

vidualism and American capitalist materialism as has ever been published. Or that Fae Myenne Ng's *Bone* is a feminist novel about how three young Chinese American women in San Francisco's Chinatown respond to traditional obligations to their family and their ancestors, their "bone." The obedient daughter chooses suicide rather than rebellion or compliance. The post-feminist daughter (significantly, a flight attendant) selfishly escapes her filial obligations and duties, flying away from them forever. The feminist daughter (also, significantly, a social worker) leaves home for good, leaves the past "back dair," as well, but with the husband of her choice, while still working as a community "bridge" within Chinatown.

Warning. Readers will find Li's haut scholarly jargon impenetrable, but no worse than many others, mine included.

Reviewed by: Phillipa Kafka  
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**Aldon Lynn Nielsen, ed. *Reading Race in American Poetry: An Area of Act* (Urban and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000). X, 232pp., \$49.95 cloth; \$18.95 soft cover.**

For some time now it has been fashionable when reviewing any sort of anthology to focus critical lens on what the anthology leaves out. In both formal and informal reviews of literary anthologies and collections of essays what an editor does not include in his or her text often takes precedent over the relative virtues of the texts actually appearing in the anthology itself. In the most postmodern of moments, absence erases presence.

Despite every good intention on my part to avoid such an approach, *Reading Race in American Poetry: An Area of Act* demands at least a passing interrogation of what it is not. What it is not is a book about the many races that comprise America and its poetry. For Nielsen and his well-respected contributors,

the term “race” remains, in virtually every instance, interchangeable with the word “black.” Imagine my surprise when I opened a book entitled *Reading Race in American Poetry* and found no essays on American Indian, Latino, Jewish, Asian American, or Arabic American poetry. To his credit Nielsen acknowledges the limited perspective of his book by quoting Shelley Fisher Fishkin’s essay, “Interrogating ‘Whiteness,’ Complicating ‘Blackness’: Remapping American Culture,” an essay with which Nielsen’s book forms a revealing intertext:

Like Shelley Fishkin, ‘I would not want my decision to frame this essay in black or white terms to be interpreted as a denial of the importance of these other groups and traditions [...] I am simply choosing to focus, at this time, on one particular aspect of a complex set of issues’ (20).

Eric Sundquist asks for the same leeway in his *To Wake the Nations: Race in the Making of American Literature*, and because his and Nielsen’s projects are so well-intentioned, the reader grants indulgences. Still, one can’t help but wonder if the oppression mindset Nielsen and Sundquist attack in their work gets ironically reinforced when one assumes the race=black.

Once I began to think of Nielsen’s book as a musing on how black and white poets enact issues of race, I found *Reading Race* engaging and provocative, particularly because the (both white and black) contributors seemed less interested in chronicling performed ethnicity and more interested in exploring the ways in which race figures into 20th century African American and Anglo American poetry. For instance, in “‘The Step of Iron Feet’: Creative Practice in the War Sonnets of Melvin B. Tolson and Gwendolyn Brooks,” Maria K Moorty suggests that Tolson’s and Brook’s war sonnets illustrate “in microcosm, the progress of the black sonnet and the richness and craft within the black poetic tradition” (133). Arguing that issues of genre and conformity become endemic of larger cultural forces, Moorty shows how Brooks and Tolson play off and with “convention” to create a poetry that resides in both white and black worlds. In perhaps the most engaging essay of the collection, Rachel Blau DuPlessis mines the *Deuvres* of American modernist poets like Wallace Stevens, William

Carlos Williams, Gertrude Stein, D.H. Lawrence, and Marianne Moore in attempt to unearth nuggets of culture work that unveil a burgeoning nation's attitudes on black and white anthologies. In larger sense Duplessis' mission is Nielsen's, for when taken as a whole, these essays not only speak to the lived experiences of race, but they also serve as concentrated poetics of black/white relations in twentieth-century America.

Reviewed by: Dean Rader  
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**Linda Pertusati. *In Defense of Mohawk Land: Ethnopolitical Conflict in Native North America.* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997). 166 pp., \$14.95 paper.**

On March 10, 1990, Mohawks at Kanehsatake, located in Quebec, Canada, staged an armed demonstration that lasted seventy-eight days to protest the expansion of the Oka Golf Club onto lands that the Mohawk claimed, which included their ancestral burial grounds. One Canadian officer was killed, and many on both sides were injured during the protest. The entire Mohawk-Oka conflict lasted 200 days (March 10-September 26) and finally ended when the Canadian federal government, on behalf of the Mohawks, purchased the contested land from the town of Oka. Linda Pertusati, Assistant Professor of Ethnic Studies at Bowling Green State University, offers an overview of this ethnopolitical conflict and relates it to the nearly 400 year struggle of the Mohawk Nation to retain its political and economic sovereignty. She convincingly argues that Mohawk resistance was an indigenous reaction to colonialism.

Pertusati focuses on how the militant Mohawk Warrior Movement leaders mobilized support from other Mohawks by appealing to their ideology (nationalism) and politicized ethnicity (ethnic identity and ethnic consciousness). Indeed, Mohawk beliefs in their sovereignty and rights of self-determination