

What's in a Last Name?

Patriarchy, Inter-Ethnicity and Maternal Training

This paper examines the complexities both of being born an inter-ethnic subject, and of mothering one. I consider how inter-ethnicity affects the gender identities and gender performances of inter-ethnic children. It is interesting that, in western society, the last name is passed down to children in a patrilineal fashion, yet mothers still do the majority of cultural training, socialization and raising of children. As a result, children often have their fathers' last names but are raised more in step their mothers' cultures, as well as the gender performances deemed acceptable in such communities. Still, even despite this training such children will frequently be identified by outsiders as having at least some membership to their fathers' cultural group because of their monikers. This can result in children who feel culturally lost, as they find themselves unable to perform an ethnic background with which they are commonly identified. In this essay, I use the lens of empowered mothering discourse to find a way to change parenting practices so they do not result in ethnically hybrid children with such asymmetrical understandings of their cultural heritage. Ultimately, I argue that men must engage more meaningfully in parenting practices in order for inter-ethnic children to feel more evenly engaged with all the sides of their ethnic selves. To illuminate my argument, I use my own upbringing as an inter-ethnic person descended from both British and Armenian immigrants to Canada who was raised predominately by her stay-at-home mother.

When I was in grade one, the morning of my first day of school, my mother sat me down and told me, "Sarah, you need to learn how to spell your last name." The operative word was "your." It was not hers. As a feminist-identified former investment banker, my mother had kept the last name she was born with upon getting married. Her surname was the very Scottish moniker "Laidlaw" and mine was the very Armenian "Sahagian." Despite the fact that my last name has no

silent letters and is written completely phonetically, people have always found my last name harder to say and to spell than my mother's. And unlike other children with last names like "Jones" or "Robinson," my mother knew it was important I learn how to spell my name for myself from an early age, because teachers and adults would not automatically be able to write it for me.

I was born in Toronto, Ontario. I was the descendant of both Canada's British immigrant population and of diasporic Armenian immigrants who had settled in St. Catharines in the 1920s after having been displaced from their homeland during the Armenian Genocide. Despite this inter-ethnic heritage, my last name only represented my Armenian side. My name was given to me by my father, by patrilineal naming traditions, so it is somewhat ironic I was taught how to spell and say it by my mother, who was a stay-at-home parent and the primary caregiver to me and my siblings as my father worked to support us financially. I never knew that my mother had been mispronouncing my Armenian surname my entire life until university, when I met people with Armenian last names who had also had Armenian mothers. I carry this anglicized pronunciation with me to this day. I have been told by people who self-identify as "real Armenians" that it is too late for me ever to learn how to say it now. My mouth did not learn how to make the sounds it should have as a child; I will never know the "proper" way to say my name or speak Armenian.

The fact that my father gave me his last name but my mother taught me how to write and say it operates as a metaphor for my entire argument, which will soon become apparent. Theorists such as Nira Yuval-Davis and Sara Ruddick tell us that women are responsible for cultural training. Women recreate the nation with childbearing and childrearing, something women still do far more of than men in North America. What is paradoxical, however, is that despite the fact that one learns how to perform one's cultural identity from one's mother, one of the most obvious symbols of cultural identity, the last name, is traditionally bestowed by the father in heterosexual parenting units. In my case, when people see me, a young woman with ethnically ambiguous looks but a very "ethnic" Armenian last name, people often categorize me as an "Armenian" woman and assume I can perform the gendered traditions they associate with this identity.

I have been asked if I can speak Armenian by countless people of Armenian and non-Armenian ancestry who seem to expect this of me; I cannot. I have been asked if I know how to cook traditional Armenian foods; I do not. I have had numerous people ask me if I only date Armenian men: I have not. Still, for whatever reason, in my personal history, people seem to associate ethnicity with last name, and never suspect that I might be the product of multiple ethnicities until I prove myself to be a deficient Armenian according to their standards and feel prompted to explain the nature of my biologically hybrid

ethnic identity. That I might have had a mother of Scottish and English ancestry who taught me about Brit coms and drinking mulled wine at Christmas does not seem to occur to most people until I tell them. The irony is—whether or not the world sees me as Armenian until told otherwise—I do not know *how to be Armenian*.

