

The authors were lax in using diagrams and charts in the first half of the book, the first time that the readers saw a chart or diagram was in Chapter 8, which could be seen as a detriment. There were other places where the authors could have used a chart or diagram, especially when discussing colonization. Chapter 8 also provided a summary of the factors of resettlement as well as a summary of the rest of the chapters of the book from that point forward. This is detrimental because many readers may not want to continue reading or they might just jump to the most important chapter, which is Chapter 19. Although, Chapter 19 is extremely significant in this book because it points out the importance of Nunavut as well as its negative and positive aspects; the authors have failed to discuss the impact that Nunavut has on the rest of Canada—specifically on the province of Quebec, many of whose residents have always wanted to be a separate nation.

In conclusion, the authors have done an excellent job at recounting the story of the Inuit people, specifically women, from past to present. They have done their job and been able to let the reader acknowledge the fact that Nunavut should be etched in Canadian Inuit history. It is important to get beyond the negative data, they note, “and to move toward understanding their empowerment.”

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## **EXALTED SUBJECTS: STUDIES IN THE MAKING OF RACE AND NATION IN CANADA**

Sunera Thobani  
Toronto: University of Toronto  
Press, 2007

### **REVIEWED BY TABASSUM FAHIM RUBY**

In *Exalted Subjects*, Sunera Thobani engages with state policies/laws, practices, myths, and ideologies that conceptualize and construct Canada's national identity. She argues that Indigenous peoples and immigrants have come to be constituted as “Others” in relation to white Canadians or what she calls the “Exalted Subjects.” While the “exalted national” is law-abiding, the subject that is constructed as the outsider is susceptible to lawlessness; the “exalted national” is compassionate, and what is constituted as the outsider wants to gain access to valuable resources; and while the former is committed to gender equality, the latter is irremediably patriarchal. Moreover, Thobani notes that “the master narrative” of Canada as a nation of law-abiding citizens who are committed to the values of diversity and multiculturalism is seen to be in danger in the post 9/11 era. Muslim immigrants and those who “look like Muslims” have come to be constructed as a serious threat to the very survival of Canada. Hence, they not only require surveillance, but also provide justification for increased restrictions on Canadian immigration and citizenship. Thobani's careful examination of Canadian nationhood is a significant contribution in the area of race, nation, and citizenship. However, I would suggest that the idea of “keeping Canada white” and its effects on indigenous and immigrant women requires some further examination.

In the first two chapters, Thobani examines unbalanced power relations

between Europeans and Natives, and issues of citizenship. She argues that the encounter of Europeans with Native peoples during the fur trade was marked by violence and that the colonial relationship has been hierarchical. She states that the Europeans perceived the indigenous peoples as “uncivilized,” “not fully human,” non-Christian with no recognizable legal system, and consequently lawless. Hence the Europeans draw on these differences to articulate a racial and religious superiority as legitimate reasons for subjugating Natives. Presumed racial superiority then was extended to immigration policies. Thobani observes that “undesired” immigrants such as Chinese, Japanese, and Indians have been victims of discriminatory Canadian immigration policies. She also critiques the views of Seyla Benhabib, a feminist philosopher and political theorist on citizenship. Thobani argues that rather than examining citizenship from the perspectives of those who are denied this status, such as Indigenous peoples, Benhabib focuses on the experiences of those who are already at the centre. Thobani also examines the constitution of subjectivity through the points system. She writes that the category of “person suitability” grants immigration officers, who “disproportionately favoured male applicants as independents over female applicants,” an immense power. Moreover, Thobani notes that the events of 9/11 and the London bombing have provided excuses to Canadian immigration to further restrict citizenship rights of the “non-preferred” groups.

