

Reviews

ARTS, LITERATURE AND SPORT

THE MEMOIRS OF ALTON AUGUSTUS ADAMS, SR.: FIRST BLACK BANDMASTER OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY

Ed. Mark Clague

Publisher: University of California Press

Year: 2008

Pagination: 388pp

ISBN: 978-0520251311

Price: £35

Alton Augustus Adams Sr. (b. 1889 - 1987) was the first Black musician to attain bandmaster status in the US Navy. The framing biography charts Adams' life, from his entry into the US military in 1917 to his initiations into music to his extensive writing career – both in terms of music journalism and, later, his memoirs, which are edited here and contextualised by Clague.

The book starts with a foreword by Samuel A. Floyd Jr. who describes his friendship with Adams from the 1970s until the bandmaster's death in 1987. Here, Floyd Jr. highlights the importance of this kind of testimony - documents, he says, that all too often get relegated to the backrooms of history. Thereafter, Clague discusses Adams' relationship with W.E.B DuBois and the ways in which they were united through a shared passion for racial equality, education and political justice.

Chapters one and two focus on Adams' upbringing, told mostly in his own words. He describes growing up in St Thomas in the Virgin Islands – then a former Danish colony – and his early work education, firstly as a carpenter and then a shoemaker. He details his forays into music and literature and the early nourishment of his dream to be a professional musician. There follows a discussion of the various bands he became a part of and his entry into the formalised study of music. These early experiences led to the formation of the Adams Juvenile Band in 1910, described in more detail in chapter four.

The major episodes of Adams' life are described in detail in chapters five to eleven. Particular attention is paid to Adams' entry into the US Navy and the subsequent setting up of the Navy band. The 'early years' of the band – namely, 1917 – 1923 – are described in some depth in chapter five. The band's 'glory years' are described in chapter six. Here, the action centres on the band's tour of the United States in 1924.

Chapters seven and eight move away from the US Navy completely to focus on Adams' life in the 1920s. In chapter nine, the series of tragedies that beset Adams' life in the early 1930s are told in detail: the demise of his band and the death of two of his two daughters, firstly Merle, and later Hazel, who was killed in a house fire which also destroyed many of his music manuscripts, books and publications. Chapters ten and eleven reveal the ways in which Adams attempted to rebuild his life – moving into music publishing and working in the tourism industry by building and managing a guest house in St Thomas.

Also relates to:

Arts, Literature and Sport

Culture, Identity, Gender and Relationships

History

Politics and Government

"BAAD BITCHES" AND SASSY SUPERMAMAS: BLACK POWER ACTION FILMS

Stephane Dunn

Publisher: University of Illinois Press

Year: 2008

Pagination: 192pp

ISBN: 978-0252075483

Price: £12.99

Here, Dunn examines the portrayal of women, especially Black women, in a range of action films – from low-budget ‘blaxploitation’ films to more ‘radical’ independent films. The author charts the influence of the Black Power movement and feminism on more progressive films, and the impact of less-progressive films on contemporary hip-hop culture.

Examining the relationship between power and the image, Dunn undertakes a critical analysis of the ‘blaxploitation’ genre and urges for more scholarly discussion on the impact and significance of Black film history. Employing critical spectatorship in the arena of race, gender and sexual politics, Dunn analyses the ways in which Black women, and their bodies, are represented within these films. Deconstructing the representational strategies and politics of the image, Dunn interrogates what she sees as, problematic imagery relating to Black femaleness within the action film genre. Building on existing critiques of film as contributing to proliferation of negative Black imagery, Dunn highlights how Black female spectatorship varies generationally and how ‘blaxploitation’ character icons both appeal to and repel Black female spectators. To this end, she takes aim at, what she interprets as, the voyeuristic pleasure of female sexual objectification as disguised as entertainment, and instead urges for the pleasures of mutual engagement and transformative representation.

The first half of the book traces the legacy of the ‘blaxploitation’ film and its influence on contemporary hip-hop. Defined here as a ‘studio-supported 1970s ghetto-action film’, the ‘blaxploitation’ genre is characterised through its representation of men as hyper masculine and women as subordinate sex objects; ‘bitches’ and ‘hos’ to male patriarchal bravado. Examples of this genre include *Shaft*, *Super Fly* and *Foxy Brown*, all of which are discussed in depth, and in relation to notions of Black cultural memory and nostalgia.

The final sections of the book examine the impact of the Black Power movement on the development of the popular Black film era and considers the political implications of such fantasy spectacles. Dunn shows how the representation of Black women as ‘baad bitches’ and ‘sassy supermamas’ in, for example, the characterisation of ‘Cleopatra Jones’ and ‘Foxy Brown’, was the direct result of radical political activism, which itself challenged dominant American ideology and subsequent power relations.

Also relates to:

Culture, Identity, Gender and Relationships

Politics and Government

Social Theory

LEARNING AT THE MUSEUM FRONTIERS: IDENTITY, RACE AND POWER’

Viv Golding

Publisher: Ashgate

Year: 2009

Pagination: 246pp

ISBN: 978-0754646914

Price: £55

Learning at the Museum Frontiers analyses the notion of the anthropology museum – its collections, curators and intended audience – and the colonial tendencies therein. The book examines the social responsibilities of museums, highlighting the potential for museums to be major agents of social change, to tackle social injustice and exclusion, and to promote awareness and understanding of diversity and difference. The author urges museums to review their policies and to adapt to change through an emphasis of collaboration and diverse programming.

Viv Golding, a leading museum educator, draws on a wide range of material for her analysis – from critical studies of ‘race’ and gender, to post-colonial discourse, and Black feminist theory. In keeping with the recent work of social geographers, *Learning at the Museum Frontiers* examines concepts of space, place and knowledge in its discussion of access, learning and power. The resulting text combines recent theoretical critiques and understandings with best practice implementation in the realm of museum and gallery work to produce a pedagogy of museum education.

Section one – ‘The Spatial Politics of the Museum Frontiers’ – explores issues of race, knowledge and truth. Delving into the history of the museum, the author highlights the problematic

relationship between knowledge and power as manifested through imperialism, colonialism and post-colonialism. In this vein, chapter one is a re-examination of the Enlightenment period, exploring notions of race and racialisation and, in particular, the formation of 'them/us', Western 'norm'/racialised 'other' within ethnographic thinking. The chapter moves on to highlight recent anti-racist responses to the historical and theoretical framings of museums. Chapter two is the result of the author's collaborative research with the 'Caribbean Women Writer's Alliance' (CWWA) and looks at the role of Black women's writing to engage wider and excluded communities.

Section two – 'Including New Voices and Forms of Practice' – examines the detachment of traditional exhibitions and the resultant exoticisation and framing of the racialised 'other'. Chapter three presents case studies of recent exhibitions that have challenged the notion of the 'museum', including re-enactments by indigenous groups within the spaces of the museum. Chapter four examines the historical shifts of power in South Africa and its affect on the power structures of museum organising.

The chapters comprising the final section – 'Critical Collaborative Museum Pedagogy' – examine the role of the museum in addressing issues of low self-esteem in Black children; the roots of Black underachievement as explored through holistic approaches; and cross-cultural and embodied forms of knowledge.

Also relates to:

Culture, Identity, Gender and Relationships

Education

History

Politics and Government

THE HERITAGE SERIES OF BLACK POETRY, 1962 – 1975: A RESEARCH COMPENDIUM

Ed. Lauri Ramey

Publisher: Ashgate

Year: 2008

Pagination: 327pp

ISBN: 978-0754657828

Price: £60

This anthology celebrates the *Heritage Series of Black Poetry*, which was founded and edited by Paul Breman and which published a total of 27 volumes of poetry between 1962 and 1975. Taken together, these publications comprise an impressive and important body of work. According to this collection's editor, Lauri Ramey, this body of work represents 'the twentieth-century's most important and influential poets'. This research compendium has two aims – firstly, to document the prolific output of a particularly progressive publishing house and, secondly, to celebrate Black poetry in the twentieth century.

In the introduction, Ramey discusses the circumstances which led to the situation in which a young Dutchman by the name of Paul Breman began collecting and disseminating African American poetry during the 1960s and 70s, at first independently and, later, through *The Heritage Series*. There follows a discussion of the socio-political climate of the post-World War Two era – the connections formed between Holocaust survivors and African American intellectuals, and the key figures who emerged out of a backdrop of Civil Rights and Black Power – including W.E.B. Du Bois, Audre Lorde and James W. Thompson.

The text itself is divided into four sections: 'Essays'; 'Memoirs and Reflections'; 'Statements on Poetry and Poetics'; and 'Poems'. In the 'Essays' section, a range of theorists consider a range of topics including: publisher and literary connections; Harlem Renaissance poetry; memory, consciousness, faith and spirituality in the work of Audre Lorde, Dolores Kendrick and Owen Vincent Dodson. The next section contains excerpts of memoirs pertaining to *The Heritage Series*, as written by active participants. Section three contains some critical reflections by some of the key poets involved with the movement. The final section covers the main contributions of African American poets who were published by *The Heritage Series*.

Also relates to:

History
Politics and Government

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND RACIAL VIOLENCE

LEGACY AND LEGITIMACY: BLACK AMERICANS AND THE SUPREME COURT

Rosalee A Clawson and Eric N Waltenburg

Publisher: Temple University Press

Year: 2009

Pagination: 232pp

ISBN: 978-1592139033

Price: £16.99

Examines Black Americans' interactions with the US Supreme Court, both in terms of their perceptions of the legal process as well as the Court's influence on people's judgements of social policies. The book starts by detailing significant historical landmarks, which came to define the year 1954 – from military intervention in Southeast Asia to the outlawing of the Communist Party in the United States and, most importantly for the purposes outlined here, the elimination of second-class citizenship for Black Americans. The latter point was decided by the Supreme Court during the case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*. According to Clawson and Waltenburg, the decision of the Supreme Court in this case proved instrumental not only in opening up public education to Black Americans but also for ensuring equal citizenship, at least in principle. However, a third, and often over-looked outcome, claim the authors, was the renewed respect accorded to the Supreme Court among African Americans. This forms the starting point of this survey into the attitudes of Black Americans towards the Court and, in turn, the high court's interaction with Black political and legal interests.

In sum, the authors set out to define African American attitudes towards the US Supreme Court, as explained through a framework of Legitimacy Theory. To this end, societal attitudes are defined as the result of historicity and regulated experiences which, in turn, produce credibility and justification of legal interventions and processes.

In terms of structure, the book starts by drawing attention to the importance of the Court in both securing and maintaining equality and justice for African Americans and, more importantly, the significant yet often overlooked role played by Black Americans ensuring the many court victories. The resulting phenomenon of Black American support for legal justice is explored in the context of the 1940s through to the 1970s.

Chapter two enforces Legitimacy Theory to highlight the ways in which the Court should legitimise policies among African Americans. In chapter three this central tenet is opened up to examine the influence of the Court more generally to highlight the need to move away from bureaucracy and towards 'affirmative action policy'. Chapter four focuses on press coverage pertaining to the *Adarand v. Peña* decision and the different responses elicited according to racial lines. This is expanded upon in chapter five. The final three chapters examine the discrepancies between Black American support to showing how Black affirmative action is in keeping with Court policy and that this serves as a reciprocal arrangement.

Also relates to:

Culture, Identity, Gender and Relationships

Politics and Government

WHAT IS GENOCIDE?

Martin Shaw

Publisher: Polity Press

Year: 2007

Pagination: 232pp

ISBN: 978-0745631837

Price: £15.99

As the title infers, the author returns to the origins of 'genocide' as a means of shifting attention away from an emphasis on individuality (namely, the identities of the perpetrators and victims)

and towards an understanding of genocide as a form of war directed against civilians. This shift in interpretation forms the mainstay of the book, which takes issue with the ways in which genocide has been theorised and understood both within 'genocide studies' and wider social studies. From the outset, the book presents a conceptual framing of genocide. However, the author tries, where possible, to link theoretical debate with historical and contemporary instances of genocide.

The book starts by justifying the study of genocide. Here, the author counters claims that such studies are 'unhealthy' and 'unjust' to instead show why such investigations are important to the wider social and political understanding of conflict and violence. Thereafter, the book is divided into two sections. The first part explores the 'Contradictions of Genocide Theory' whilst the second section examines the 'Sociology of Genocide'.

The first chapter of section one returns to the work of social theorist Raphael Lemkin who, the author claims, invented the term 'genocide'. According to Shaw, Lemkin was also responsible for getting the United Nations to pass a convention recognising genocide as an international crime against humanity. The chapter sets out Lemkin's founding principles and sociological treatise on genocide. Chapter three applies Lemkin's framework of genocide to the Holocaust, which, he claims, has come to represent the only form of genocide within current understandings of political violence. Shaw sets out to address this discrepancy. There follows a critique of the phrase 'ethnic cleansing' and, in particular, the ways in which it has been used as a substitute for genocide. The last chapter in this section explores the nuances of genocide in terms of the various 'isms' that are used to specify its proliferation.