The fact that most non-Armenians did not fathom that I could have any heritage beyond the one my last name reflected did not, however, correspond with Armenians I met accepting me into their ethnic communities. Once, while dating a fully Armenian man, he and I were having a conversation about ethnicity. After twenty minutes of me lamenting how ill-prepared my mother was to teach me everything from the Armenian language to Armenian cooking while I was growing up, he asked me, “Sarah, do you feel culturally lost?” “Yes!” I exclaimed in reply. His response was immediate: “Well, don’t feel that way. I can tell you what you are.” I waited with bated breath. I so badly wanted him to recognize me as part of his community. For him to pronounce that I *belonged*. His response was disappointing: “You’re a WASP,” he said simply. It was at that moment that I realized WASPs would always call me Armenian and Armenians would always call me WASP. While I saw my WASP and Armenian ethnic identities as intersecting to create the person I was, others would always see these two cultural identities as running parallel to each other, but never truly coalescing. The fact that I merged these two ethnicities in my body and in my own understanding of my identity did not serve to make the fusion of these two cultures possible, it served to make me *impossible*.

I am not the first person with a hybrid ethnic identity to encounter the attitude that I, as a person, am not possible. In her memoir, *Black, White and Jewish: Autobiography of a Shifting Self*, Rebecca Walker recounts being confronted by people who felt her black identity could not be reconciled with the Jewish heritage she also claimed. Rebecca Walker was descended from black, white and Yiddish traditions but she was led to believe that her intersectional identity was “impossible.” This is the same question other people like her—people like me—with hybrid cultures and ethnicity—ask and try to answer.

One of the ways I attempt to explain my existential position is by interrogating and analyzing what I see not as two competing ethnic backgrounds, but my “ethnic hybridity.” I use the term ethnic “hybridity” to refer to the epistemic position of being a biologically hybrid subject. It is often used by race and ethnicity scholars to refer to the biological hybridity of people who are the product of inter-racial sex (Kapchan and Strong 242). Being a person who is made up of multiple ethnicities can also affect one’s cultural allegiances and sense of belonging, making people feel caught between two worlds (Song).

One should note, however, that ethnic hybridity is a concept that has been used quite broadly. Ethnic hybridity does not require the reproductive mixing

of inter-ethnicity to occur. This term is also used to refer to the cultural hybrids produced when diasporic groups move to nation-states where they are not in the cultural majority. In the cases of diasporas, even without any inter-ethnic reproduction occurring, such groups interact with and are influenced by their new surroundings. Their cultural customs combine with and are affected by those of the majority culture, and a hybrid way of life is born (Song 64). What is constant to this broad concept of hybridity, however, is that it refers to heterogeneity and multiplicity, rejecting “the notion of homogeneous, uniformly defined identities” (Cieslik and Verkuyten 78). Hybridity, though it can seem amorphous and is certainly wide-ranging, is therefore a useful theoretical concept with which to examine and understand what might otherwise have been seen as incoherence.

