

BOOK REVIEWS

Onnagirai — Nippon no Misojini (Woman-Haters: Misogyny in Japan) by Chizuko Ueno (Tokyo: Kinokuniya Shoten, 2010), 285 pp., \$14.84.

Misogyny is a social device that assists male heterosexuality. As Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick explains in her theory on homosocial relations, misogyny often helps men to maintain their male homosocial solidarity. Availing herself of Sedgwick's theory, Japan's preeminent feminist scholar Chizuko Ueno contributes to Sedgwick's work by indicating how charges of simple misogyny do not fully explain misogyny both in men and women in Japan.

Throughout sixteen chapters which examine various social and cultural topics on misogyny in Japan, such as the Japanese Imperial Family, *konkatsu* ("marriage hunting"), DV ("domestic violence," often committed by a husband in Japan, but increasingly by adult children toward their parents), BL ("boy love" in manga or comics—directed at young women or girls which often portray young male homosexual relationships, including sexual acts), and *enjoyo kousai* (which means "compensated dating" between an old male and a young female), Ueno's *Onnagirai* reveals that male womanizers in Japan in fact hate women. As she explains, misogyny represents self-loathing within men; in hating women, "men are not reacting to women, but in fact are reacting to the signification of femininity" (p. 9, all quotations translated by the reviewer). Ueno provides specific examples that men do not intend to hate women themselves, but rather unconsciously idealize women as sexual objects under their male sexual fantasies. A similar claim has been made by Masahiro Morioka, an ethicist and author of *Kanjinai Otoko* [Impotent Men] (2005). Morioka's claim is that men are sexually stimulated by, for example, clothes that signify a cute female. More specifically, he claims that men can even react to the signification of femininity represented by their same-sex comrades if they wear a mini-skirt and male legs are displayed as that of beautiful women. As is clear, both Ueno and Morioka share the idea that one's sexual fantasy or fetishism can go beyond conventional heterosexual eroticism. Yet, the distinctiveness of Ueno's work here is that she attempts to further reveal the complexities of male misogyny within male sexual fantasies (some may call it "male sexual objectification" or "sexual exploitation") toward women, while Morioka simply revealed the fact that men can react to anything representing the feminine.

Throughout the book, Ueno further develops Morioka's idea of male sexual fantasy through the concept of misogyny. As she notes, male sexual objectification of women cannot always be identified as misogynistic reactions against women — it is rather more important to note that there is a certain degree of sexual desire within men, something similar to fetishism, which unconsciously leads men into reacting to the items signified as female, such as a

mini-skirt or female undergarments. Using the example of Pavlov's dog, Ueno notes: "men's sexual desire seems to represent an automated-machine-like fetishism of men, which easily react to the fragmented signification of femininity" (9).

Although several innovative analyses on misogyny have appeared outside Japan, such as Joan Smith's *Misogynies* (1989) and David Gilmore's *Misogyny: The Male Malady* (2001), Ueno's book is the first book for Japanese gender scholars to fully encounter the theoretical study of misogyny within Japan. Scholars who read this book may be skeptical about Ueno's analysis of gender-misogyny issues for both men and women, because Ueno famously claimed that women's issues should be studied by women themselves, whereas men's issues should be studied by men--a point of view familiar to those who have read Michael Kimmel and his idea of men writing about men. Yet the arguments in her book are not just about what is noted above. Rather, she explains what male analysis (or male depictions) of women lack, that is, analyzing female figures depicted by men will not be precise, because they are simply creations based on male sexual fantasy or idealization of women. Although Ueno analyzes the issue of misogyny both in men and women, this book is no doubt written for men, who are still dominated by conventional gender stereotypes and who she sees as slaves to their male sexual fantasies in constructing relationships with women. Ueno argues that even today men in Japan have not changed — they continue to escape from real women, instead intoxicated by fetishism for fictionalized, especially virtualized women.

Although gender studies in Japan is a less developed discipline than in the United States, this book is well worth publishing in English because it introduces a number of case studies critiquing gender in Japan. Considering today's globally expanding gender studies, Japanese feminist Ueno's *Onnagirai* will take Western readers on a new journey in which they can encounter another gender narrative.

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The Country We Want to Live In: Hate crimes and homophobia in the lives of black lesbian South Africans by Nonhlanhla Mkize, Jane Bennett, Vasu Reddy, Relebohile Moletsane. (Capetown, SA: Human Sciences Research Council, 2010), 66 pp., \$10.95 or Free Online pdf download.

