE WORLD**

24 to 29 April, 2008, London, UK

Website: [http://](http://www.worldwork.org)

www.worldwork.org

Contact name: Stanya Studentova,
Anup Karia

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WOMEN'S WORLDS 2008

**10TH INTERNATIONAL
INTERDISCIPLINARY CONGRESS
ON WOMEN/ THEMES OF VIOLENCE
AND MIGRATION**

Deadline- Feb. 4th 08

Madrid, Spain

www.mmww08.org

**WAR, EMPIRE, SLAVERY C. 1790-
1820**

Deadline- April 30th 07

University of York, UK

[www.york.ac.uk/inst/cecs/conf/
nbi/NBI.htm](http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/cecs/conf/nbi/NBI.htm)



RECENT PUBLICATIONS ON RACE

compiled by Marie-Claire MacPhee

**A Place at the Multicultural Table: The Development of an American
Hinduism**

Prema A. Kurien. Rutgers University Press, 2007.

Afghanistan: Political Frailty and External Interference

Nabi Misdaq. Routledge Press, 2006.

**Another Face of Empire: Bartolomé de Las Casas, Indigenous Rights, and
Ecclesiastical Imperialism**

Daniel Castro. Duke University Press, 2007.

Arabs

Mark Allen. Continuum Press, 2006.

Awakening Warrior: Revolution in the Ethics of Warfare

Timothy L. Challans. State University of New York Press, 2007.

**Between Colonialism and Diaspora: Sikh Cultural Formations in an Imperial
World**

Tony Ballantyne. Duke University Press, 2006.

Beyond Belief: India and the Politics of Postcolonial Nationalism

Srirupa Roy. Duke University Press, Forthcoming.

Beyond Terror: Gender, Narrative, Human Rights

Elizabeth Swanson Goldberg. Rutgers University Press, 2007.

Black Geographies and the Politics of Place

Edited by Katherine McKittrick and Clyde Woods. South End Press, 2007.

**Blackness and Modernity: The Colour of Humanity and the Quest for
Freedom**

Cecil Foster. McGill Queen's University Press, 2007.

Bodies in Dissent: Spectacular Performances of Race and Freedom, 1850-1910

Daphne A. Brooks. Duke University Press, 2006.

Body Evidence: Intimate Violence against South Asian Women in America

Edited by Shamita Das Dasgupta. Rutgers University Press, 2007.

Challenging Notions: Critical Victimology in Canada

Tammy C. Landau. Canadian Scholar's Press, 2007.

Color of Violence: The INCITE! Anthology.

Andrea Smith, Beth E. Richie, Julia Sudbury. South End Press, 2006.

Colored Amazons: Crime, Violence, and Black Women in the City of Brotherly Love, 1880-1910

Kali N. Gross. Duke University Press, 2006.

Cradle of Liberty: Race, the Child, and National Belonging from Thomas Jefferson to W. E. B. Du Bois

Caroline F. Levander. Duke University Press, 2006.

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Edited by: Gillian Balfour and Elizabeth Comack. Fernwood Publishing, 2006.

Cultural Sites of Critical Insight: Philosophy, Aesthetics, And African American And Native American Women's Writings

Angela L. Cotten and Christa Davis. State University of New York Press, 2007.

Deconstructing Tyrone: A New Look at Black Masculinity in the Hip-Hop Generation

Natalie Y Moore and Natalie Hopkinson. Cleis Press, 2006.

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Thabit A.J. Abdullah. Zed Books, 2006.

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Peggy Reeves Sanday, New York University Press, 2007.

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Adam Jones. Routledge Press, 2006.

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By Ian Condry. Duke University Press, 2007.

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Matt Wray. Duke University Press, 2006.

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Edited by Jane Jeong Trenka, Julia Chinyere Oparah, and Sun Yung Shin. South End Press. 2006.

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Edited by Shannon Sullivan and Nancy Tuana. State University of New York Press, 2007.

Race Riots: Comedy and Ethnicity in Modern British Fiction

Michael L. Ross. McGill Queen's University Press, 2006.

Religion and Canadian Society Traditions, Transitions, and Innovations

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Laura Maria Agustin. Zed Books, 2007.

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Zillah Eisenstein. Zed Books, 2007.

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Gurharpal Singh and Darshan Singh Tatla. Zed Books, 2006.

Territoires et Trajectoires [adapted from 13 Conversations About Art and Cultural Race Politics]

Monika Kin Gagnon and Richard Fung. Adapted and translated by Colette Tougas. Montreal: Artexes Editions, 2006.

Terrorism as Crime: From Oklahoma City to Al-Qaeda and Beyond

Mark S. Hamm, New York University Press, 2007.

The Cultivation of Whiteness: Science, Health, and Racial Destiny in Australia

Warwick Anderson. Duke University Press. 2006

The Heart of Whiteness: Normal Sexuality and Race in America, 1880-1940

Julian Carter. Duke University Press. 2007.

The Indigenous Experience: Global Perspectives

Roger C.A. Maaka and Chris Anderson. Canadian Scholar's Press, 2006.

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What Lies Beneath: Katrina, Race, and the State of the Nation

Edited by The South End Press Collective Released. South End Press, 2007.

Where Now For Palestine: The Demise of the Two-State Solution

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When the Prisoners Ran Walpole: A True Story in the Movement for Prison Abolition

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