For the purpose of my analysis in this paper, I will focus primarily on the epistemic position of being born biologically hybrid, and the subsequent cultural confusion this can create. My preferred term for describing such individuals is “inter-ethnic.” It is a term I use frequently in my analysis. I have chosen “inter-ethnic” because, to me, it describes the feeling that characterized being a child of two or more ethnicities while growing up; the feeling of being positioned between two seemingly separate cultural worlds that I believed were somehow connected through my mind and body, even despite the fact that others did not seem to share this belief. Individuals who are inter-ethnic are often seen as dangerous to the social order, as they “reflect the arbitrary and contested logic of racial distinctions” (Mahtani 471). In the English language, such outsiders are often referred to as “Others”—people who are not part of a community, who do not belong (Owens). The Armenian word for this category of person turns out to be quite similar, *Odar* (Kaprielian). I borrow these words for a concept I call “The Other/Odar Paradox.” While this term is taken from my own bilingual experience with cultural Othering, I feel it is applicable to the experiences of numerous different hybrid subjects. With it, I am attempting to convey the fact that it is quite possible to come from two communities, to be literally, genetically hybrid, but for each half of this identity to disqualify a subject from real acceptance in the other. Perceived membership in the one group disqualifies a subject from meaningful acceptance and membership in the other, and vice versa. Rather than having multiple ethnocultural communities then, it is possible that biologically hybrid children have none. “The Other/Odar Paradox” is a term I have invented to explain the predicament of “impossible” people. Thus, the biological impacts on the cultural.

Upon creating this term, “the Other/Odar Paradox,” to describe social locations like my own, I realized that we must imagine new methods of childrearing that could facilitate the raising of children with such biologically hybrid ethnic identities. While I contend maternal theory does not provide adequate

attention to the concept of biologically inter-ethnic children, diaspora studies has historically often failed to consider the concept of hybridity within diasporic communities. While there has recently been more emphasis placed on interrogating questions of hybridity, diaspora theory is still guilty of paying too little attention to how issues of gender complicate diasporic identity. It is thus safe to say that issues of hybrid diasporic gender performance and hybrid diasporic gender training are neglected in this field (Al-Ali).

The combination of patrilineal naming rituals and the gendered division of family labour that makes women responsible for the majority of cultural training is a destructive force that hurts both mothers and children. The task of transmitting a culture that is not one's own to one's child is an intimidating one that should not fall solely on mothers' shoulders. Men must mother, not just because it is fair that they share this work, but because there are some tasks at which even those mothers seen by society as "good mothers" will likely fail. As Adrienne Rich makes clear in *Of Woman Born*, women are not necessarily better or natural parents who are born instinctively knowing how to raise children. Mothers, for example, do not, and cannot, be expected to know how to raise their children in the culture of the child's father with relatively limited exposure to it while they were growing up themselves. In order for mothers not to watch helplessly as children become culturally lost, the fathers of such children must help in their daily cultural training. An end to the patrilineal naming system and an insistence on hyphenation is not enough. Such hyphenation would symbolize children's biological hybridity, but without hybrid cultural training, and parents who subsequently insist their children deserve a place in both of their different ethnic communities, such a naming ritual would only be lip service to the very real issue of hybrid children who only know how to perform one part of their identities. In this case, the gendered performance of mothering complicates learning racialized performances of culture.

My theoretical work seeks to examine the hypothetical questions of which strategies the mothering of a truly culturally hybrid child should involve. I do not seek to mother-blame. I write with a belief in empowered mothering. It is simply my contention that a truly empowered mother in a heteronormative parenting relationship in a sexually equal society would be able to call upon her partner to do such tasks as to teach his child his family's mother tongue, how to cook ethnic foods he ate growing up, or how to spell his last name. In fact, a mother in a society where mothers were truly empowered would likely not even have to call upon a father to do such tasks—he would see them as *his job*.

Thus far in the field of maternal theory, there is a dearth of theoretical interrogation of how mothering models must change to accommodate the reality of biologically hybrid children, and how this provides even more strength for the contention that it is necessary to move towards a society where men mother,

too. By applying a race-conscious lens to gender and maternal theory, I feel I have arrived at a valid justification for why this is so.

Before going any further into my theoretical analysis of this topic, however, I would like to acknowledge the limitations of my solutions. There are cases, I understand, where calling upon men to participate equally in childrearing is not a helpful idea. In cases where a mother does not have access to the father for whatever reason, alternative role-models would likely have to be called upon. I also do not claim to have new and productive strategies for how to raise children whose hybrid cultural identity is the result not of inter-racial sex, but of international adoptions, diasporic movements and immigration. I do, however, recognize that these are areas that ought to be theorized, and that children in these situations are no less the product of a hybrid identity.