The second section presents a theoretical overview of genocide as being both an intentional action and a 'structural concept formation', moving towards an understanding of the social relations of genocide. Taken together, claims Shaw, social intention and social relations together constitute the structure of social conflict underpinning genocide. Chapter seven illustrates how this works, by exploring the nature of social groups and the progression of group conflict and exclusion into social destruction and war. Chapter eight builds on this to discuss the role of the civilian during genocide. The section concludes with a glossary of terms relating to genocide.

Also relates to:

Culture, Identity, Gender and Relationships

History

Politics and Government

Social Theory

CULTURE, IDENTITY, GENDER AND RELATIONSHIPS

AFRO-BRAZILIANS: CULTURAL PRODUCTION IN A RACIAL DEMOCRACY

Niyi Afolabi

Publisher: University of Rochester Press

Year: 2009

Pagination: 440pp

ISBN: 978-1580462624

Price: £45

Afro-Brazilians starts by stating that racial democracy does not exist in Brazil; exposing as myth the image of Brazil as an inclusive and diverse Latin American country. This is shown, claims Afolabi, by the country's treatment of Afro-Brazilians who, he claims, remain marginalized within contemporary Brazilian culture. Drawing on his own experiences as a Nigerian student studying in Brazil, Afolabi claims that the psychology of slavery still exists, both in terms of societal attitudes towards Blackness and in the mindsets of Afro-Brazilians themselves. This forms the starting point for this exploration of the challenges faced by Afro-Brazilians from the 1800s to the present.

In introducing the book, Afolabi cites, what he sees as, the contradictory nature of Brazil in terms of its segregationist stance towards Afro-Brazilian people. Behind the nation's bid for 'harmonious relations', claims Afolabi, is a get-out clause for apathy with regards to racism and the maintenance of White Supremacy. In order to counter this tendency, the author instead draws attention to the

survival strategies of Afro-Brazilians. Described by the author as 'vital forces', these strategies convert forms of ancestral knowledge and awareness into tools of healing and cultural production. The various forms of cultural production – visual, verbal, social and political – are analysed by the author as evidence of the vitality of Afro-Brazilian culture from the nineteenth century onwards.

In summary, chapter one explores the nature of racial democracy as it relates to Brazilian culture in general and Afro-Brazilian culture, in particular in terms of social justice and social policy, as well as literary history and other forms of cultural production. Chapter two builds on this to draw attention to 'Quilombhoje' – a cultural collective centred on Afro-Brazilian literature. Chapter three sheds further light on the importance of literature for establishing a sense of Afro-Brazilian identity by analysing the work of women writers in this realm. This is followed by a discussion of the work of Antonio Olinto, a Yoruba diaspora writer (chapter four) and Gilberto Gil, a musician (chapter five). Thereafter, chapter six focuses on the potential of the Afro-Brazilian carnival as an agent of socio-cultural change. The genre of film forms the subject matter of chapter seven. The remaining chapters (eight through to ten) explore the tension between modernity and tradition in modern-day Afro-Brazilian culture over the last two centuries. The book closes with a discussion of the interaction of ancestry, memory and citizenship in the everyday life experiences of Afro-Brazilian communities (chapters eleven – thirteen).

Also relates to:

Arts, Literature and Sport

History

Politics and Government

ISLAM AND MODERNITIES

Aziz Al-Azmeh

Publisher: Verso

Year: 2009

Pagination: 234pp

ISBN: 978-1844673858

Price: £12.99

First published in 1993, *Islams and Modernities* is here updated and expanded to include a discussion of the current position of Islam in a post 9/11 climate. Al-Azmeh here provides a historical overview of the relationship between Islam and 'the West' in order to challenge the notion of Islam as a fixed and unchanging entity.

The majority of essays of which *Islams and Modernities* is comprised, were written in the 1980s and 90s with the exception of chapters two and nine, which contain a recent essay on Osama Bin Laden and an updated account of the global situation of Islam. In this third edition, Al-Azmeh responds to the original publication and the wealth of discussion generated. Particular attention is paid to 'the Muslim question' as examined through contemporary Islamic thought, historical analysis, and post/modernist perspectives.

Chapter one – 'Culturalism, Grand Narrative of Capitalism Exultant' – examines the notion of cross-cultural conversations. The author takes issue with, what he sees as, fixed assumptions pertaining both to monolithic positioning and dated notions of culturalism as regards to both Islam and the West. This cultural hegemony, claims the author, takes as its starting point a language of primitivism. The next chapter – 'Civilization, Culture and the New Barbarians' – continues this line of thought and expands the discussion to focus on the 're-barbarization' of Islam. The chapter includes a discussion of civilisation in light of ideas pertaining to 'disenchantment', 'reactionary ideals', the Enlightenment and degeneration.

Chapter three – 'The Religious and the Secular in Contemporary Arab Life' – is more self-reflexive in tone, bringing to the picture a discussion of contemporary Arab life as it is negotiated on a personal and experiential level. There follows a discussion of Islam as it relates to a range of secular traditions pertaining to significant events over the course of modern Arab history. The next chapter – 'Islamism and the Arabs' – discusses the notion of 'Islamism' in relation to ideas of Neo-Orientalism, politicisation and democracy.

The remaining chapters explore the notion of Islamic revivalism as it relates to the Enlightenment (chapter five), the influence of the Koran on Modernist Reformism (chapter six) and the diversity of notions of utopia within contemporary Islamic political ideology (chapter seven). Chapter eight presents an overview of the Wahhabite movement – namely, the social and power dynamics of a particular tribal group - and, according to the author, Western incomprehension and misunderstanding pertaining to its multi-faceted tenants. The book finishes with a discussion of the role of Islamic Studies in Western academic thought and, in particular, post-modern discussions of 'The Muslim Question'.

Also relates to:

History

Migration, Immigration and the Refugee Experience

Politics and Government

ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF THE JEWISH DIASPORA: ORIGINS, EXPERIENCES AND CULTURE, VOL. 2

Ed. M. Avrum Ehrlich

Publisher: ABC - CLIO Ltd

Year: 2008

Pagination: 1254pp

ISBN: 978-1851098736

Price: £190

This resource is the second of three volumes pertaining to the history and geography of the Jewish Diaspora. According to the editor, this series is the first of its kind. Taken together, the three volumes explore the founding of the nation of Israel and consequent Judean conquests. Building on from volume one, which contained numerous essays about the Jewish Diaspora experience, volume two concerns the spatial aspects of Jewish Diaspora – examining the geographical spread and migration of generations of Jewish people as a result of conflict, opportunity and collective identity.

The volume contains both overviews of the major historical events and dominant communities of Jewish people world-wide as well as in-depth case studies that explore the nuances of specific communities. It is divided into three parts. The first part highlights the phenomena associated with the Jewish experience, introducing readers to the history of Diasporic Jews. Here, various issues are tackled – persecution, religion, languages, biology and medicine, ethnicities and culture, and gender. The second part is divided into five geographical locations – Africa, Australasia, North America, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East. Here, the authors discuss community identity and formation in both hyper-visible sites as well as lesser-known sites of Jewish Diasporic formation. The final part builds on the methods employed in section two to zoom in on individual experiences and community stories in a wide range of places, from Western Europe and Scandinavia to East Asia and the Baltic States.

The introduction highlights the importance of Diaspora Studies and, in particular, the study of Jewish diasporic people. Here, the author cites the urgency of such studies, not only to understand the nuances of this phenomenon, but in order to prevent future atrocities linked with the turbulent processes of forced migration. Linked to this, the author claims, is the fact that Jewish diasporas have remained hidden, largely as a result of forced assimilation (whether direct or indirect) within their host societies. The author concludes that this makes surveys of this kind all the more urgent.

Also relates to:

Arts, Literature and Sport

Criminal Justice and Racial Violence

Education

History

Migration, Immigration and the Refugee Experience

Politics and Government

VIOLENCE AND GENDER IN THE GLOBALIZED WORLD: THE INTIMATE AND THE

EXTIMATE

ed. Sanja Bahun-Radunovic and V.G Julie Rajan

Publisher: Ashgate

Year: 2008

Pagination: 244pp

ISBN: 978-0754673644

Price: £55

This collection examines, from an academic context, the often sidelined issues of gender and violence which translate into global discussions of violence against women. The contributions, written by academics and activists, focus on male-female violence specifically and the resultant gender constructions and power dynamics. The complex and nuanced relationship between women's agency and notions of victimisation is set in a wider historical and socio-political context. The transition of gender-based violence from local matter to global concern and its consequent recognition as a human rights violation and tool of war is accompanied by the consideration of gender in human rights work and the use of international human rights within women's groups world-wide.

The essays which comprise the first section – 'Revealing the Gaps' – point to the 'gaps' in scholarship pertaining to gender dynamics and gendered violence. The case studies here focus on indigenous women's experiences in Nicaragua and Kenya; faith-rights feminists in Malaysia; and the effects of microcredit on women in Kerala, India.

Section two – 'Enclosures and Exposures' – highlight examples of gender violence in both a local and global context. The essays here include a survey of the Palestinian women's movement; an examination of the position of Algerian adolescents as both victims and perpetrators during the Algerian civil war; the deconstruction of misogynist discourse in the former Yugoslavia; and gender violence in post-apartheid South Africa.

The essays of section three – 'Bordered Subjectivities, Global Connections' – looks at the interaction of borders in understanding gender violence in the context of US legislation and the global trafficking of women, with case studies pertaining to the latter focusing on South Korea, Central Europe and Eastern Europe.

The final section – 'Aesthetics and Gendered Transformations' – explores the transformative and healing potential of women's artistic practice. The resultant essays juxtapose selections of Chicano women's writing with factual information pertaining to Chihuahua. The final essay in the collection discusses *the V-Day Project* by playwright Eve Ensler.

Also relates to:

Criminal Justice and Racial Violence

Economics and Globalisation

Employment

History

Migration, Immigration and the Refugee Experience

Politics and Government

NEW GEOGRAPHIES OF RACE AND RACISM

Ed. Claire Dwyer and Caroline Bressey

Publisher: Ashgate

Year: 2008

Pagination: 326pp

ISBN: 978-0754670858

Price: £65

This anthology brings together the work of geographers who explore the social practice and cultural politics of 'race', ethnicity and racism. Drawing on case studies from the UK and Ireland, the resultant collection of essays explore themes pertaining to identity, intersectionality, whiteness, community cohesion, and sense of place, nation and everyday experience. Together, the editors' argue, these themes form the new geographies of 'race' and racism. Employing ethnographic, visual and historical analysis, the authors examine the theoretical, experiential and political frameworks of 'race' and ethnicity. This translates into an exploration of the framing of 'race' within politics and policy

discourses as well as the specifics of geographical locality.

The book is structured into three sections. The essays, which comprise the first section - 'Racing Histories and Geographies' – build on the existing body of work on the social construction of 'race' and the shifting political and discursive contexts there-in, to examine the historical geographies of 'race'. This translates into an exploration of the 'historical imaginaries' of 'race' and racism. To this end, the areas covered include a survey of Western Whiteness, which connects nineteenth-century Colonialism to contemporary neo-liberalism; and a discussion of how arguments against 'political correctness' serve to suppress the historical presence of Black people in Britain.

Section two – 'Race, Place and Politics' – emphasises the importance of locality when considering ethnicity. The resultant essays which comprise this 'place-based study' consider the framing of 'race' within policies of immigration and multiculturalism, and issues pertaining to community cohesion, identity politics, cultural values and sense of nation.

The final section – 'Race, Space and Everyday Geographies' – represents an ethnographic exploration of 'race' and ethnicity. The essays here-in focus on the experiential aspects of racial encounters, from the experiences of British Asians at a gay club in Birmingham to the dynamics of inter-ethnic interaction and youthful expressions of ethnicity.

The book closes with an afterword by Peter Jackson, a scholar of social geography, which charts how the discipline has changed over the last twenty years and which re-interprets the significance of *New Geographies of Race and Racism* accordingly.

Also relates to:

History

Migration, Immigration and the Refugee Experience

Politics and Government

Social Theory

BLACK SKIN, WHITE MASKS

Frantz Fanon

Publisher: Pluto Press

Year: reprinted 2008

Pagination: 256pp

ISBN: 978-0745328485

Price: £12.99

Originally published in 1952, this highly influential text is here reprinted with a foreword by Ziauddin Sardar in addition to a foreword written by Homi K. Bhabha for the 1986 edition.

