

Nations Fourth World Conference on Women.

Morley's *The Mountain is Moving* is written in accessible language and is suitable for undergraduate students in women's studies, English and those with an interest in feminism and literary traditions. The language in Wittman's *Interactive Identities* and Puri's *Women, Body and Desire in Post-Colonial India* will be less accessible to undergraduate students in women's studies and sociology. However, these two texts will provide graduate students with an understanding of how postmodern and post-colonial theoretical analyses inform accounts that examine the intersections of feminist and national identities.

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At My Mother's Feet: Stories of Muslim Women, Sadia Zaman (ed.) for the Canadian Council of Muslim Women, Kingston, Ontario: Quarry Women's Books, 1999; illustrations; 120 pages; ISBN 1-55082-263-2; \$14.95.

Reading Rights: A Woman's Guide to the Law in Canada, Rahat Kurd for The Canadian Council of Muslim Women, Kingston, Ontario: Quarry Women's Books, 1999; illustrations; 93 pages; ISBN 1-55082-262-4; \$12.95.

Despite growing interests in scholarly and popular writings about Islam and gender, materials that give prominence to the voices of women, rather than to the undeniable discriminatory gender practices in Islamic societies, are still few in number. In recent years, this glaring absence has been addressed to a certain extent by academic and scholarly publications. But publications about the subject for the general reader, including media reports, are predominantly self-congratulatory and stereotypical accounts of the exotic "Muslim woman," who is "kept" in the jealously guarded confines of the husband's home. The public presence and activity of the "Muslim woman," when observed and reported, often has the undertone of an unexpected circumstance. *Not Without My Daughter* (Mahmoody 1987) and *Nine Parts of Desire* (Brooks 1995) are among several

examples which work to fuel everyday racism against the Muslim diaspora in the West. Such publications obscure the profound heterogeneity of peoples from Muslim societies within or without the Middle East and their differing understanding and interpretations of Islam(s) and Shari'a, particularly on issues of women's rights. Worse, they conceal the humanity of Muslim women and particularly, their remarkable resistance against male-serving gendered values and laws in Islamic societies.

At My Mother's Feet counters the dominant trend. It is a most welcome contribution to the existing literature about Muslim women, particularly because Muslim women speak for themselves rather than being spoken of. The book consist of an introduction by the editor; a useful historical account of Muslim migration to Canada; a few pages about Islam in very simple language; and a glossary of terms, followed by very interesting life narratives of seven Muslim women of diverse ethnic and cultural background. Some of the women speak of their own experiences (Lila, Solmaz, Atiya, Mariam). Others tell us the story of the difficult journey of their mothers and grandmothers and how they met the challenges of building a new home for themselves and their families in Canada (Amina, Rikia, Najabey).

The book is a valuable source that reveals more than the life narratives of migrant Muslim women. In fact, the early periods after arrival and the struggle both to make a living in an unwelcoming environment and to maintain their identity while adjusting to a new way of life in Canada, as some of the narrators tell us, did not dramatically differ from the experiences of other immigrant woman (48). But these women had to confront racism and ignorance about Muslims in their adopted home. They had to counter the dominant images constructed by Hollywood movies of Muslims and Arabs as villains, (33). The book provides an interesting and telling account of life in nineteenth-century Canada, reminding the reader of the profound social changes that this country has gone through, particularly in its treatment of non-European immigrants. It makes one appreciate the struggles of the pioneering immigrants like Amina, Rikia and Najabey, for example, to end the practice of changing the surname of the arriving Muslim immigrants (to make it easier for "Canadians" to pronounce them).

The book emphasises the struggles of Muslim women within the larger community. The reader learns how, through the establishment of their own community (by building a mosque in Edmonton and establishing the Canadian Council of Muslim Women), these women have reclaimed their distinct identity and have made a positive impact on their new society. What is missing is an account of the women's struggles in their intimate, domestic lives. Did migration change these women's self-images and expectations? Did it have a lasting impact on family dynamics and gender relations within the community? Regrettably, doors remain closed to these aspects of the life experiences of Muslim women.

Reading Rights, the second book, represents a commendable example of the active involvement of the Council of Muslim Women in the civic life of the larger community. The book provides source material in a very accessible language and form (using graphics and cartoons), aiming to answer the most common questions regarding the concept of rights. Various sections in the book provide a general guide to the law in Canada, including the areas of social life that are covered by the provisions of human rights legislation, employment-related rights, and laws regarding marriage and divorce. The objectives of the Guide, despite the fact that it covers a wide range of subjects, are quite modest, having in mind "ordinary women," as outlined in the preface and introduction. The goal is to educate and empower women - that is, to create an awareness about women's legal rights and when and how to go about asserting one's legal rights. Unfortunately, often these rights are not discussed with specific references to the laws. The book, however, contains a useful list of other sources of information and a list of women's organizations in Canada should the reader need to seek information on specific subjects covered in the book.

REFERENCES

Mahmoody, Betty. *Not Without My Daughter*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987.

Brooks, Geraldine. *Nine Parts of Desire: the Hidden World of Islamic Women*. New York: Anchor Books, 1995.

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Temporary Work: The Gendered Rise of a Precarious Employment Relationship. Leah Vosko. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000; 380 pgs; ISBN 080208334x; \$27.95.

It is over a decade since the now-defunct Economic Council of Canada's 1990 report *Good Jobs, Bad Jobs: Employment in the Service Economy* alerted Canadians to an important set of changes in the labour market. Since the 1980s, the postwar norm of full-time, full-year jobs, each with its own career ladder, has become increasingly less common, while self-employment, part-time and temporary work together have come to account for the majority of new jobs. Leah Vosko's *Temporary Work: The Gendered Rise of a Precarious Employment Relationship* affords an in-depth analysis of one of the "new" forms of precarious work - the temporary help industry (THI).

In fact, Vosko argues, this form of employment relation is not new. Before governments began to lay the basis for the "standard employment relationship" that became the normative postwar model, private employment agents played an important role, especially in intermediating the flow of immigrant labour. When national and provincial governments, spurred on by the International Labour Organization (ILO), took steps to prohibit or at least to regulate their operation, however, the typewriter companies began to carve out a special niche in the labour market, as suppliers of native born, female clerical workers. Conditions in the postwar era were ripe for the expansion of the THI. On the one hand, the establishment of collective bargaining rights and the development of social insurance systems helped to establish the "standard employment relation" as the norm for many male workers. On the other, the postwar ideology of domesticity provided a ready supply of workers prepared to accept temporary positions.

As that postwar order began to crumble in the 1970s, the THI began to change its role, from supplier of "stopgap labour" to purveyor of "staffing services." This expanded its sectoral and occupational reach to include scientists, lawyers, computer programmers, nurses and managers, as well as the clerical workers of "Kelly Girl" fame. With this shift the industry has also changed its gender composition, growing to include male as