In her seminal work *Gender Trouble*, Judith Butler argues that gender comprises a continuous series of performative actions. She argues gender is socially constructed through cultural practices like language. If gender then is culturally constructed, one can see that varying ethnocultural groups will culturally construct gender in different ways. We perform gender in culturally constructed ways and culture in gendered ways.

Butler pays attention to how sexuality intersects with gender performance. In *The Psychic Life of Power*, she discusses the melancholia caused by heteronormative gender performance, as it makes individuals unable to desire same-sex partners. Butler discusses how the gender binary that establishes subjects as necessarily either feminine or masculine based on the sex with which they are associated at birth is “established in part through prohibitions which *demand the loss* of certain sexual attachments...” (Butler 1997: 247). The gender binary creates a system where we must perform the gender that is associated with our sex, and we are expected to do so in a heterosexual manner. Butler contends that gender is performed and achieved in part through the “repudiation of homosexual attachment” (Butler 1997: 248). I contend that Butler’s theories regarding the relationship between homosexuality and gender are also highly applicable to the case of the inter-ethnic child.

An inter-ethnic child does not simply have to deal with the confines of the gender binary; he or she will also have to contend with ethnic binaries, as well. Ruth Wodak et al tell us ethnic identities are not just established by constructing a collective with shared heritage, but “but by ‘excluding’ the Others from this constructed collective” (Wodak et al. 4). Patrizia Albanese also argues that, “Nationalism often embraces a palingenetic vision” or “doctrine of genetic rebirths” (835). A child who does not reproduce the genes of one nation wholly, but instead reflects two or more partially, will therefore trouble ethnic nationalism. In ethnic communities where the self is defined by excluding Others, these inter-ethnic children are in a precarious position, as

they simultaneously embody the cultural heritage of a nation, and the others against which the nation defines itself. If to create a nation is to create literal and metaphorical borders, which foreclose the possibility of other national affiliations, one can see parallels between the plight of the inter-ethnic child and that of the gendered subject Butler describes who is not allowed homosexual relationships. For reasons that are similar to the plight of the gendered subject with repressed same-sex desire, I contend it is difficult to be both an insider and an outsider to an ethnic group. The Other/Odar Paradox is my attempt to describe the melancholia felt by inter-ethnic subjects, for whom the performance of one part of their identity forecloses truly belonging to their other. A subject who is simultaneously Other and Odar might have a nationalist love and allegiance for one of his/her ethnic community groups, but have an equal connection to, and perhaps an equal loyalty to, another national identity and culture. In the world of nationalist discourse, however, the fact that dual allegiances are frowned upon makes dual ethnic identities all the harder to embody and perform.

I will now provide a simple example of the perils of negotiating ethnocultural hybridity as an inter-ethnic subject. My mother's family is from Great Britain, where the official church is Anglican. The dominant religion for Armenians, however, is Armenian Orthodoxy. Believing in each church's separate dogma and traditions thus forecloses truly following the other's. It is not possible to be both a devoted Anglican and a committed member of the Armenian Orthodox Church, and so a choice must be made; however, unlike sexuality, where one's homosexual urges can in theory be hidden and repressed, inter-ethnic children may choose to devote themselves to one side of their ethnic identities, but this ethnic performance could be compromised by the fact that while one can learn to act like an insider, it is still likely this child might well *look* like an outsider. Simply choosing one ethnic cultural identity to perform will not necessarily prevent members of that ethnic cultural group from seeing a child as an outsider. One obvious strategy for alleviating this ethnic melancholia is to fight against nationalist forces that put so much stock in identifying the self through identifying Others. Surely, if more and more children are raised to see themselves as true cultural hybrids, rather than seeing multiple ethnic identities as mutually exclusive with one another, this could go a long way to reducing xenophobia by creating a critical mass. This change, however, is easier said than done; binaries in ethnic identity are not just parallel to Butler's theories regarding the gender binary, they intersect with them, as well.