In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon undertakes a psychoanalytic study of the crushing inadequacy experienced by Black people as a result of sustained and endemic racism. Here, Fanon traces the development of, what he terms, an inferiority complex in Black people, tracing its origins to the continued affect of colonialism in modern times. He draws attention to the notion of the divided self which, he claims, is a result of a severed connection with one's cultural ancestry and homeland. The result, stresses Fanon, is internalisation of the cultural codes of the colonizer by the colonized, namely Black people in contemporary 'Western' societies.

Fanon's manifesto urges Black people of the Western world to combat the oppression inflicted on them by White-dominated and White-supremacist societies. The resultant call to arms is designed to inspire a collective struggle and, by extension, political autonomy. Fanon takes as his starting point his own journey of self discovery, employing subjectivity as a means of encouraging self-awareness, self-respect, confidence and dignity in his readers.

Employing emotive language, Fanon's delivery is fast-paced and his tone urgent. This is in stark contrast to his crucially painstaking analysis of the language and visuality which underpin social codes, and consequent hierarchies, of Blackness and Whiteness. The result, claims Fanon, is conflation of Blackness with inferiority, on the one hand, and the marriage of Whiteness with superiority, on the other.

Also relates to:

Economics and Globalisation

History

Migration, Immigration and the Refugee Experience

Politics and Government

Social Theory

A SUITABLE ENEMY: RACISM, MIGRATION AND ISLAMOPHOBIA IN EUROPE

Liz Fekete

Publisher: Pluto Press

Year: 2009

Pagination: 259 pp

Price: £17.99,

ISBN: 9780745327931

This timely book by Liz Fekete, executive director of the Institute of Race Relations, engages in a detailed analysis of the complexities and dehumanising effects of racism across Europe to investigate how it operates today; through Islamophobia, xeno-racism and the security state.

The book's introduction gives a historical backdrop, discussing the concept of 'nativism' and looking at how racist trends tend to go hand in hand with the urge to create a cohesive nationhood in the face of globalisation. Here Fekete refers specifically to attitudes towards Roma communities in Italy to discuss how discourses of fear around 'alien' values in mainstream politics lead to racist measures. The rest of the book is split into three sections, each with two chapters.

Part 1 addresses the concept of xeno-racism, to discuss how racism has become non-colour coded in order for increased state security measures and tightened immigration controls. Through this racist patterns and profiling are used against asylum seekers, regardless of colour. This section discusses how these attitudes mirror different forms of racism that have existed throughout history, the current form targeting those from the poorest countries. This analysis continues with an engagement with responses to 9/11, specifically their Islamophobic dimension that has taken the form of religious profiling and the policing of 'suspect' communities (ie Muslim). The role of the media is also discussed, as well as rulings on state-imposed dress codes such as the wearing of the hijab.

Part 2 explores how Islamophobia has been written into law; in particular Fekete considers family reunification and marriage rights in the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark to highlight how legal mechanisms construct Islamic and European values as irreconcilable, and in turn how this creates Islam as homogenous. This discussion extends to the role of western feminist discourse in furthering racist ideas and the section concludes with a chapter that draws comparisons with McCarthyism in discussing the current monitoring of Muslims. Fekete draws this discussion back into the formulation of xeno-racism to show how 'western' Islam is constructed as a good Islam, whereas the Islam of 'elsewhere' is seen as a threat.

Part 3 focuses on the detention and deportation of asylum seekers to consider the idea of the failed asylum seeker, looking at the denial of humanitarian protection and what happens when those seeking asylum are sent back. The discussion also outlines the appalling conditions in detention centres and the resulting effects on detained children. The next chapter analyses cases when there have been attempts to fast-track deportations due to a perceived national security risk that is assessed in relation to 'western' or 'democratic' outlooks rather than in relation to regular public laws.

Part 4 begins with focusing on detained children to highlight how rights for asylum children are denied. This leads into an outline of the grassroots resistance movements that have emerged to protect children from this treatment. The final chapter of the book considers the effects of xeno-racist laws and Islamophobia on Muslim youth – in particular the effect on feelings of self worth.

Overall, Fekete's research is concerned with the developments in popular and institutionalised racism since 2001, as well as its multiple dimensions; looking at how 'the nativism of extreme right and anti-immigration movements came to be written into European immigration and security laws'(1). Through this the mainstreaming of extremist racist parties across Europe is analysed and the book looks at both popular and political discourses as well as resistance movements.

COMPLYING WITH COLONIALISM: GENDER, RACE AND ETHNICITY IN THE NORDIC REGION

Ed. Suvi Keskinen, Salla Tuori, Sari Irni and Diana Mulinari

Publisher: Ashgate

Year: 2009

Pagination: 288pp

ISBN: 978-0754674351

Price: £60

Examines the concept of 'colonial complicity' to draw attention to the role of Nordic countries in contributing to sustained colonialism – or, post-colonialism in the present. In so doing, the editors debunk the notion of the Nordic region as removed from the persistence of colonialism and imperialism. As such, the ties between European colonialism are here extended to include systemic 'colonial complicity' within Northern Europe.

Particular attention is paid to the ways in which Nordic countries impose their own models of welfare and gender equality; reinforcing the idea that European values are allegedly more advanced. As a result, the authors show how gender equality is promoted at the expense of race relations and national ties.

The first section – Post-colonial histories/Post-colonial presents – charts the location of Nordic countries both historically and in the present, with regards to the issue of global dominance. Here-in, the essays range from an exploration of the 'Nordic Colonial Mind' to an investigation of 'Myths of Origin and Genealogy' of White Supremacy. Case studies include an examination of the experiences of Bosnians living in contemporary Finland; and the impact of a take-over by the Swedish transnational corporation VOLVO on workers at a plant in Mexico.

The essays which comprise section two – Welfare State and its 'Others' - scrutinise the existing welfare state policies of Nordic countries and the eurocentric tendencies and, by extension, the aspects of perceived Western superiority. This area is examined in relation to the adoption system, domestic advertising, migration and ageing. The final section – section three – examines the state regulation of sexuality and reproduction, and the ways in which the resulting gender equality policies 'other' migrants to Nordic countries, especially in the realm of the education system.

Also relates to:

Economics and Globalisation

Education

Health and Social Care

History

Migration, Immigration and the Refugee Experience

Politics and Government

Social Theory

THE MULTI-CULTURAL FAMILY

Ann Laquer Estin

Publisher: Ashgate

Year: 2008

Pagination: 604pp

ISBN: 978-0754626480

Price: £135

This 575-page anthology explores 'the family' as it relates to familial ties, family conflicts and family law. Taken together, the twenty-five essays that comprise this collection, explore the multiplicity, the nuances and plurality of family as tied to multiculturalism and law. The book is divided into two parts. The essays that comprise the first section – Marriage and Divorce – examine the foundational principle of family law.

Part one - Marriage and Divorce - examines the challenges brought forward by multiculturalism. Here, the editors divide countries according to three models – a liberal democracy, which is maintained through the interaction of religious minority groups and a secular family law system; and a pluralistic legal system, which separates family law from religious and cultural matters. The third model arises

when tensions develop between dominant family law and the specific needs of minority groups.

The essays that comprise section one explore the tension between secularism and religious/legal tradition and, in particular, the conflicts presented to the Islamic and Jewish communities of Australia, Canada, England, the United States, France and Belgium. Some essays examine the unique cultural and religious traditions underlying marriage, tempering this with a look at the legal disputes surrounding custody and divorce. Other essays critique Eurocentric and monocultural approaches to international family law. Elsewhere, scholars examine the relationship between Islamic family law and women's rights, with case studies focusing on the situation in India, Morocco, South Africa and Israel. The section closes with a look at indigenous and customary law.

Part two examines the situation of international family law as it relates to children. The essays of this section draw attention to the different cultural interpretation of what is in a child's best interests and the multi-cultural conflicts that result. Lastly, the essays of section three focus on processes of dispute resolution and the corresponding cultural sensitivity and conflict management needed.

Also relates to:

Relationships

History

Politics and Government

Social Theory

QUESTIONING THE VEIL: OPEN LETTERS TO MUSLIM WOMEN

Marnia Lazreg

Publisher: Princeton University Press

Year: 2009

Pagination: 184pp

ISBN: 978-0691138183

Price: £15.95

Written by Marnia Lazreg, a prominent authority in Middle East women's studies, *Questioning the Veil* challenges the wearing of the veil by Muslim women. The author examines what she claims are inconsistent and inadequate reasons for women wearing the veil.

The book is structured around a series of letters which are based on the author's own experiences growing up in a Muslim family in Algeria as well as interviews conducted with other Muslim women. Each letter, written from a woman's perspective, tells a deeply personal story. However, taken together, the letters provide a window through which to examine the place of women in contemporary Islam. As such, the highly subjective nature of the book provides a human dimension to an otherwise highly theorised and detached academic debate. This is not to say that the book has no theoretical premise. Far from it, the book itself is the result of extensive academic research into the principles and practices of Islam.

The author avoids taking sides in the pro versus anti-Islam debate and instead criticises the way in which the war on Afghanistan and Iraq was hailed as a means of liberating the 'oppressed' women of Islam. By drawing attention to the veil – a subject which the author claims has been dismissed as 'unimportant' given the wider political climate, *Questioning the Veil* instead shows how discussions of the veil illuminate our understanding of the contemporary role of Islamic society and its relationship with the 'West'.

The letters are intended for Muslim women who wear the veil or who are thinking about wearing it, as well as anyone interested in the relationship between women and Islam and the nuances of women's relationship with the veil. The author claims that this issue is especially urgent given the recent increase in the numbers of Muslim women and girls who have taken up the wearing of the veil, which, the author claims, is largely the result of protest against the negative media attention towards Islam. Simultaneous to this, Lazreg claims, is the rise of conservatism in the Muslim world, highlighted both through the promotion of women's 'place' in the home and men's sudden interest in women's dress and deportment. In this text, Lazreg speaks out against the ways in which the veil has been used by men to control women. The resultant chapters explore the veil as a sign of women's lack of self-determination and independence, as a tool of oppression and as a means of curtailing

women's advancement.

Also relates to:

History

Politics and Government

Social Theory

REPRESENTING BUSHMEN: SOUTH AFRICA AND THE ORIGIN OF LANGUAGE

Shane Moran

Publisher: Univeristy of Rochester Press

Year: 2009

Pagination: 222pp

ISBN: 978-1580462945

Price: £45

Representing Bushmen traces the origins of racism and racial discrimination in post-apartheid South Africa to early colonialist ideology and language. Here, attention is drawn to the impact of language formation on current understandings of racial and cultural categories, community formation and national identity as they relate to indigenous people and, in particular, the Bushmen of South Africa. Guided by the work of Jacques Derrida, Edward Said and Martin Bernal, Moran conducts an in-depth study of the ways in which language has been used against the indigenous people of South Africa over the last two centuries.

The book starts by scrutinising the position of both the colonial and post-colonial intellectual. There follows an analysis of the work of nineteenth-century linguist, W.H.I. Bleek and, in particular, *On the Origin of Language*. Chapter two traces the impact of Bleek's work on future generations of Enlightenment scholars as a means of highlighting the literary dissemination of colonialist ideas and influence. Chapter three explores the philosophical treatise in the opening pages of *On the Origin of Language*. This is followed, in chapter four, by a discussion of the rise of ethnocentrism and semiology and its impact on Bleek's thinking in the nineteenth century.

The representation of the Bushman forms the focus of chapters five and six. The former chapter highlights the ways in which Bleek figures the Bushman – both in terms of comparison with various animal and bird species and as an indexical sign. The latter chapter picks up this issue to highlight the ways in which a sense of evolutionary race and language is developed within Bleek's text. Chapter seven zooms in on this aspect in order to draw out Bleek's exploration of Zulu language and culture.

The book ends with a discussion of Bleek and Lloyd's *Specimens of Bushman Folklore* and, in particular, how its literary colonialism has contributed to concerns of commemoration within post-apartheid South Africa.

Also relates to:

Criminal Justice and Racial Violence

History

Politics and Government

CARIBBEAN DIASPORA IN THE USA: DIVERSITY OF CARIBBEAN RELIGION IN NEW YORK CITY

Bettina E. Schmidt

Publisher: Ashgate

Year: 2008

Pagination: 208pp

ISBN: 978-0754663652

Price: £55

This study on *Caribbean Diaspora in the USA* presents an account of culture as fragmented, repetitious and contradictory. Bettina Schmidt explores inaccuracies in the assumption of cultural coalescence among Caribbean migrant community in New York, despite the camaraderie experienced at social events. This volume offers new theoretical insight into inter-disciplinary studies on Latin American and the Caribbean, as well as to stimulate debates on the complexity of Caribbean culture. By

illustrating the transcendent nature of Caribbean culture, the author demonstrates that culture and identity are not static productions but in constant flux, which requires renegotiation over time. In order to effectively demonstrate cultural dynamism, the author focuses on the densely populated city Brooklyn, New York, a site that has a high concentration of Latin American, Anglophone and Francophone Caribbean migrants. Through the use of ethnographic data the author traces the sociological composition of grouped Caribbean migrants. By so doing, patterns of group formations demonstrate the technique deployed as survival strategy and inclusion among Caribbean migrants. Nevertheless, it is the author's intention to problematise institutions and conventions as they become pervious within plural societies. Schmidt's theoretical framework features Creole culture as unstable and identity fragile. Central to this study is the contradictions surrounding Caribbean integration and common Creole heritage. While culture can be manifested in various forms, the author expounds cultural diversity from the viewpoint of the actor/ spectator, the emic (native)/ etic (external) perspectives. The point diversity was reiterated through ritual, which Caribbean New York annual carnival demonstrates the superficiality pan-Caribbean integration as actors and spectators form revel in the performance and cultural aesthetic. Notably, cultural hierarchy is being obscured during such cultural exchange. Nevertheless, it is to religion within which the author explores Caribbean cultural dynamism and effects caused by dispersion. The study incorporates the concept of religious bricolage as a Caribbean model to explain consciousness and self-representation, tenets that are invisible but crucial to choice and independence.

