



Constructing the Enemy: Empathy/Antipathy in U.S. Literature and Law

Rajini Srikanth

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In her engaging book, *Constructing the Enemy*, Rajini Srikanth probes the concept of empathy, attempting to understand its different types and how it is—or isn't—generated and maintained in specific circumstances.

Using literary texts to illuminate issues of power and discussions of law, Srikanth focuses on two case studies—the internment of Japanese citizens and Japanese Americans in World War II, after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, and the detainment of Muslim Americans and individuals from various nations in the U.S. prison at Guantanamo Bay.

Through primary documents and interviews that reveal why and how lawyers become involved in defending those who have been designated “enemies,” Srikanth explores the complex conditions under which engaged citizenship emerges. *Constructing the Enemy* probes the seductive promise of legal discourse and analyzes the emergence and manifestation of empathy in lawyers and other concerned citizens and the wider consequences of this empathy on the institutions that regulate our lives.

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