Ethnic melancholia is also shaped and affected by practicalities, like the fact that mothering is gendered as women's work, and women find themselves unable to perform the task of teaching children how to perform the cultural identities they themselves were not raised to perform, it makes sense that the resulting

children will also have feelings of melancholia. Theirs will be melancholia for the ethnic identity that is foreclosed to them. So in these cases, even the choice to pick one parent's ethnic culture over the other is not a meaningful one—it is shaped by the child's circumstances and who is present to perform this cultural training. A child, for example, might have a Chinese biological mother and an East Indian biological father, but if the child is raised predominately by her mother, it seems unlikely she will have the opportunity to learn as much about her father's culture as her mother's.

The issue of mothering being gendered as women's work brings me to call upon the writings of Sara Ruddick. In "Maternal Thinking," Ruddick tells us that, in addition to keeping a child alive and fostering its growth, it is also incumbent upon the mother to shape an "acceptable child" (162). Ruddick writes: "Acceptability' is defined in terms of the values of the mother's social group—whatever of its values she has internalized as her own plus values of group members whom she feels she must please or is fearful of pleasing" (102). Ruddick illustrates that mothers do not simply raise children in accordance with their own personal values, but also in accordance with wider community standards to which the mother believes she must adhere. This process of culturally appropriate socialization, however, becomes infinitely more complicated when a mother must single-handedly train a child in accordance with the values of two (or more) cultures, not all of which are hers.

Ruddick does not shy away from the fact that mothering requires constant thought and "mental practice"; however, feminist theorists like Adrienne Rich (1986) remind us that facts of social location, such as the class, race and the religious community to which one was born, do inevitably affect one's ideas about, and perspectives on, the world. In that case, maternal thinking is limited by a mother's own experiences. In the case of a child whose group affiliation is the same as her mother's, this does not present complications. Social location, however, becomes an issue when a child has multiple group affiliations, not all of which is the mother able to train him/her to play a meaningful role in.

Ruddick acknowledges that just because a woman is the mother of her own children does not mean she is necessarily politically motivated to support social welfare policies that will benefit all children, including those who are socioeconomically disadvantaged. She states in no uncertain terms, "...It would be foolish to believe that mothers, just because they are mothers, can transcend class interest and defend principles of justice" (109). Though Ruddick does not deal explicitly with the case of mothers of inter-ethnic children here, it makes sense that the same logic could apply; it seems just as difficult to imagine a set of cultural mores and practices with which one was not brought up as it does to imagine a set of socioeconomic circumstances with which one does not live.

In her memoir about her experiences being a white mother to bi-racial sons with African American heritage, Jane Lazarre explains the dangers of blind spots on the part of mothers raising inter-ethnic children. She recounts, at first, it did not occur to her that she really was a different race from her children. She initially thought, "They were simply my children" (41). Indeed, children literally emerge from their mothers' bodies at birth, so the idea that they could have an ethnic appearance and identification so different from their biological mother's does seem a wondrous phenomenon; however, the fact that her sons were half white, and even emerged from a white body, did not stop those they met from categorizing them as black and discriminating against them as such. Such discrimination might have come as somewhat of a surprise to Lazarre, but her lack of preparation only made life harder for her sons (42).

Despite their best efforts, mothers like Lazarre will often fail to consider what practices and advice must be imparted to their children for the sake of cultural training and physical preservation. Rather than allowing mothers to fail at imagining a lived experience they have never had of being another race or ethnicity, it seems more logical to ask why fathers are so absent. If a hypothetical inter-ethnic child were to be raised by two parents who are equally involved, it strikes me that there would be many more opportunities for fathers to participate in appropriate cultural and preservation training that reflects the child's needs.