The author indicates the illogicality of taming culture as it becomes adaptable with each generation moving further away from the centre and interacting with alien practices. The study investigates the new phenomenon that promotes partially, self-representation (personal interest) and self-actualisation instead of authentication. Schmidt argues against Caribbean cultural consensus, and advances the view that cultural aestheticism is personal and one may modify the existing convention as desired. Nonetheless, Caribbean culture has breaks which affect diasporan homogeneity such as social belonging, gender, social situation, living conditions and location. Caribbean diaspora has found its place at the cultural border as studies have revealed religious communities such as Cuban/ Puerto Rican Santeria, Haitian Vodou, Trinidad and Tobago Shango and Brazilian Pentecostal church have experienced transition in ritual format. The author attributes these changes to cultural fluidity through time and space and believes they become evident through individual response. This study brings to focus the process of change affecting practice and how individual interpretation impinges on established models. It is within this sphere that individual adjustment gives rise to cultural dynamism, as each generation of Caribbean migrants personalise the ritual as they see fit.

Also relates to:

History

Migration, Immigration and the Refugee Experience

Social Theory

THE MAP OF ME

Various

Penguin

2008

Pagination:

ISBN:

'The Map of Me' contains fourteen auto-biographical short stories concerning individuals whose parentage is from different cultural backgrounds. These true stories are the result of an open competition to new writers produced by Penguin in collaboration with 'Decibel', the ethnic diversity unit of the Arts Council.

The fourteen stories vary in their life experiences, throughout there is a common diasporic theme of striving for a sense of self and identity. Whilst longing for a sense of purpose in life, the fourteen short stories highlight the experiences of mixed heritage; difficulties, challenges, sadness, happiness, honesty, anger and hurt. However, as complex as each authors life may seem, towards the end of each story they result in understanding their identity and what it means to them, by connecting the

past to the present and the future.

This book was a very interesting read and can be enjoyed by anyone from any background, not necessarily those from a mixed-heritage background only. The stories are themed around cars, recipes, hairstyles, music and letter writing. The overarching theme of being different, travelling through different countries and continents and finding oneself comes through in each of the tales.

Most of the stories are amusing and entertaining such as the story by Tina Freeth (Growing up on Lard) concerning her experiences as a young Chinese girl adopted by White British parents who feed her greasy fry-ups and fattening food which result in her weighing ten stone at the age of ten years! Her connections with Chinese culture being an occasional visit to a Chinese restaurant to eat rice with chopsticks, which she hates and can never get the hang of!

But amongst the collection were stories of frustration and anger, such as the one by Rashid Adamson (Torn) which describes the experiences of a young boy who has a White British mother and Pakistani Muslim father. Reminiscent of the 'East is East' script, as the title suggests, he constantly feels torn between the two cultures. He does not agree with much of what his father says or does, but through a sense of loyalty is even prepared to have an arranged marriage at the age of sixteen, even though his heart tells him this is wrong. His father looks to Rashid as his saviour in life and strive to connect back to his Pakistani roots after a life of 'Westernisation'. The momentary point in his life when he realises he could see 'a lot more clearly', is after the futile death of his cousin Talib over a dispute over some land in a village in Pakistan. In an instant he begins to hate his father's culture and religion and everything it stands for.

Some of the stories have a romantic and reminiscent quality of life, proving that however difficult life may have been, memories of family life and growing up are filled with affection and sentiment such as the story by Radhika Praveen (The Amruthur Iyengar family) concerning inter-caste marriages. The author cleverly weaves a string of delicious Indian recipes throughout the story highlighting the importance of food and social gatherings in South Asian culture.

This book is worth reading, throughout each story we hear the 'voice' of honesty that tells us what it is really like being Irish and Muslim, English and Pakistani, Chinese and Brummie and much more.

ECONOMICS AND GLOBALISATION

THE TROUBLE WITH AID: WHY LESS COULD MEAN MORE FOR AFRICA

Jonathan Glennie

Publisher: Zed Books

Year: 2008

Pagination: 192pp

ISBN: 978-1848130401

Price: £12.99

The Trouble with Aid, claims Jonathan Glennie, is that it has served to worsen rather than better the economic plight of Africa. Instead of throwing money at the problem, Glennie instead urges us to take action to encourage financial independence for the nation of Africa.

The opening chapter – 'Time to Think Again' – describes 2005 as the year which saw more campaigns than ever targeting the eradication of poverty, including the *Make Poverty History campaign* in the UK and the *ONE* campaign in the US. The author claims that campaigning of this sort was successful in mobilising public support to put the issue of ending poverty in Africa on the political agenda and, by extension to increase government aid to poorer countries. However, argues Glennie, such campaigns were naïve and fundamentally flawed, failing as they did to understand the full complexity of the political situation.

The book sets out to show how, rather than increasing aid to African countries, the government should instead be reducing the amount of official aid offers. His ambivalent view is in keeping with African policy analysts rather than Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), who, he claims, are too

simplistic in their strategising for international development. African NGOs, it is claimed here, have urged for drastic revisions to understandings of aid and development in light of the current political situation. Indeed, the author goes as far as stating that the giving of aid has served to worsen the economic and political situation of Africa as a result of over-dependence and the reduced accountability of African governments.

The chapters that comprise *The Trouble With Aid* examine the reasons why so many Africans are against the notion of giving more aid. Employing an approach which he terms 'aid realism', Glennie highlights the importance of remaining objective in the face of mass hysteria which, he claims, is not only ineffective but damaging to survival and growth. The bulk of the book thus presents evidence of the highly fraught and complex nature of aid, power struggles, international relations and economic development in recent decades.

Also relates to:

Employment

Health and Social Care

Politics and Government

TRAVELLING LIGHT: ON THE ROAD WITH AMERICA'S POOR

Kath Weston

Publisher: Beacon Press

Year: 2008

Pagination: 262pp

ISBN: 978-0807041376

Price: £24

Here, writer and anthropologist Kath Weston chronicles her experiences travelling through the US by bus for a total of five years. Informed by Weston's own experiences of growing up working class, the resultant collection of stories and statistics provide a snapshot of people's experiences of poverty and the poverty trap in 'the world's wealthiest nation'. The result, claims Weston, is to translate and highlight the contradictions of the widening gap between rich and poor in an age of globalisation. No better place to capture all this, she claims, than the bus and the image it presents – chance encounters, mobility, stagnancy, change, tension, survival and humanity.

Weston employs an anthropological lens with a twist, presenting in-depth social observation infused with empathetic conversation with the people she meets. The resultant stories and anecdotes serve to illustrate an otherwise abstract and dehumanising statistics pertaining to poverty and inequality. Claiming that concepts of 'rich' and 'poor' are misleading, Weston complicates notions of poverty and class to instead articulate the prominence of self-perception and the art of survival when describing systems and languages of poverty. To this end, the author speaks about 'living out' rather than 'living in' poverty, and the creativity and despair found there-in. She applies this theory to the reality of bus-riding and the idea that riding the bus in the US is akin to a social performance which may enable class mobility through the accumulation of social networks and cultural capital.

The book is split into five parts. The first part describes the first leg of her journey and the various incidents which unfold – from the barriers and punishments dished out to low income travellers and people of colour at border control to the careful planning of lunch in lieu of money. Particular attention is paid to the contrast between cut-throat survival when tempers raise and money is scarce and moments of empathy when a passenger, or passengers, comes to the assistance of a fellow underdog.

In section two, we learn of single mothers crossing states in search of better lives for their children and the long-term unemployed uprooting themselves from their homelands and all they have known in search of work elsewhere. Section two highlights moments of humanity and a temporary crossing of racial lines in an otherwise bleak post-colonial American landscape. This is expanded on in part three, which draws attention to the forging of liminal community in an otherwise isolating and punishing post-9/11 climate of Middle-America suspicion.

Also relates to:

Employment

Health and Social Care
Housing and Planning
Migration, Immigration and the Refugee Experience
Politics and Government

MORE THAN JUST RACE: BEING BLACK AND POOR IN THE INNER CITY

William Julius Wilson

Publisher: WW Norton and Co Inc

Year: 2009

Pagination: 208pp

ISBN: 978-0393067057

Price: £17.99

More Than Just Race addresses three most-pressing racial problems currently facing the US – namely, the persistence of the inner-city ghetto, the plight of low-skilled Black males, and the rupture of the African American family. With this in mind, the author examines the broader socio-economic climate which both sustains and perpetuates these problems, highlighting how forces of global and national change have been especially hard-hitting for vulnerable inner-city Black communities. There follows an open and honest dialogue about why poverty and unequal opportunity persists in the lives of African Americans.

Chapter one engages a multiple approach to exploring racial inequality, focusing both on the structural processes and the cultural forces at work. Here, the author states that it is a combination of structural racism and cultural attitudes which have led to limited economic and social opportunities for young Black males. The fallout of this has been a disproportionately high rate of poverty, crime and incarceration which, it is claimed here, informs negative cultural responses towards young black males. This is tied to the continued legacy of historic racial subjugation, which is manifested through a range of complex factors that both create and reinforce racial inequality. The author makes a convincing case for the need to consider cultural factors in addition to social analysis.

Subsequently there is an analysis of structural forces that contribute to the social processes informing racial group outcomes, which have tended to be overlooked. In other words, the cultural forces – such as community views and beliefs – have tended to be ignored for fear of 'blaming the victim'.

Chapter two focuses on the forces which shape concentrated poverty in urban areas. This is followed by a consideration of the economic plight of inner-city black male. Chapter four discusses the fragmentation of poor Black families. The book concludes by summarising the issues pertaining to structure and culture.

Also relates to:

Criminal Justice and Racial Violence

Employment

Health and Social Care

Housing and Planning

Politics and Government

EDUCATION

RECASTING RACE: WOMEN OF MIXED HERITAGE IN FURTHER EDUCATION

I. A. Dewan

Publisher: London. Trentham Books Ltd

Year: 2008

Pagination: 164pp

ISBN: 9781858564050

Price: £19.99

In her book, Indra Angeli Dewan challenges theories of race and mixed race identity found in sociological literature and examines discourses around personhood and equity evident in recent Further Education (FE) policy. Dewan questions whether women's identity constructions correspond

with academic theories and popular discourse around mixed heritage identity. She also explores the extent to which women's experience of, and views on, education, correspond with UK government discourses on education.

The research is based on data from interviews with forty mixed heritage women studying in FE colleges in ethnically diverse and mainly working class areas of London. She uses discourse analysis to explore how dominant discourses such as essentialism, postmodernism and individualism are embedded within the women's praxis of language.

Dewan has an antiracist feminist agenda and adopts the standpoint that racialised identities are the constructed product of historical, social and political processes. She argues that unequal power relations tend to make mixed heritage women marginalised and discriminated against. She aims to show how women's experiences may inform theory and how theory can be used to further feminist and antiracist projects, in particular those that seek to advance quality and justice for women of mixed heritage.

Identifying sociological literature on mixed race, Dewan begins by outlining how discourse has 'drawn largely on postmodern notions of identity to highlight the socially constructed, fluid and highly complex nature of mixed heritage identities'. However, she argues that the theory of postmodernism is difficult to sustain in light of her findings. She demonstrates that, whilst many of the women advocated the idea of defining themselves as mixed race, they drew strongly on notions of fixed racial heritage. Thus, Dewan concludes that their talk does not reflect the commonly held assumption that people of mixed heritage epitomise the postmodern subject.

Dewan also finds that the women revealed how discourses of individualism and race essentialism could exist together, contrary to the view that individualised identities are at odds with essentialist formations of selfhood. She argues then, that the discourses of essentialism, pluralism and individualism are mutually inclusive rather than competing with each other, and were drawn upon by the women in a variety of interconnecting ways.

