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Title: Book review: On the Margins: Race, Gender and Empire by O.R. Dathorne

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Example citation: Watley, G. (2011) Book review: On the Margins: Race, Gender and Empire by O.R. Dathorne. *BASA (Black and Asian Studies Association) Newsletter*. **59** 1469-2082.

It is advisable to refer to the publisher's version if you intend to cite from this work.

Version: Accepted version

<http://nectar.northampton.ac.uk/4358/>



O.R. Dathorne, *On the Margins: Race, Gender, and Empire*: Africa World Press, 2009. Paperback (269 pp.), £17.99.

Although the title could indicate that this book would be mostly referring to obscure aspects of history, Dathorne actually refers to a variety of literature and people that would generally be well known even to those never having studied race and/or gender specifically. The beauty of this work is that the author makes extensive reference to popularly known people of historical importance, as well as commonly known literature, to demonstrate and delineate how gender, ethnic and racial marginalisation developed from the 16th century onwards.

From the beginnings of understanding of Africa and Asia in Britain based largely on myths, to the development of Romantic notions of love brought over during the Islamic conquest of the Iberian peninsula in the 8th century, the book interweaves various notions and opinions surrounding concepts of courtly love and femininity. Furthermore, the facts and myths surrounding Africans in Britain were used in the book to demonstrate how all of these factors influenced the Western construction of both women and people of African and Asian origin as socially or mentally undeveloped, and as such perceived to be inferior.

The book also explores literary development in former African and Asian colonies through authors such as Achebe, Fanon, Naipaul and Walcott amongst others. This exploration is critical in exposing further perceptive layers of marginalisation through authors' contesting and/or accepting various layers of such perceptions learned through their European colonial education.

Dathorne's book is a fantastic read for those interested in having a better understanding of the development of gender, ethnic and racial marginalisation over the past five centuries from a largely British perspective. Additionally, this book gives the reader some understanding of how women and people of African and Asian origin both resisted views of them as marginalised groups, as well as creating means of transforming such beliefs, mainly through using literary examples.

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