While mothers will not always be able to perform the task of appropriate cultural training Ruddick identifies as part of maternal thinking, the solution I identify to this problem can also be attributed to Ruddick's work. Ruddick tells us we need to get beyond the "symbolic fathers" of patriarchy who gives children their last names and exists in the shadows but does little parenting. She contends we must evolve to a place where men also engage in "transformed maternal practice." Ruddick writes, "On this day, there will be no more 'fathers,' no more people of either sex who have power over their children's lives and moral authority in their children's world, though they do not do the work of attentive love" (109). Indeed, if we had what Ruddick calls "mothers of both sexes," the problems of inter-ethnic cultural training could be greatly reduced (Ruddick 109).

If fathers transcended their symbolic authority and symbolic associations with their children, there would be more opportunities for children to feel attachment and genuine understanding for each part of an inter-ethnic identity. In my own case, my mother's social location and upbringing had not presented her with problems like being teased for having an ethnic last name as a child. Nor did she have the same kind of familiarity with important cultural and familial stories, such as how my relatives escaped the Armenian Genocide. Had my

father been partly responsible for the work of mothering and cultural training, my mother's cultural blind spots would have affected me less profoundly. While I contend it is important for a mother to be self-reflexive enough to realize she might have a very different social location from her children, dual parenting, however, is a logical way to address the issues presented when children have a dual ethnic identity.

While I think fathers participating meaningfully in the raising and cultural training of their children is one viable strategy for helping biologically hybrid children grow up with a well-adjusted sense of self, I acknowledge that this is not a magic bullet. In my own case, I realize my father was little more capable of teaching me how to be an Armenian woman than my mother was. In cultures where there is a gendered division of labour, where men go out to work and women perform duties like cooking, childrearing and housekeeping, a boy-child's cultural training is likely to be biased towards the social roles he will one day be expected to perform. In this sense, a man might be able to recognize appropriate gender performance for a woman in his cultural group or community, but that does not necessarily mean he would know *how* to replicate that performance. After all, cooking traditional foods, cultivating one's appearance to please cultural standards of feminine beauty and learning any other tasks historically associated with women in a certain group all require skills that must be learned and practiced.

There is no short-term solution to the problem of how to train inter-ethnic children. A father might want genuinely to be involved in the raising of his children, but where the mother of his children might have ethnic blind spots, he could have gender blind spots. I have no doubt my father could have taught me how to be a very successful Armenian man, but for the life of him he did not know how to make a steaming pot of pilaf to go with the roast chicken for dinner. While individual fathers could overcome any blindspots in their own cultural training by educating themselves or turning to their sisters, mothers, or aunts for advice, it seems overly ambitious to expect them to learn a lifetime's worth of gender training during a nine-month gestation period. It would be just as burdensome a task to expect fathers to overcome their gendered social locations as it would be to expect mothers to overcome their raced social locations. It is not enough to queer gender roles in adulthood by expecting fathers to participate in activities that Ruddick labels "mothering"; the *way* we mother children must also change. The gendered division of labour gives birth to a gendered division of culture, which makes women the bearers of some forms of ethnocultural knowledge while men are the transmitters of others. This not only makes for children with a sense of raced gender melancholia, but it also endangers the very future of these cultural practices themselves. The threat of inter-marriage, so taboo in many

endangered cultural groups (Dekmejian), is somewhat neutralized if a man is able to pass on cultural traditions to his children in a meaningful sense, even when their mother is a different ethnicity. If hybridity is no longer associated with a child who is inevitably less attached to his father's ethnic community, I contend this might assist in the necessary process revolutionizing nationalism so it no longer fears inter-ethnic children as the diluting of a community's ethnic gene pool and national identity.