Dewan's exploration of the women's experience of, and views on, FE shows that the women's talk reflected policy. Dewan concludes that they had 'bought into government discourses' as they reiterated the discourse on the value of education, learning as investment, equality of opportunity and the belief in a meritocratic vision of society.

The book is structured in nine chapters. It begins by explaining the research process and by providing a review of existing sociological and feminist studies around mixed heritage identity. It goes on to discuss in detail the women's reflections on identity, followed by a discussion that compares education policy and government discourse and the women's views on education. Finally, the book concludes by drawing together the key themes around identity and education and considers the implications of the findings for policy and antiracist feminist projects.

Also relates to:

Culture, Identity, Gender and Relationships

History

Social Theory

IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT BLACK AND WHITE, MISS: CHILDREN'S AWARENESS OF RACE

Sally Elton-Chalcraft

Publisher: Trentham Book Limited

Year: 2009

Pagination: 176pp

ISBN: 978-1858564371

Price: £18.99

It's Not Just About Black and White, Miss draws on extensive interviews with primary school children. The research itself was conducted with a sample group of nine and ten year-olds across four schools – two of which had a predominately White student population and two of which had a more mixed student population. As such, the research centres on the attitudes and opinions of the children themselves as a means of investigating what children today have to say about cultural and racial diversity. In sum, the book highlights the importance of listening to children's views, especially with

regards to race equality policy and practice.

The research revolves around four key questions: Are children in some types of schools more racist than others? Are some children born racist and others naturally antiracist? Are children less racist than adults? What do children think about their own and other cultures? In each case, Elton-Chalcraft is interested in the connection between children's attitudes and the knowledge that informs their opinions.

The introduction sets the educational backdrop for the research, exploring how key racist incidents have served to shape education policy and practice. In addition, the author connects these changes in policy to the ways in which the National Curriculum is both taught and received. As a result, connections are made between the ways in which children are taught about racial and cultural diversity and how this contributes to their attitudes towards race and racism. In sum, the book begins with an overview of the National Curriculum and the ways in which knowledge is imparted to children within the British school system. She also explores the impact of the media on children's perceptions of race and racial difference.

Chapters two and three present the discussions with the children from across the four schools. Thereafter, chapter four highlights the children's attitudes about Britishness, cultural identity and skin colour. The children's conversations about racial difference forms the topic of chapter five. Here, the author divides the reactions into the following categories – colour blindness, political correctness, and White privilege. Chapter six builds on this to explore the relationship between cultural knowledge and anti-racist attitudes. Lastly, chapters seven and eight examine the impact of teaching on children's attitudes towards race and, in so doing, formulate a methodology of best practice for educators and policy makers.

Also relates to:

Culture, Identity, Gender and Relationships

MULTILINGUAL EUROPE: DIVERSITY AND LEARNING

Ed. Chairman Kenner and Tina Hickey

Publisher: Trentham Books

Year: 2008

Pagination: 208pp

ISBN: 978-1858564234

Price: £19.99

Explores the ways in which children and young people grasp language, both in terms of acquiring language and honing understanding. By drawing on multilingual programs in a range of European countries, the authors construct, what they deem to be, successful pedagogies of learning for the creation of the optimal multilingual educational setting.

The first section – Communities and Identities in multilingual Cities – explores the formation of self and community in the identities of children growing up in Utrecht, Sheffield and Barcelona, which are here interpreted as 'multilingual cities'. In addition, the editors examine the negotiation of identity in the case of the diasporic Tamil community. Here, the authors examine the employment of theatre, carnival and photography as tools to aid children's understanding of their national.

The next section – Home, School and Community – looks at learning at the intersection of home, school and community, paying particular attention to the connections between schools and families at a range of schools in Europe.

Finally, part three – Learners, Teachers and Schools – posits a series of learning pedagogies aimed at educators. Here, the authors place emphasis on the context of learning for a child – namely, cultural and national community and experience.

Also relates to:

Culture, Identity, Gender and Relationships

Migration, Immigration and the Refugee Experience

GENERATING GENIUS: BLACK BOYS IN SEARCH OF LOVE, RITUAL AND SCHOOLING

Tony Sewell

Publisher: Trentham Books

Year: 2009

Pagination: 160pp

ISBN: 978-1858563688

Price: £18.99

Author Tony Sewell here describes the 'Generating Genius' programme, which was started in 2005 to raise the aspirations and achievements of African Caribbean schoolboys. The programme comprised a summer school which ran for five years, both at the University of the West Indies and at Imperial College London. The boys, mainly from deprived areas and failing schools in London and the South-East, were offered the chance to nurture their existing passion and skills in science, technology, engineering and medicine.

Alongside a rigorous academic programme, students were encouraged to participate in a wide-range of activities – sports, music, drama, dance, counselling and discussions – in order to develop their social and emotional skills. Emphasis was placed on teaching the boys about becoming responsible men with a strong work ethic, a well-rounded masculinity, and a healthy, empathetic and responsible attitude to life.

Generating Genius shows how genius is not innate but instead is the product of attitude, hard work and cultural legacy, which, the author argues, allows for the possibility of nurturing genius through the right conditions. The programme is not without political implications – 'genius', as it is here understood, is made more accessible and less elitist, becoming less about eugenics and more about cultural influence. Although the author notes the influence of race and racism on the underachievement of Black boys in UK schools, he claims that the pressures of home and peer group present a tougher challenge to young Black males achieving success. To this end, chapter two examines the affect of family patterns on the academic performance and social mobility of African Caribbean boys in the UK. Chapter three charts the role of history on the formation of contemporary Black male sexuality and the attraction of gang culture. Chapters four and five present case studies of the programme's success in a secondary school in Samoa and a primary school in Jamaica. The book concludes with a section on 'The Making of Genius', which discusses the overriding aims and outcomes of the 'Generating Genius' programme.

Also relates to:

Culture, Identity, Gender and Relationships

Employment

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

ISLAM AND SOCIAL WORK: DEBATING VALUES, TRANSFORMING PRACTICE

Sara Ashencaen Crabtree, Fatima Husain and Basia Spalek

Publisher: Policy Press

Year: 2008

Pagination: 198pp

ISBN: 978-1861349477

Price: £18.99

Islam and Social Work urges policy makers to consider faith identities and, in particular, the faith identities of minority ethnic communities in a post 9/11 climate. To this end, the book examines the centrality of Islamic principles in the lives of Muslim communities in Western societies. The text is written to inform and guide social work practitioners who work with, or who are interested in working with, faith communities, especially Muslim communities.

The book begins by claiming that although much has been written about 'race' and ethnicity in relation to social work practice, there has been nothing exploring social work with Muslim

communities. The authors registers their surprise that this is the case, especially given an increased focus on Muslim minority ethnic groups in the West in recent years.

Islam and Social Work examines, and ultimately negates, the notion that there is an irreconcilable conflict between Western cultural values and practices and the cultural backgrounds of Muslim minority ethnic communities. Focusing on a UK context, attention is paid to the UK government's heightened focus on young South Asian men and their alleged inability to assimilate into UK society. The authors go on to claim that recent debates about assimilation miss out key issues concerning British Muslim identities – namely, the high levels of socio-economic deprivation among this demographic which, for young men, translates into a 'strong' Islamic identity and the desire for global rather than local affiliations.

This text, the first of its kind, provides social workers with the necessary information pertaining to Islamic principles so they can develop culturally sensitive strategies and practical applications. The book starts by providing a general overview of the topic and a useful synopsis of all terms used throughout. Chapter two concerns the diversity of the Muslim 'ummah' (diaspora) – its foundational principles and application in a global context as well as its application for migrant and settled minority ethnic communities in the UK and Western Europe. Chapter three connects this discussion with an examination of the training needs of social workers in the UK. The next chapter moves on to explore the centrality of the family within Islam and what this means in the context of the everyday for Muslim families and communities. Chapter five continues this strand of thought by raising awareness around domestic violence and child abuse, giving training advice for social work interventions. Whilst chapter six examines the health concerns of Muslim families – disability, mental health and female genital mutilation – chapter seven highlights the impact of Islamophobia and crime on the social needs of Muslim communities across the UK. The book concludes with some good practice guidance for social practitioners, highlighting the need for sensitive and professional practice.

Also relates to:

Culture, Identity, Gender and Relationships

History

Migration, Immigration and the Refugee Experience

Politics and Government

BLACK ISSUES IN SOCIAL WORK AND SOCIAL CARE

Mekada Graham

Publisher: Policy Press

Year: 2007

Pagination: 195pp

ISBN: 978-1861348456

Price: £18.99

Here, Mekada Graham employs an African-centred approach to the study of social policy as well as the 'doing' of social work. As such, *Black Issues in Social Work* brings Black perspectives to the fore, citing the importance of studying Black and Minority Ethnic communities in-depth in order to bring about true anti-discriminatory practice and social change.

The book starts by providing a brief introduction to the history of social work and its links to social justice. Graham shows how, within a British context, social work has tended to neglect the welfare needs of Black communities. *Black Issues in Social Work* sets out to address this issue, educating social workers and students, policy makers and professors about the needs and issues facing Black communities in contemporary Britain.

Graham spends some time familiarising the reader with the theories and debates surrounding Black Studies as it has emerged and developed in recent years. There follows a brief note about terminology. This leads to a discussion about anti-discriminatory practice within social policy and social work. Chapter two presents an historical overview of this practice, taking into account social theories of race and their impact on social work. Chapter three builds on this to discuss the relevance of post-modern theories more generally within social work.

Moving on, chapter four centres on the experiences of Black families and, in particular, the

issues presented by young Black people and children in care. The focus of the next chapter is mental health and particular attention is paid to instances of institutional racism and the ways in which such instances have served to further isolate an already marginalised group. Solutions, explored in more depth in chapter six, detail spiritual and holistic approaches to improving the mental health of Black people in this context. Here, the author brings out important cross-overs between a Black-centric approach and a social model of disability as it has evolved in recent times.

Ageing forms the focus of chapter seven and, more specifically, social policies as they impact on older black people. In its place, the author highlights the need for social workers to understand the specific cultural nuances of an older Black community, as brought to the fore through oral history projects. In the final chapter, the author pulls together the various strands of social work discussed as they relate to the Black community in order to communicate best practice to social workers and future possibilities for social policy research.

Also relates to:

Culture, Identity, Gender and Relationships

Education

Employment

Housing and Planning

Migration, Immigration and the Refugee Experience

Politics and Government

Social Theory

BOUNDARIES OF CONTAGION: HOW ETHNIC POLITICS HAVE SHAPED GOVERNMENT RESPONSES TO AIDS

Evan S Lieberman

Publisher: Princeton University Press

Year: 2009

Pagination: 368pp

ISBN: 978-0691140193

Price: £16.95

This survey represents the first comparative analysis of government responses to HIV/AIDS, which, the author claims, have varied greatly, especially with regards to Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. Drawing on case studies undertaken in Brazil, India and South Africa – countries with a similar demographic and where the AIDs epidemic is rife - the author explores the impact of ethnic divisions on government politics and policy-making. It is no mere coincidence that ninety percent of the world's HIV infections are contained in low and middle-income countries. This statistic makes research of this kind all the more urgent.

Boundaries of Contagion shows that in societies with strong ethnic boundaries, the government response to HIV/AIDs is weaker than in countries where ethnic divisions are not so fiercely drawn. In the latter case, the epidemic is more likely to be perceived as a shared national threat which demands urgent action and thus a greater mobilisation of resources. The crux of the book is the question of why some governments have responded to the AIDs crisis more quickly than others. Attempts to answer this question must start by examining why HIV/AIDS has hit some countries harder than others. The challenge of attempting to explain government responses to AIDS touch on the political origins of government efforts and differences in the provision of public policies and resources more generally.

The book starts by exploring the international dimension of policy-making and the active dissemination of the Geneva Consensus by richer countries. Drawing on theories of ethnic policy, social identity and the construction of risk, the author makes a key point that AIDS has proven to be central to the development of South Africa. Chapter two develops theories about how and why governments have responded to the AIDs epidemic in different ways. The next chapter sets the scene for individual government response by analysing the globalised environment of the AIDs epidemic. Chapters four, five and six concern the politics of policy-making in Brazil, India and South Africa; whilst Brazil is shown to be an overperformer, South Africa and India are highlighted as underperformers. The book concludes with a positive empirical analysis of the ways in which these findings resonate

with debates about identity politics.

Also relates to:

Economics and Globalisation

Politics and Government

HISTORY

MEXICANOS: A HISTORY OF MEXICANS IN THE UNITED STATES, (2ND EDITION)

Manuel G Gonzales

Publisher: Indiana University Press

Year: 2009

Pagination: 424pp

ISBN: 978-0253221254

Price: £14.99

As the subtitle states, this revised and updated edition serves as a short history of Mexican experiences and culture in the United States. Here, Gonzales charts the influence and development of Mexican culture within US society, both historically and as continued in the present.

