

***Theorizing Empowerment: Canadian Perspectives on Black Feminist Thought.* Notisha Massaquoi and Njoki Nathani Wane, editors. Toronto, Canada: Inanna Publications and Education, 2007; xiv+314 pages; ISBN 978-0-9782233-4-2; \$29.95 (paper).**

Theorizing Empowerment is a response to the ongoing colonial project that silences the experiences, diversity, and resistance of African women. Written from a transnational perspective, but drawing on Canadian experiences, this collection counters the myth of Canada as a multicultural and tolerant nation by highlighting the failure of multicultural policies to acknowledge the legacy of the nation as a White settler society. The writers included in this collection advocate for a diverse Canadian feminism that demands the Canada that is being promoted in these policies: a Canada that integrates experience, rather than assimilates identities.

In the introduction, editors Massaquoi and Wane set a large agenda for this collection. They want to provide space for coalition-building, resistance, and empowerment designed for "Academics, Artists, and Activists." They want this collection to seize the "moment of possibility" for articulating a counter movement within mainstream feminism and the Canadian nation. They want this collection to create methodologies that recognize previously ignored identities and lead a progressive movement toward integrating theories and privileging experience. Their success on all these fronts is dubious; however, they open up the conversation in the direction of forging these goals by illuminating two holes in Western feminist theory.

First, this collection does successfully address the neglect of Black women's experiences in mainstream feminist theory. Crawford's "Black Women, Racing and Gendering the Canadian Nation" and Bobb-Smith's "'We Get Troo...'" present the experiences of Black Canadian women as outside the purview of feminist theory and demonstrate some of the strategies used to overcome this exclusion. Second, *Theorizing Empowerment* acknowledges that Black women in Canada speak from a different place and have different experiences than their African-American sisters. This is seen in the cleverly titled, "Building Sandcastles in the Snow" by Amoah and "An Unsettled Feminist Discourse" by Massaquoi. The editors' goals are also achieved by dividing the text into four main sections. In each section, the works included destabilize colonial ways of knowing by spinning out the meanings and nuances of labels and ideologies. In this they demonstrate the uniqueness of Black Canadian feminist theory through spirituality, history, experience, and activism. However, although the first section on spirituality seems intended to express the centrality of spirituality to Black women's lives and theories, I found this section long and lacking the power of later sections.

The strongest articles in this collection are the ones that draw on participant-based research and highlight the voices of Black Canadian women: Timothy's article on nomenclature and identity and Tharao and Cornwell's discussion of Black women's activism and mainstream healthcare, for example. However, because "Experience" is relegated as the third section, articles such as Madibbo's "Race, Language, and *la Francophonie*," get lost midway through the book, lessening the impact of her discussion of immigration, service access, and linguistic isolation.

This collection demonstrates the passion Massaquoi and Wane have for showcasing the depth, breath, and continuous presence of a Black Canadian feminism that has responded to and survived a history of colonial erasure. Although it would have been impossible to address all the goals they laid out in the introduction, these goals, and this text, provide canonical groundwork for strong and important feminist theories that demand a welcoming, diverse, and truly multicultural Canadian nation.

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