This significant volume highlights the reality of ongoing violence against black lesbians in South Africa that has for too long remained hidden and ignored in a country known for its progressive constitution and widely viewed forward thinking on LGBTIQ issues. Jointly authored, the report is based on a round-table seminar hosted by the Human Sciences Research Council during the 2006 '16 Days of Activism' campaign for no violence against women and children. The 16 Days campaign was and "is used to address policy and legal issues, to campaign for the protection of survivors of violence...and for the elimination of all forms of gender violence." The start date of the campaign, 25 November, was made the "International Day of No Violence against Women at the first Feminist Encuentro for Latin America and the Caribbean" held in Bogota, Colombia, in 1981. November 25 commemorated the death of the Mirabal sisters (1960) under the dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo in the Dominican Republic.

This report was then produced through an innovative partnership between academics, non-governmental organizations and activists. The book highlights violence against lesbians as a gender-based assault problem that demands attention from this larger campaign, in particular due to the campaign's prior and dominant heteronormative focus. The report argues why lesbian and gay matters are urgent gendered human rights issues despite South Africa's constitutional protections of gender and sexuality, and human dignity. Discrimination remains a social practice, indeed, violence based on gender and sexual orientation in the country is deeply embedded and widespread.

The report offers an insight into the socio-political context of South Africa and the language used to speak about these issues and presents views expressed by some of the people who were part of this historic conversation. Comments such as Zethu Matebeni's that "the term 'lesbian' can encompass a very wide range of people" and does not mimic the Global North's notion about sexual identity, are important to situating black "lesbians" in South Africa, and can not be separated from "men" or "heterosexuality." The term "black" equally functions as a complex and contentious term inseparable from class, ancestry, ethnicity, and apartheid era status. Hate speech is another complicated issue in South Africa, and the 2004 Prohibition of Hate Speech Bill, though discussed was never ratified. Similarly, the 16 Days Seminar wrestled with definitions of "homophobia," citing also "homo-prejudice," the term preferred by the Triangle Project in Capetown, arguing that "benign" homophobia, e.g., common jokes and

assumptions about LGBTIQ persons, contributes to the “climate of ‘disgust’ strangling lesbian and gay people’s breath.”

The Seminar participants recognized the toll taken on people’s lives by the struggle against hate crimes endured by black lesbians and transgendered citizens. Everyone acknowledged the fact that activists experience a broad range of emotional and physical challenges and that psychological assault or trauma is a core aspect of fighting for a world in which people are not victims of hate. At the round-table the dominating themes ranged from concrete work around policy change to the demand of South Africans to re-imagine the meaning of citizenship so that lesbians, gay men and transgendered people may secure equal access to security, civil rights, dignity and the opportunity to live their lives free of hatred, stigma and fear. The book emphasizes that violence against black lesbians, precipitated by culturally sanctioned homophobia and hate speech often results in physical and emotional harm inflicted by certain men in the community, and while “corrective” rape was mentioned, the emphasis was on everyday assault, rape, even murder.

Justifications for the continued marginalization of lesbians (and gay men) in South African communities range from the notion that homosexuality is un-African, to beliefs that lesbians and gays should not be afforded the same constitutional protections provided to the rest of society. These perceptions and attitudes that homosexuality should be criminalized emanates from ethnic, religious and national notions of what correct or proper gender behavior is and what is not.

The authors provide a set of positions on issues that will have relevance for human rights and LGBTIQ activists nationally, continentally and globally. While providing an analysis of the state of affairs concerning lesbian lives in South Africa, it does not speak on behalf of lesbians. The text highlights the pain of experience through the voices of those most affected. Interspersed in the text are references to the critical literature, news reports, popular articles and statements made by participants in the roundtable discussion that connect the issues to ongoing discussions about human rights. In capturing key points from the 2006 Roundtable-Seminar, an update on crimes and events were added, then the authors concluded with recommendations relevant for ongoing policy and advocacy actions for social justice by the state of South Africa and its agencies, for non-governmental organizations, and for all international organizations and donor groups. All are urged to begin with strong public condemnations of violence which targets LGBTIQ and PLHIV persons and to document, challenge, and publicize such violence as human rights violations. International agencies, in particular, are asked to support and advocate for the “LGBTI sector” to strengthen their capacity. As the report’s opening statement says, since the 2006 Roundtable Seminar “...the number of lesbians who have been murdered has increased. Silence on this matter is not an option in the

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country we want to live in.” Any one who reads this report should be outraged and moved to act to support South African lesbian sisters.

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