Issues of welfare and notions of multiculturalism are stereotypically tied to immigrants and Indigenous peoples. Thobani takes up these issues in her third and fourth chapters and argues, “Rather than doing away with the socio-economic inequalities of class and gender, the welfare state further institutionalized and deepened [them].” For instance, Thobani writes that welfare policies reinforce women's dependency on men and put

women in a hierarchical relationship where the traditional heterosexual nuclear family becomes a “fundamental principle of social organization.” Nonetheless, Thobani observes that Aboriginal communities and mothers were denied the right to raise their children, as they were forced to send their children to residential schools where they experienced “deep racial denigration of their communities by their teachers and guardians.” Despite having social hierarchies, Canada prides itself as being a multicultural society that respects different cultures. However, Thobani argues that the idea of multiculturalism politically identifies people of colour by their cultural backgrounds. And race is reconfigured as culture where “all people of colour would become ideologically constructed as immigrants on the basis of their shared cultural and linguistic diversity.” Multiculturalism thus comes to attest to the enduring superiority of whiteness. Further, Thobani writes, multiculturalism diverts attention from the power relations that reproduce racial hierarchies since it suggests that conflicts arise from “ignorance and cultural intolerance,” rather than social inequalities.

In the last two chapters, she examines the most recent changes to immigration policies. Thobani reviews the Immigration Policy Review (IPR), the Social Security Review (SSR), and post 9/11 security measures. Through these documents, she argues that Canadian immigration articulates Canada as white and through its policies tries to “keep Canada white.” However, since Canada’s birth rate is declining, and the population is aging, it cannot sustain itself without immigrants. Hence, Thobani notes that some of the recommendations these reviews proposed include that Canada should return to the pre-1960 source countries because by doing so, it would not have to deal with cultural and racial tensions. For the most part these suggestions are sparked by the “war on terror.” Thobani argues that these discursive measures recast Ca-

nadian nationality as superior, its very survival threatened by the “fanatic” Muslim. Further, feminist gender values are used to justify the “war on terror.” After all, Thobani states, a central slogan in mobilizing popular support for the war in Afghanistan and for Canadian participation in this “good” war is to save Muslim girls and women from the Taliban.

Analyses of post 9/11 security measures in the light of historical racist immigration policies are thus a timely project. Thobani examines these issues meticulously and her engagement with the subject is insightful and informative. Throughout the book, Thobani discusses “keeping Canada white” idea’s impact on women. Her analysis, however, sometimes falls short of engaging Native women’s issues and, besides the Indian Act, the effects of colonialism on their lives. Similarly, the points system not only “disproportionately favoured male applicants,” but in essence it is *masculine* and *class based*. For instance, a person would earn a maximum of 25 points if s/he has a Master’s or a Ph.D. degree, and 24 points if fluent in national languages. Most immigrants come from countries where resources are limited. Many parents often send male children to get higher education because in turn, potentially they would bring higher salaries into the family. Thus, many prospective female applicants’ social circumstance may not allow them to score as high on the points system as male applicants. Thobani, however, does not examine the gender effects of the points system. Moreover, the dustcover of the book shows an image of a woman who has her head covered. The illustration thus suggests that the book focuses on women, which is somewhat contrary to its content. Nevertheless, Thobani’s contribution on the subject of race and nation-making is substantive. Academics would find *Exalted Subjects* an invaluable book that engages critically with Canada’s national identity, Indigenous rights, migration, and citizenship.

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## TROUBLING WOMEN’S STUDIES: PASTS, PRESENTS AND POSSIBILITIES

Ann Braithwaite, Susan Heald, Susanne Luhmann, and Sharon Rosenberg  
Toronto: Sumach Press, 2004

### REVIEWED BY RACHEL HURST

*Troubling Women’s Studies* is a critical intervention into the practice of Women’s Studies in the (Canadian) university. This book accomplishes the difficult work of formulating questions that face Women’s Studies in a university climate shaped by two factors: an increasingly instrumental vision of university education within the institution at large, and the inclination in Women’s Studies in particular to transmit histories that paradoxically function as legitimization and ossification of the (inter)discipline. The authors convincingly present the foundations of Women’s Studies as rooted in modernism, with goals that are no longer tenable and appear impossible: under these conditions, how do we “pass on” (meant by the authors in all senses of the phrase) Women’s Studies? A key question elaborated in the text is about *how* we pass on Women’s Studies (in contrast to a conventional focus on *what contents* get passed on). The authors argue against fortifying the boundaries of Women’s Studies by articulating a singular definition of the field in reaction to the contemporary climate. Instead, they encourage cultivating an atmosphere of intellectual curiosity and openness, even as this