Gonzales starts by tracing the development of Chicana/o Studies – namely, the study of Mexicans in the US – and the ways in which it was dismissed by the hegemonies of academe. Whilst Gonzales shares with Chicana/o Studies the need to trace the historical roots of the ‘Chicanismo’ movement, he also cites the need for more objective and rigorous forms of intellectual inquiry. *Mexicanos*, he claims, addresses this need, lending scholarly consideration and weight to an otherwise overlooked and undervalued area of focus.

Chapter one charts the emergence of the term ‘Mexican American’ in 1848. Central to this inquiry is an investigation of Spanish history, and the conquests of Christopher Columbus and Hernán Cortes. There follows a look at the beginnings of ‘Amerindian’ culture. The Spanish Frontier of 1521-1821 forms the basis of chapter two, which examines the growth of the Spanish front and consequent settlement in New Mexico. Chapter three moves on to chart Mexico’s independence from Spain in 1821 to 1848 when Mexico lost its northern territories to the US. The newly-termed American Southwest forms the basis of chapter four, which examines an otherwise overlooked period of Mexican history, namely the decades of 1848-1900, a time when the Mexicano population was severely marginalised and oppressed. The next chapter traces the ‘Great Migration’ of 1900 to 1930, which saw a dramatic rise in the number of Mexicans migrating to the US.

Whilst chapter six examines the effects of the US depression of 1930-40 on the Mexicano population, chapter seven shows the ways in which the aftermath of the Second World War served to both integrate and separate Mexicano communities from US society. This historical inquiry forms the basis for further inquiries into the rise of the Chicano movement between 1965 and 1975 (chapter 8), to its development between 1975 and 1994 (chapter 9) and its continuation, i.e. from 1994 to the present (chapter 10).

Also relates to:

Culture, Identity, Gender and Relationships

Economics and Globalisation

Migration, Immigration and the Refugee Experience

Politics and Government

ENTANGLED BY WHITE SUPREMACY: REFORM IN WORLD WAR I-ERA SOUTH CAROLINA

Janet G Hudson

Publisher: The University Press of Kentucky

Year: 2009

Pagination: 400pp

ISBN: 978-0813125022

Price: £49.50

Returning to World War I-era South Carolina, historian Janet Hudson explores the complex nature of White supremacy and the impact of World War I on White supremacist organising in South Carolina.

She shows that whilst South Carolina's White reformers drew on an improved economy to better the state's educational system and infrastructure, Black reformers utilised this time of new-found optimism to challenge the very structures of White supremacy. As such, Hudson goes on to trace the resultant clash between Black and White reformers, and the incompatibility of White supremacy and progressive reform.

The author starts by discussing the importance of reconsidering the politics of South Carolina in the World War era. Although World War I is not considered to be an important turning point in Southern history because it did not trigger substantial economic, political or social change, Hudson makes a convincing case for the importance of re-examining the impact of war on Southern dialogue and reforms. Hudson describes 1917 as a year of optimism for the reformers of South Carolina who anticipated immense change as a result of the new economic opportunities of a post-war era. However, Hudson shows that these opportunities were short-lived, eroded by agricultural depression. Nevertheless, she urges the reader not to dismiss this research as inconsequential and instead highlights the necessity of studying this brief window of optimism.

Particular attention is paid to challenges that Black reformers presented to White supremacy and, by extension, White supremacist organising. Hudson shows how a new-found sense of freedom generated hope among Black reformers, which, in turn, threatened the existing racial hierarchies of White supremacy. White citizens are here shown to be especially anxious because they had formerly held power as a minority in a Black-majority state. Thus, the challenge presented to White supremacist organisers was two-fold – firstly, they were forced to include Black reformers within their program and secondly, they were directly confronted by Black reformers. These indirect and direct measures served contributed to the social and political turmoil of 1917 South Carolina.

The book is divided into two parts. The first section examines the challenge that World War I posed to White supremacy, and moves on to trace the interplay of White and Black reformers in the immediate post-war era. Chapter one sets the scene by examining the economic and demographic structure of the state of South Carolina, and the pervasive poverty and oppressiveness there-in. The next chapter introduces the core premise of White supremacy as dictated through its institutional construction. Thereafter, chapter three explores the hope of Black reformers during this time and the ways in which African American activists responded to war and White supremacy. Chapters four and five highlights the tensions of White supremacy in terms of the White reformers' desire for Black co-operation during war-time and the white resistance to African American post-war reform initiatives. The final chapter in this section gives further insight into the violent clashes which resulted, fuelled as they were through African American migration and the resultant labour shortages.

Section two focuses in the internal dynamics among Whites in the context of white supremacist politics and the impact of black activism on these debates. Whilst chapter seven shows the ways in which labour shortages served to highlight economic differences among whites, chapters eleven and twelve highlight the problem of an illiterate and under-educated population. The remaining chapters look at the woman suffrage debate and the political complexities of undertaking tax reform.

Also relates to:

Criminal Justice and Racial Violence

Culture, Identity, Gender and Relationships

Politics and Government

REMEMBERING SCOTTSBORO: THE LEGACY OF AN INFAMOUS TRIAL

James A Miller

Publisher: Princeton University Press

Year: 2009

Pagination: 296pp

ISBN: 978-0691140476

Price: £19.95

Remembering Scottsboro illuminates the events surrounding the Scottsboro trial, in which nine young black men were falsely charged with raping two White women in Scottsboro, Alabama in 1931. The author makes a case for considering the Scottsboro case as marking the beginning of the Civil Rights

Movement. In this regard, the author shows how this instance of injustice has had a profound effect on the American cultural imagination. Re-examining events leading up to the trial as well as documents from the trial itself, Miller shows the ways in which this historical event informed representational practices and daily life in the US.

The book opens with an examination of the framing of the Scottsboro case and the emerging conflict between the 'International Labor Defense' (ILD) and the 'National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People' (NAACP) over how best to represent the young men involved. There follows a discussion of the publicity surrounding the case and public debates pertaining to Black masculinity and civil rights. Chapter two centres on the ways in which the prison, in this context, functioned as a site of pilgrimage for a range of artists, writers and journalists, who were moved by the injustice they witnessed, aligning the suffering of the 'Scottsboro Boys' with that of Christ. The author shows how the subsequent artistic and literary interpretations served to mobilise an entire generation towards the cause of civil rights.

A case in point is the analysis of Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960) in which the author draws attention to the blurring of fact and fiction in the representation of the Scottsboro case.

Also relates to:

Criminal Justice and Racial Violence

Culture, Identity, Gender and Relationships

History

Politics and Government

MIGRATION, IMMIGRATION AND THE REFUGEE EXPERIENCE

IMMIGRATION AND NATIONAL IDENTITY: NORTH AFRICAN POLITICAL MOVEMENTS IN COLONIAL AND POST-COLONIAL FRANCE

Rabah Aissaoui

Publisher: Tauris Academic Studies

Year: 2009

Pagination: 320pp

ISBN: 978-1845118358

Price: £56.50

Immigration and National Identity explores North African nationalist movements in France, from the Interwar period to the late 1970s. Attention is paid to the themes of immigration, nation, 'race', ethnicity and identity and the place of Maghrebi migrants during this period. By comparing the socio-cultural context of 1925-1939 with the events occurring during the 1970s, Aissaoui traces the development of the Algerian Nationalist Movement in the context of colonial and post-colonial France.

Aissaoui shows how the interpretation of Maghrebi immigration in France as being 'at odds with French culture' ignores the complex history of colonialist ties between France and North Africa. He shows Maghrebi immigrants as central, rather than irrelevant, to France's national and cultural history. As such, the book charts the political mobilisation of the Algerian Nationalist Movement in France, which took the form of the 'Etoile Nord-Africaine' (ENA) and the 'Parti du Peuple Algerien' (PPA), from their beginnings during the Interwar period to their influence on the 'Mouvement du Travailleurs Arabes' in the 1970s.

Part one analyses the North African Nationalist Movement during the Interwar period – the beginnings of the ENA and the PPA, exploring notions of Maghrebi Diaspora and the concept of Maghrebi as an ethnic group and ethnicity with a unique nationality (what is here termed 'nationness'). There follows a discussion of the interplay of racism, colonialism and universalism and the resultant affects on North African nationalism.

Part two goes on to track the development of Algerian nationalism from its beginnings during the Second World War to its significance for Algerian Independence. There follows a description of the emergence of the 'Mouvement pour le triomphe des libertes democratiques' (MTLD) and the conflict between the Messalist and Centralist factions of the MTLD. Part three draws on the experiences of

North African migrants in the post-colonial period to highlight the impact of North African nationalist movements and actions on the wider political arena.

Also relates to:

Criminal Justice and Racial Violence

Culture, Identity, Gender and Relationships

History

Politics and Government

RIOTOUS CITIZENS: ETHNIC CONFLICT IN MULTICULTURAL BRITAIN

Paul Bagguley and Yasmin Hussain

Publisher: Ashgate

Year: 2008

Pagination: 200pp

ISBN: 978-0754646273

Price: £55

Riotous Citizens examines the Bradford riots of July 2001 which, the authors claim, have been largely omitted from academic study. They claim that these riots mark a significant turning point in the history of race riots in Britain, occurring as they did at a time when the BNP gained increase visibility and support in some areas. As such, the media interpretation of the events of 2001 cast young South Asian Muslim men in a particularly negative and dangerous light, marking a societal shift from multiculturalism to community cohesion, the authors claim. This was sealed, they argue, by the extremely strict sentencing of the Bradford rioters under a 'tough on crime' New Labour government. Despite rioting in Oldham and Burnley in 2001, the authors here turn their attention to the Bradford riots due to the seriousness of the event and its significant impact on the local South Asian community.

Chapter one introduces a range of theoretical approaches to understanding the historical and cultural meanings of riots. The next chapter places the riots in context, providing an in-depth explanation of how the riots occurred and the consequences that followed. A more detailed analysis of the Bradford events is given in chapter three, which draws on interviews with the local Pakistani community, including eyewitness accounts. The following chapter provides a profiling of the rioters, highlighting the diversity of the crowd both in terms of demographics and behaviours. The Bradford riot is placed in a broader socio-political context in chapter five, building on interviewees' opinions of local and national media coverage of the events. Chapter six moves on to examine the wider impact of the Bradford riots and the 9/11 and 7/7 attacks in terms of increased racism and Islamophobia against Britain's South Asian communities. Chapter seven examines the harsh punishments and sentences given to the South Asian men who were caught up in the riots. This leads to a discussion of citizenship in chapter eight and a look at consequent changes of policy in chapter nine. The book ends with a number of social commentaries exploring riots and collective violence.

Also relates to:

Criminal Justice and Racial Violence

Culture, Identity, Gender and Relationships

History

Housing and Planning

Politics and Government

Social Theory

IMMIGRATION AND MIGRATION

Rayna Bailey

Publisher: New York, Infobase publishing

Year: 2008

Pagination: 325pp

ISBN: 978081607

Price: £40.50

This book is part of the *Global Issues* series and is intended as an introduction to the key issues relating to immigration and migration. It explores some of the challenges raised and places these within context. Whilst the focus is largely on the United States (US), the book incorporates case studies

from four other countries: France, South Africa, Mexico and the Philippines. Many of the challenges illustrated by these case studies will be relevant to those interested in migration and immigration in other parts of the world.

The book is divided into three sections. The first begins by defining what is meant by migration and immigration, outlining different types of migratory movements, with a particular focus on involuntary migrants. It goes on to briefly describe a history of migration and immigration, from the earliest known migrations around two million years ago up until the present day, and outlines the consequences these movements have for the countries of origin and destination. Part one continues with a focus on the US, providing a historical context and considers the benefits and challenges associated with inward migration to the country. It then goes on to summarise legislation in the US, referencing the key historical moments during which legislation was introduced. Finally, part one examines the four case studies to provide a global perspective.

Part two presents significant US and international documents, which include legislative documents, presidential speeches and scholarly papers and speeches.

Part three includes a number of research tools to assist those interested in doing research on migration and immigration. It gives advice to students on how to narrow down their topic of research and how to go about collecting information. It suggests sources of information for students researching in the US and in the case study countries included in this volume, with cautionary advice as to how to evaluate the reliability of available information. Finally, part three provides useful information, incorporating facts and figures, listing the key international political players referenced in the book and providing the names and contact details of various US research organisations, legal agencies and support groups. It also lists international organisations and agencies, and anti-immigration and migration organisations. It provides an annotated bibliography of books, articles and reports on international immigration and migration, as well as literature which specifically covers the US and the four case study countries. The book concludes with a chronology of significant events relating to international immigration and migration in the US and case study countries.

The book is largely an introductory guide to international immigration and migration and is therefore most likely to be of use to students new to the topic. However, because it provides a useful reference guide, it also would be useful to professionals, as a readily accessible resource.

