

unless we accept the notion that our criminal justice system is perfect, which it is not. Thus, as she points out, “The conventional measure of the disproportionality is only useful assuming all racial groups are on equal footing” (19). The factors that often point to social marginality such as high rates of unemployment and crime are often—although by no means always—correlated. Attempts to downplay their importance is a disservice to developing rational public policy alternatives.

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***Yanick St. Jean and Joe R. Feagin. Double Burden: Black Women and Everyday Racism. (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1998). 235 pp., \$36.95.***

The women interviewed in *Double Burden* share personal accounts of what it is like to be black and female in the contemporary United States. Drawing on over two hundred interviews with middle-class, well-educated black women, Yannick St. Jean and Joe R. Feagin present a collective memory of the misrepresentation of black women in our history, as well as individual experiences and triumphs. Through excerpts of personal narratives on topics including career, work, physical appearance, media representation, relationships with white women, and motherhood, the women recount experiences dealing with everyday racism, the denigrating social messages about their beauty, self-worth, sexuality, intelligence, and drive. While the general tone of the book may be considered negative by some, the stories of encounters with racist attitudes and prejudicial actions and opinions reveal methods adopted for overcoming barriers through a development of survival and countering strategies, the “oppositional culture” rooted in family structure and sustained through generations by a collective memory. The introduction of the book presents a brief overview of the stigmatized image of black women in American history, but the analysis of the text offers few new insights and some sections appear dated, e.g. doll colors, the white stereo-

type of beauty. The work does contribute narratively to the body of literature about the black female experience in America including such major works as *The Black Woman Cross-Culturally*, edited by Filomina Chioma Steady, and *Women of Color in U.S. Society*, edited by Maxine Baca Zinn and Bonnie Thornton Dill.

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**Leland T. Saito. *Race and Politics: Asian Americans, Latinos, and Whites in a Los Angeles Suburb*. Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1998. Part of the Asian American Experience Series edited by Roger Daniels. 250 pp., \$49.95 cloth, \$21.95 paper.**

This book is a testament to the maturity of ethnic studies curricula. They were developed by activist students, primarily of Asian, Native American, African, and Latino ancestry, and by faculty members who had no formal training in ethnic studies because the discipline did not exist. The faculty who participated in the creation of ethnic studies curricula were scholars with an interest in this emerging field or people who by dint of race were deemed to have interests in the field. By training they were primarily historians, English department faculty, sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists, and art and drama department faculty. There was no shared corpus of work, methodology, or background among them.

Professor Saito, whose PhD is in sociology, has been trained in a university system where fully articulated ethnic studies curricula are widespread. Over thirty years of scholarship, teaching, and conceptualization undergird his work, and it shows. This is a solid academic work, utilizing approaches, methods, perceptions, and information that were not available thirty years ago. As the discipline was designed to be, his work is thoroughly interdisciplinary. He draws broadly on women's