Ultimately, as it exists in a climate of patriarchal fatherhood, the question what's in a *last* name has this answer: very little. It seems unfair to saddle children with last names that create expectations for how they ought to behave or perform their ethnic identities, which they cannot meet. For these reasons, I plead for parents to raise children who blur both the gender binary and nationalistic ethnic binaries. Such practices seem fairer to children produced through inter-ethnic unions, as well as to mothers, who should not be forced to bear the responsibility of training their children for their cultural communities as well as alien ones belonging to children's fathers.

I close with this anecdote. When I was in the third grade, I came home from school one day after being teased for my surname. At the time I was being taunted, I could not come up with a single thing to say in response. They were right; it was a weird name, at least in the context of the school I attended. I did, however, feel saddened by the event and was looking for some sympathetic reassurance by the time I made it home that night. My father was not yet home from work. The only parent to whom I could relay this story, was thus my mother. I told her, "Kids made fun of me because they said I had a stupid last name." Her response was simple and decisive: "Well, maybe you should change it. I told your father we should have given you kids my name." It took me years of schooling to realize she was not just being racist. My mother herself was not equipped to perform the task of doing a foreign culture's training. Since my father had not made any real attempt to participate equally in parenting and culturally training his children, in retrospect, I feel my mother had a point. She hadn't trained me or my siblings to be Armenian, and so we were not Armenian. I might have stuck out as different in comparison with my monocultural white Anglosaxon school friends, but ultimately, I was a WASP kid with a funny surname and ethnically ambiguous looks. Culture is as culture does.

References

- Al-Ali, Nadjie. "Gender and Diaspora." *Diasporas: Concepts, Intersections, Identities*. Eds. Kim Knott and Sean McLoughlin. London: Zed Books, 2010. 118-122.

- Albanese, Patrizia. "Territorializing Motherhood: Motherhood and Reproductive Rights in Nationalist Sentiment and Practice." *Maternal Theory: Essential Readings*. Ed. Andrea O'Reilly. Toronto: Demeter Press, 2007. 828-839.
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Femininism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1990.
- Butler, Judith. *The Psychic Life of Power*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997.
- Cieslik, A. and M. Verkuyten. "National, Ethnic and Religious Identities: Hybridity and the case of the Polish Tatars." *National Identities* 8.2 (2006): 77-93.
- Dekmejian, Hrair. "The Armenian Diaspora." *The Armenian People: From Ancient Times to Modern Times, Volume 2*. Ed. Richard Hovannisian. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997. 413-444.
- Kapchan, Doborah A. and Pauline Turner Strong. "Theorizing the Hybrid." *The Journal of American Folklore* 112 (445) (1999): pp. 239-253.
- Kaprielian, Isabel. *Polyphony: Armenians in Canada*. Toronto: Multicultural Society of Ontario, 1982.
- Lazarre, Jane. *Beyond the Borders of Whiteness: A Memoir of a White Mother of Black Sons*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1996.
- Mahtani, Minelle. "What's in a Name? Exploring the Employment of 'Mixed Race' As an Identification." *Ethnicities* 2.4 (2002): 469-490.
- Obermeyer, Carla Maklouf "Female Genital Surgeries: The Known, the Unknown and the Unknowable." *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 13.1 (1999): 79-106.
- Owen, C. *The Discourse of Others: Feminists and Postmodernism*. London: Pluto Press, 1985.
- Rich, A. Notes Towards a Politics of Location." *Blood, Bread, and Poetry: Selected Prose, 1979-1985*. New York: Norton, 1986. 210-231.
- Rich, Adrienne. *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution*. London: Virago, 1983.
- Ruddick, Sara. *Maternal Thinking: Towards a Politics of Peace*. Boston, Beacon Press, 1989.
- Song, Miri. *Choosing Ethnic Identity*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing Inc, 2003.
- Walker, Rebecca. *Black, White and Jewish: Autobiography of a Shifting Self*. New York: Riverhead Books, 2000.
- Wodak, Ruth et al. *The Discursive Construction of National Identity*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009.
- Yuval-Davis, Nira. *Gender and Nation*. London: Sage Press, 1997.