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## Race, Gender and the Activism of Black Feminist Theory: Working with Audre Lorde (Concepts for Critical Psychology)

By Surya Nayak



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**Race, Gender and the Activism of Black Feminist Theory: Working with Audre Lorde (Concepts for Critical Psychology)** By Surya Nayak

Beginning from the premise that psychology needs to be questioned, dismantled and new perspectives brought to the table in order to produce alternative solutions, this book takes an unusual transdisciplinary step into the activism of Black feminist theory. The author, Surya Nayak, presents a close reading of Audre Lorde and other related scholars to demonstrate how the activism of Black feminist theory is concerned with issues central to radical critical thinking and practice, such as identity, alienation, trauma, loss, the position and constitution of individuals within relationships, the family, community and society.

Nayak reveals how Black feminist theory seeks to address issues that are also a core concern of critical psychology, including individualism, essentialism and normalization. Her work grapples with several issues at the heart of key contemporary debates concerning methodology, identity, difference, race and gender. Using a powerful line of argument, the book weaves these themes together to show how the activism of Black feminist theory in general, and the work of Audre Lorde in particular, can be used to effect social change in response to the damaging psychological impact of oppressive social constructions.

Race, Gender and the Activism of Black Feminist Theory will be of great interest to advanced students, researchers, political activist and practitioners in psychology, counselling, psychotherapy, mental health, social work and community development.



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### Editorial Review

#### Review

'Nayak lays a strong foundation for a critical psychological engagement with the activism of black feminist theory for all of us committed to addressing the psychological effects of oppression and who seek to make social change.' - Stephanie Davis, *The Psychologist*, June 2015

'Nayak offers readers a book that is simultaneously theoretical and conversational, personal and political. Nayak's tone is that of an educated friend, both intense and personal at the same time, especially in the chapter focused on intersectionality, where Nayak shares more personal stories... Nayak's ability to transgress theoretical boundaries is impressive and something that she explains is "a particular 'critical' tendency of the activism of Black feminist theory"... For a text of just 156 pages, *Race, Gender and the Activism of Black Feminist Theory* is astonishingly useful as a reference manual, textbook, or activist guide, or can even seem like an understanding friend.' - Geneva Reynaga-Abiko, *PsycCRITIQUES*, May 2015

*ace, Gender and the Activism of Black Feminist Theory* offers cutting-edge social theory that uses Audre Lorde's pathbreaking writings as a foundation. The book contains sharp insights into how critical theorists have sidestepped Lorde's anger at the racism within white feminist writings and thus misunderstood much of her work. As a result, Nayak ensures that feminist political engagement occupies a central place, both in her critique and her wonderfully forward-looking theory. The book is a must-read for all feminists and women's studies students!' – Kum-Kum Bhavnani, *Department of Sociology, UC Santa Barbara, USA*

#### About the Author

**Suryia Nayak** is a senior lecturer in social work at the University of Salford, UK. She has 30 years' experience of working in the Rape Crisis Movement, community engagement across a diverse range of peoples positioned as alienated using models of education as liberation, and the activism of Black feminism to raise consciousness about the psychological and political impact of oppressive social constructions.

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