Also relates to:

Culture, Identity, Gender and Relationships

Economics and Globalisation

History

Politics and Government

Social Theory

ACROSS GENERATIONS: IMMIGRANT FAMILIES IN AMERICA

Ed. Nancy Foner

Publisher: New York University Press

Year: 2009

Pagination: 235pp

ISBN: 978-0814727713

Price: £14.99

This collection of essay examines the relationships between immigrant parents and their US-reared children. The ethnographic case studies therein focus on a myriad of issues faced by immigrant families and, in particular, second generation children. As such, it presents a more nuanced view of inter-generational relations and the resultant tension between homeland and the challenges of a 'new' world. Drawing on in-depth interviews with families from a range of countries and cultures – including parts of Latin America, Asia, the Caribbean and Africa – the book touches on a number of issues relating to parental expectation, discipline, youthful rebellion, belonging, adjustment and cultural affiliation. In turn, the authors connect each strand to themes of race, gender, class and power struggle.

The resulting research highlights the migration pathways of national-origin groups and socio-

cultural patterns of each home country. Here, the authors show how teenage rebellion is intensified when parents of second generation children disapprove of dominant American values and practices. The authors highlight differences with regards to expectation, especially with regards to discipline and respect. Central here is the notion of nostalgia - the nostalgia for one's home country – and how this serves to intensify traditional values and customs. When children fail to show parents the levels of respect normally expected of them in their parents' homeland, parents responds by disciplining their children in ways which the American legal system deems to be abusive. Whilst second generation children view their parents as authoritarian, their parents view them as disrespectful and 'non-ethnic', chastising them for rejecting their ethnic and cultural roots. Moreover, the authors claim that immigrant parents tend to be stricter with their daughters, especially when it comes to sexual relations, and the notion of arranged marriage contrasting sharply with the American ideology of free love.

Other pressures – such as educational and occupational success – and the expectation that children owe their parents for the numerous sacrifices made in order to rear them in the US, are here explored in full. The authors move on to explore the notion of parental dependence on their children and the ways in which children manipulate this reliance for their own ends; how language barriers and the need for translation results in children being enlisted to interpret legal documents and communicate with English-speaking officials on their parents' behalf.

As well as highlighting the tensions and conflicts of intergenerational relations, the authors also show how immigrant families co-operate and empathise with one-another, how resistance to change exists alongside a willingness to develop a complex sense of identity and cultural affiliation which merges homeland with a new-found sense of place.

Also relates to:

Culture, Identity, Gender and Relationships

History

Reluctant Refuge : The Story of Asylum in Britain

Eds. Edie Friedman and Reva Klein

Publisher: British Library, London

Year:

Pagination: 148pp

ISBN:9780712308878

Price:£14.95

This book attempts to show how current attitudes towards refuge link into a general and historically consistent attitude of ambivalence towards the disaffected of the world, drawing attention to how refugees have been vilified and created as global scapegoats. This important historicisation explains how refugees are not new in this country and animosity towards them is not either. The book aims to convey the human realities of seeking asylum and focus on the narratives of asylum seekers themselves as too often they are erased from discussions as the focus becomes centred on political rhetoric. Contextualised within the portrayal of refugees and asylum seekers in the British media, the gap between myth and reality is explored as is the influence of anti-asylum attitudes on government policy. The writers highlight how immigration controls have become more important than the urgency of humanitarian protection, emphasising what it means for a national collective that can turn its back on human suffering. Through this the writers challenge the citizens of a rich nation like Britain 'to consider our attitudes to those who need protection from persecution' (x).

The introduction gives the authors' relationships to refuge and also outlines the concept of the refugee and gives an overview of the ideas that will be explored further in the book. The preceding chapters are as follows:

Chapter One begins to set up the historical context surrounding asylum and looks at two of the major refugee communities that settled in Britain in the first half of the twentieth century, outlining reasons for migration and experiences of settlement.

Chapter Two focuses on the Jewish diaspora, looking at the vilification of Jewish communities in the popular press across two waves – 1880-1914 and 1933. This chapter aims to challenge the saviour

attitude that Britain has of its role in World War II when in reality Jews were largely not welcomed, the hostile environment and formation of several anti-Semitic groups in response to the refugees is also outlined.

Chapter Three looks at post World War II refugee, focusing on stories of refugees from Ugandan Asians, Somalis and Roma communities in their own words. The chapter incorporates much contextual detail and also looks briefly at Polish, Hungarian, Chilean and Afghan refugees.

Chapter Four outlines the legal specificities of claiming asylum in the UK, looking at the UN Refugee Convention, UK and EU law. Chapter Five centres on an analysis of the British system that aims to deter refugees from trying to claim asylum in the country. The discussion considers how this system, rather than directly contravening the Geneva convention, subverts its intention through excessive bureaucracy and penalising refugees. The chapter examines categories of status, detention, lack of access to support services and forced removal.

Chapter Six is made up of several case studies of children seeking asylum analysing how, in the process of seeking asylum they are not entitled to services they would be if granted citizenship. The chapter considers education, detention and the specific situation of unaccompanied children.

Chapter Seven looks at the public imagination and anti-immigration sentiment in the popular press. It proceeds to look at the effect of media representations on public opinion and finally looks at the effects of this on refugees and asylum seekers themselves.

The conclusion engages with anti-asylum rhetoric as a coded and acceptable form of racism, urging for the need for the UK government to revisit the UN Refugee Convention and incorporate it effectively and with compassion.

IMMIGRATION POLICY AND SECURITY: US, EUROPE, AND COMMONWEALTH PERSPECTIVES

Ed. Terri Givens, Gary Freeman and David Leal

Publisher: Routledge

Year: 2009

Pagination: 232pp

ISBN: 978-0415990837

Price: £21.99

Examines the impact of national security concerns on immigration policies in Europe, the US, and the Commonwealth in a post-9/11 climate. Linked to this is an in-depth study of the impact of migration on national policies, and whether immigration poses a risk to national security.

The introductory essay explores the impact of terrorism on attitudes towards immigration and on international policies of immigration. It starts by measuring the impact of the terrorist attacks on London and Madrid on both national security and military conflicts worldwide. This is followed by a summary description of the resultant policies which have been brought about in a bid to tighten border controls and encourage police aggressiveness.

Part one focuses on the national interests and immigration policies of the US, both in terms of historical evidence and contemporary debate. It is comprised of various case studies exploring the impact of US immigration policy on Latino communities and Muslim communities, as well as an examination of unintended consequences of National Security Strategies on graduate placements.

In part two, Europe is put under the microscope. The first essay in this section challenges the linkage of terrorism with migration to instead argue that national security controls are largely unaffected by the prevailing anti-terrorism agenda. In contrast, the next essay highlights the dramatic affect anti-terrorist measures have had on immigration policies in contemporary Britain. This is followed by a comparison of pre and post-September 11 Europe and, expanding discussion with an exploration of the effects of 9/11 on EU immigration policies. The remaining essays in the second section examine issues of cooperation and surveillance, and collectivity in the twenty-first century and beyond.

Part three examines the impact of immigration and anti-terrorism policies on former British Commonwealth countries – Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Also relates to:

Criminal Justice and Racial Violence

Politics and Government

WHERE WE LIVE NOW: IMMIGRATION AND RACE IN THE UNITED STATES

John Iceland

Publisher: University of California Press

Year: 2009

Pagination: 240pp

ISBN: 978-0520257634

Price: £13.95

Where We Live Now examines the impact of immigration on the distribution of racial and ethnic groups within contemporary US neighbourhoods. Attention is paid to the extent to which immigrant groups have become residentially integrated and how current rates of segregation vary across ethnic and racial groups. In addition, the author sets out to highlight the effects of factors - such as English-language ability and socio-economic standing - on the residential segregation of immigrant families. As well as examining immigrant groups, Iceland also focuses on the segregation patterns of native populations of the US. Lastly, the author analyses the stability of residential areas both in terms of ethnic distribution and race relations.

The author starts by highlighting some of the main trends that have emerged out of this research but is keen not to draw any conclusions from these findings. Instead, he turns our attention to key definitions and models for understanding residential segregation and its consequences. Thereafter, in chapter two, the author presents an historical overview of the main immigrant settlement patterns as they have emerged from the start of the colonial period in 1607 to the present. The resultant strands are here interpreted through theories of 'immigrant residential incorporation'.

In chapter three, Iceland describes the changing face of US residential areas in relation to shifting racial and ethnic populations in the post-1965 period. Here, the author links the impact of new immigration laws to the distribution, and consequent segregation, of certain racial and ethnic groups. Chapter four puts assimilation theory to the test in its investigation into the linkage of immigration and segregation among various groups – such as Asian, Black, Hispanic. In addition, attention is paid to different rates of segregation between native-born and foreign-born groups.

Moving on to chapter five and we are presented with a case study examining the impact of race on residential distribution. This is translated into a study of racial difference within various Hispanic sub-groupings and the impact of racial affiliation on rates of residential segregation and assimilation. Chapter six addresses the impact of racial diversity on residential grouping, showing how segregation is linked more to immigration status (and, in particular, newly immigrant status) than racial and ethnic grouping. The concluding chapter notes the key issues which have emerged from these findings and which have the potential to inform future research.

Also relates to:

Culture, Identity, Gender and Relationships

Economics and Globalisation

Education

Employment

Health and Social Care

History

Housing and Planning

Politics and Government

THE CUBANS OF UNION CITY: IMMIGRANTS AND EXILES IN A NEW JERSEY COMMUNITY

Yolanda Prieto

Publisher: Temple University Press

Year: 2009

Pagination: 224pp

ISBN: 978-1592132997

Price: £58

Undertaking an ethnographic survey of the Cuban community in Union City, New Jersey, Yolanda Prieto investigates the factors that initially drew this community there during the 1940s. There follows an examination of the conflict between Cuba and the United States in the 1950s and the resultant Cuban Revolution of 1959, which saw another wave of Cuban migration into the area. Rather than citing struggle, Prieto instead emphasises how improved relations between the United States and Cuba in the post-revolution period led to the successful integration of generations of Cuban families living in Union City. What emerges is a personal account of Cuban life in Union City; the author takes her own experiences of being a Cuban and immigrating to the US as a starting point for her exploration of the intricacies of Cuban immigration and community.

Chapter one introduces the reader to the Cuban community of Union City and provides a detailed account of Cuban-US migration in a post-1959 context. Chapter two provides a comparative account of pre-revolutionary Cuban life with post-revolution life – both during the sixties and more recently - as a means of charting the growth and development of this community of immigrants. This exploration is continued in chapter three. Chapter four provides a critical analysis of gender relations and the role that women played in determining immigration. The next chapter examines the role of religion and, in particular, the contributions of the Catholic Church in both securing and enabling immigrant life in the US. The remaining chapters of the book examine the role of politics in Cuban life. Whilst chapter six focuses on the relationship between ethnicity and politics, chapter seven explores the generational differences governing political involvement and activity.

In summary, *The Cubans of Union City* sets out to show how an empathetic immigration policy leads to successful integration. Starting with an account of the author's own journey from Cuba to the United States in the late 1960s, Prieto goes on to connect her own experiences with the wider trends pertaining to Cuban immigration from the 1960s to the present. The book ends by connecting the lived experiences of Cuban immigration to US immigration policies, highlighting the importance of drawing on the experiential when enforcing otherwise abstract concepts.

Also relates to:

Culture, Identity, Gender and Relationships

Economics and Globalisation

History

Migration, Immigration and the Refugee Experience

Politics and Government

POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

FROM CO-EXISTENCE TO CONQUEST: INTERNATIONAL LAW AND THE ORIGINS OF THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT, 1891 – 1949

Victor Kattan

Publisher: Pluto Press

Year: 2009

Pagination: 544pp

ISBN: 978-0745325781

Price: £29.95

This account of the Israel-Palestine conflict is written from a Palestinian perspective and contributes to legal historical knowledge of the situation. The book concerns the question of what happened between 1947-9 when Palestine was placed under a League of Nations Mandate after war broke out between the Zionists and the Palestinian Arabs. Here, the author is more interested in the reasons behind the initial conflict rather than linking that historical event with the present Arab-Israeli conflict. In what follows, the author links the Arab-Israeli conflict to Colonialism and European expansion which, in its second stage, remodelled the area now known as the 'Middle East'. Kattan shows how Zionism mimicked the European practice of colonialism in order to gain control over much of Palestine.

Chapter one – ‘Anti-Semitism, Colonisation and Zionism’ – uses these words to summarise the situation which led to the creation of Israel and the conquest of Palestine in 1948. The resulting argument charts the history of Zionism in relation to colonialism. The next chapter charts the growing importance of the Middle East as an area of strategic significance for the ‘Great Powers’, especially the military and financial interests of ‘Great Britain’. In this regard, Kattan shows the extent to which the British facilitated the Israeli-Arab conflict for their own socio-economic advantage and gain. Chapter three concerns the Palestinian opposition to Jewish immigration and political Zionism prior to 1917 and the publication of the Balfour Declaration. Thereafter, the author traces the British crackdown on the Arab revolt and the resultant culmination of a Jewish state in 1948. This is mapped in full in chapter five, which also examines the development of British policies towards Palestine. The remainder of the book touches on the partition of Palestine (chapter 6), the Arab-Israeli Conflict (chapter 7), the British promise to Palestine - as famously recorded in the ‘Hussein-McMahon correspondence’ (chapter 8) and, lastly, on the creation of Israel (chapter 9).

Also relates to:

Criminal Justice and Racial Violence

Culture, Identity, Gender and Relationships

History

RACE AND AMERICAN POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

Eds. Joseph E. Lowndes, Julie Novkov and Dorian T. Warren

Publisher: Routledge

Year: 2008

Pagination: 368pp

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Price: £90

The editors of this anthology bring together a collection of essays exploring the impact of race on American political development, both in terms of political identity and public policy. Taken as a whole, the essays which together comprise *Race and American Political Development* provide in-depth analysis of the changes and challenges of American politics from the early eighteenth century to the present-day. Importantly, taken together, the essays challenge the history of race as it has been received within contemporary North American culture and argue against a natural progression of political development within the United States. To this end, the editors and contributors jointly believe that the notion that the United States has progressed in terms of embracing racial equality and inclusion is false. The resulting set of essays explore why.

The book is organised in chronological order with the first essay charting the expansion of the early Republic and the consequent racial division and exclusion that occurred – White settlement, Black enslavement and the forced migration of Native Americans from their ancestral homelands. This is followed by a look at the ways in which race was used as a means of dividing American opinion and communities in the early nineteenth century. The issue of federalism is taken up in more depth in chapter three in the context of both Pennsylvania and South Carolina. Here, the author traces the development of surveillance and police power in the United States, from the slave trade to the public and legal scrutiny of African-American communities.

The issue of racial injustice as institutionally-tied forms the theme of chapter four. Here, the authors draw attention to the ways in which White supremacy creates ‘racial orders’ which govern every aspect of social and political life. Thus, far from being an occasional blip, racism has solid and systemic roots. On a similar note, chapter five discusses the concept of American expansionism in the context of nineteenth-century post-colonialism. These concepts are explored in relation to the migration and settlement of generations of Mexican Americans.

Moving on, chapter six examines the notions of revolution and reconstruction in relation to theories of race and the history of racial politics. Elsewhere, chapter seven concerns various policy reforms, such as the Jim Crow and New Deal reforms of the southern states. Meanwhile, chapter eight examines the National Association for the Advancement of Colored people’s (NAACP) confrontation with the labour movement of 1940-65.

The remaining chapters explore a wide range of topics – from a survey of the long-lasting legacies of slavery as linked to political development, to a look at the relationship between Lyndon Johnson and the Civil Rights Movement. The book concludes with an essay about how a watered-down view of racial liberalism has replaced the quest for progressive racial justice, and a look at the interaction of race and religion during the development of American politics.

Also relates to:

Criminal Justice and Racial Violence

Culture, Identity, Gender and Relationships

History

ETHNIC PROFILING IN THE EUROPEAN UNION: PERVASIVE, INEFFECTIVE AND DISCRIMINATORY

Open Society Institute

Publisher: Open Society Institute

Year: 2009

Pagination: 208pp

ISBN: 978-1891385889

Price: £13.95

Here, the Open Society Justice Initiative argue against ethnic profiling, which they define as the targeting of specific ethnic groups through stop-and-search practices, raids and general surveillance tactics. The authors examine ethnic profiling by police in Europe and, in particular, in the context of the UK, France, Italy, Germany and the Netherlands, showing how such practices have increased drastically since 9/11.

The authors provide an introductory overview of ethnic profiling before critiquing the ways in which its very purpose – namely, to counteract terrorism – ultimately fails. They show how ethnic profiling – far from being an effective way to identify terrorist suspects – actually endangers the very people it is designed to protect. There follows an account of the contributions of ethnic profiling to the perpetuation of stereotypes based on ethnicity, race, nationality and religion. The authors deem the practice as discriminatory and counter-productive – over-looking criminals who do not fit certain ethnic profiles and arresting innocent people who do, leading to a great sense of injustice and the stigmatising of certain communities who could otherwise assist police with the reduction of crime and prevention of terrorism.

The authors propose a number of alternatives to ethnic profiling. Drawing on statistics pertaining to this practice, including qualitative data on the ethnic profiling of stop-and-search practices, they show behavioural analysis to be more effective than ethnic profiling. As such, the Open Society team highlight the ways in which a profiling based on ‘race’, nationality and religion is not only superficial but also unlawful. To this end, the authors monitor and measure police practices, highlighting the need to eliminate ethnic profiling and initiating a new dialogue about more effective policies and implementation strategies.

Also relates to:

Criminal Justice and Racial Violence

Culture, Identity, Gender and Relationships

History

Migration, Immigration and the Refugee Experience

Social Theory

LIBERATED TERRITORY: UNTOLD LOCAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY

Ed. Yohuru Williams and Jama Lazerow

Publisher: Duke University Press

Year: 2008

Pagination: 312pp

ISBN: 978-0822343264

Price: £14.99

Liberated Territory is a follow-up to the editors’ previous collection of essays – *In Search of the Black Panther Party*, which

provided an overview of the Black Panther Party and its legacy. In this collection, Williams and Lazerow focus on the impact of the Black Panther Party across the United States to show how the party's ideologies and strategies were taken up and subsequently modified by a range of local communities. In bringing together this collection of essays, the editors aim to initiate a scholarly body of work pertaining to 'Panther Studies' which takes local history and a historiographical survey as its starting point.

In the introduction, the authors provide a historical overview of the formation of the group and the socio-political climate pertaining to the founding aims and objectives of the group. There follows an in-depth survey of the demographic and ethnographic make-up of the various states in which the group and its consequent splinter groups set-up. The book moves on to examine the strained relationship between party members and the local police which was manifested through police corruption and brutality, violent clashes, lootings and shootings. However, this is kept in brief as a result of the need to shift attention away from any sensationalising of the group in order to instead focus on the ways in which the Panthers fought everyday experiences of racial harassment, prejudice and stigma. In other words, rather than dwelling on the alleged disturbances created by the group, the authors are instead keen to highlight the positive and empowering outcomes of the coming together of the Panthers. In so doing, the authors highlight the national appeal of the Panthers and their putting into practice the notion of 'thinking globally, acting locally'. To this end, contributors chart the significance of the group and the pro-activity of its members in the areas of housing, employment, education and recreation. Particular attention is paid to the federal initiatives of the group, which can be summarised as contributing to urban renewal, democratic politics, and anti-poverty work.

The first chapter summarises the founding aims and principles of the Black Panther Party. This is followed by geographically-specific considerations which highlight the diverse nature of the group's work - chapter two focuses on Oakland, Boston and New Bedford 'riots' of 1970; chapter three centres on the Alabama Black Liberation Front; chapter four highlights the situation of the Black Panther Party in Detroit; lastly, chapter five focuses on Milwaukee as a case study for signalling the wider ramifications of the group.

Also relates to:

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History

Social Theory

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

MATHEMATICS IN ANCIENT IRAQ: A SOCIAL HISTORY

Eleanor Robson

Publisher: Princeton University Press

Year: 2008

Price: £29.95,

Pagination: 441pp

ISBN 978 0 691 09182 2

Eleanor Robson continues her work on historicising maths with this volume that traces the origins and development of maths in the Middle East. She situates her discussion between the prominent mathematical approach that considers old Babylonian maths as the original 'pure' maths but also to as simply a forerunner to classical Greek maths; and histories of Iraq that consider maths to be marginal to the mainstream concerns within the socio-economic history of the region.

By placing the book in relation to these two threads, Robson argues that the complexity of the maths from this region (Ancient Iraq, also known as Babylonia, Mesopotamia or Sumer) has been underestimated. She aims to examine maths within its broader socio-historical and religious context to show that it was a key component in structuring society, and reclaim it from the historical assumptions that cite the maths of ancient Iraq as a simplistic precursor to Greek maths. Her discussion centres on analysis of cuneiform tablets that were used to record quantitative data, and is thus based on archaeological discoveries of clay tablets from the time that have since been deciphered and translated.

The book situates itself within the constructivist stance to maths that emerged in the 1970s and began to consider the way maths was created by social groups and why mathematical ideas and techniques were understood in certain ways rather than others. In short, she questions how the society affected mathematical ideals and practices.

The book is split into seven historical sections, plus an introduction and epilogue. The

historical chapters are set out chronologically and cover a period of 500 years each to make clear the developments emerging through time. The first three deal with Early Mesopotamia – the time of territorial empires; the final three with Later Mesopotamia – the time of great empires. These all address the south of the region where most archaeological discoveries have been made. In between there is a chapter on Assyria that considers the northern areas. Each section begins with a map that shows the locations where the tablets being discussed were found.

In the methodological introduction, Robson discusses the cuneiform tablets and their use by scribes to ask a series of questions regarding who wrote these tablets and under what circumstances. She engages in textual analysis of the tablets through looking closely at their materiality – the shapes and sizes of the tablets are as relevant as what is written on them. This emphasises the central concern of the book which is on contextualising the mathematical history of the region in order to reappraise three millennia of ideas around maths in the context of Iraq's 'rich cultural contexts and on its own terms' (263).

The discussion closes with the epilogue that takes all the above chapters together to give a historiographical overview in order to make the connections between ancient maths and the modern world. The discussion is contextualised through ideas of orientalism and highlights how Iraqi maths has been denied complexity.

There are useful and detailed tables throughout the book that give an overview of maths in Ancient Iraq through charting dates, political history and mathematical developments. There are also many images of the cuneiform tablets that help contextualise the discussion, and demonstrate the layout of writing on the tablets and the types of tablets being used. The Appendixes feature tables on metrological systems and an extensive table of published mathematical tablets, and the volume has an extensive bibliography.

MATHEMATICS IN INDIA

Kim Plofker

Publisher: Princeton University Press

Year: 2009

£28.95,

Pagination 357.pp

ISBN: 9780691 120676

The book aims to present the main arguments regarding the development of Indian mathematics. In describing conflicting points of view between scholars Plofker aims to give both sides of the debate and outline the areas where direct supporting evidence is lacking.

The introduction outlines the context of the book, locating the discussion within larger historiographies of maths from the subcontinent. Here Plofker considers the impact of colonisation on the development of understanding around Indian mathematics and the historiographic difficulties that surround it. The discussion also extends to the role of maths in Sanskrit learning.

The rest of the book is divided into 8 chapters, ordered chronologically to focus on various historical approaches rather than according to mathematical topics:

'Mathematical Thought in Vedic India' considers the mathematical concepts in the earliest Indian texts and the connections of this with astronomy. This chapter also considers the contentious history of connections between maths in Vedic India and Ancient Mesopotamia.

'Mathematical Traces in the Early Classical Period' focuses on early sources starting in the first millennium BCE; the development of written number forms such as decimals and the communication of these ideas between India and its neighbours. It also addresses mathematical ideas within the disciplines of astronomy, astrology and cosmology, as well as in grammatical structures and Buddhist texts.

'The Mathematical Universe' explores the first surviving complete Sanskrit texts in the medieval tradition of mathematical astronomy. It engages with maths as a textual genre and considers the problems in historicising this from a more modern perspective that has particular rules about how we approach science.

'The Genre of Medieval Mathematics' furthers the discussion from chapter 4 to discuss the development of maths as a textual genre and its continuing relevance to astronomy through looking closely at siddhāntas, the Bakhshālī manuscript and the Ganita-sāra-sangraha.

'The Development of "Canonical" Mathematics' begins to engage with the social and intellectual context of work on mathematics to consider the individuals who were studying and writing about maths and how this related to the development of a canon. This goes on to consider mathematicians and their roles in society and looks specifically at the work of Nārāyana Pandita.

'The School of Mādhava in Kerala' continues the discussion of individuals by looking closely at the famous Kerala school which is the best known of the pedagogical lineages in Indian maths. This chapter outlines the background of the school, its approach to mathematical methodologies and how these ideas were communicated.

'Exchanges with the Islamic World' centres around the impact of contact between India and Islamic maths during the second millennium, it also contextualises this with a discussion of maths in the West; this leads into

'Continuity and Changes in the Modern Period' which surveys some of the developments that gave way to the shift from Indian maths to Indian participation in modern maths through shifts in how maths was being taught.

The volume is supplemented by two appendixes – a guide to key features of Sanskrit, and biographical resources on Indian mathematicians. This volume is supported by illustrations of manuscripts and artefacts throughout.