

the author is not an impartial or objective observer of her people, her community, her family or herself. She is an active participant. However, her participation is thoughtful and kind. Reflective and intelligent, her words resonate with you not just because she is so informed and rich with experience, you remember the work because she is so clearly human and so clearly kind.

There is such fluency here—between spirits and humans, between past and present, between individual and communal—that your breath is, at times, taken away. It is such a gift to be able to hear *in the first person* the nature of interaction between spirits and people. Part way through reading the book, I was struck by two things. The first was that I had never heard oral stories written this way before—with their intent, fluidity, and source so evident and complete. The other thing I understood was that this is a rare gift—where a community had such a rich resource in the person able and willing to speak with such resonance and over such a breadth of issues.

Some issues arose for me as a result of my reading (but which are not inherent to or issues within the text). I wondered about my right to access the traditional ceremonies and rituals. Without context, ancestry or those particular memories in my blood, I felt truly that reading the same could be intrusive. More than that, I thought about who should have the right to those stories and I did not feel like I was one of the people who should receive them. Undoubtedly, it is important that the traditions and understandings are passed onto Kwakwakaewak citizens. In an era when teachings can be lost, each person who possesses those teachings needs to make an assessment about how to ensure that the peoples receive and honour them. I respect Elder Alfred's decision to make them available. Perhaps any text that challenges a reader to examine why, whether, or how they should read traditional teachings

from another culture and how they will treat them is important for that reason as well.

The work is important and thorough. At times, I found myself struggling with the introductions by Martine J. Reid and wondered if the tie between her anthropological review/assessment and the history and remembrances as told by the author was too forced. I found myself also wondering if the editor was trying to reinforce anthropological and historical relevancy by references to contradictions within other accounts of Kwakwakaewak (or other Indigenous peoples') life. Upon re-examination, the discussion of the anthropological and historical materials add some contextualization and clarification, reminding us of the relevance and importance of this work in assessing accuracy and entrenching orality, oral histories, and memoirs as sources of the same. While the construction at times may have felt awkward to those not grounded in that academic tradition, the additions and discussions by Reid provide an interesting context. By the end of the work, they seem more naturally woven with the text. They are also an important look into the potential approaches, materials, and understandings considered by an ethnographer or editor of an Indigenous memoir that can serve as a tool for other people looking to collaborate with Indigenous Elders, communities, and knowledge holders.

The eulogy of Daisy Sewid-Smith for her grandmother, the epilogue, and the Appendices themselves are excellent resources for those who want an in-depth history of Agnes Alfred's family history, genealogy, and the Kwakwakaewak language. Of particular note is the documentation of the wedding ceremony of her granddaughter and translator Daisy Sewid and Donald Smith. Additionally, the documentation of the author's response to the legal record of the incidents related to a prohibition of a potlatch is a one of a kind resource. All of these pieces, intertwined with the text, are

invaluable pieces—a reminder that culture, language, and history are alive. The book as a whole can serve as a guideline for communities and nations who are considering different approaches to recording and reviving their traditions.

This book is a very welcome and excellent addition to the resources available for Indigenous studies, history, anthropology, law, and women's studies courses. It may also be useful for those communities and individuals who are pursuing community and oral traditions preservation and history projects.

Tracey Lindberg is Cree Metis from northern Alberta. She teaches Indigenous law. Dr. Lindberg works on issues related to Indigenous nationhood and Indigenous womanhood.

“REAL” INDIANS AND OTHERS: MIXED-BLOOD URBAN NATIVE PEOPLES AND INDIGENOUS NATIONHOOD

Bonita Lawrence
Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2004

REVIEWED BY PATRICIA A. MONTURE

Bonita Lawrence's work on identity of urban Indians¹ focuses on their experiences of status, band membership, belonging, location (on- and off-reserve), and Bill C-31 (as it remains known). Her analysis of identity and belonging is linked continuously to Aboriginal demands and struggles for self-determination. She sees Indian status as “a system that enabled Canada to deny and bypass Indigenous sovereignty, by replacing ‘the Nation’ with ‘the Indian.’” Lawrence's work is the most comprehensive work on Aboriginal

urban identity completed to date in this country. Throughout the book she weaves the law of registration (that is being legally an Indian) dictated to us by the *Indian Act* with the experiences of belonging and being considered a “real” Indian. The book is, then, also a study in decolonization. Her analysis considers the power to name inclusion and exclusion by both Canadian and Indian governments. She explains:

... the primary function of Indian status is a boundary marker—a clear indication of who is Indian and who is not, and it is only by retaining this power to include some and exclude others that Indian status has any meaning.

Exclusion has some particular consequences as the analysis of the interviews she conducted revealed: “their families left their home communities either through state organized policies that forced them to leave or under the threat of other kinds of violence.” Lawrence’s case study of Aboriginal persons residing in the Toronto area is a long over-due and much needed contribution to the scholarship.

Native identify, according to Lawrence is “a negotiated and highly contested set of realities.” To organize her work she elects to focus on the “legal regulation of identity for Native people.” On the difference between growing up on reserve and in an urban area she writes of the need of some

... urban people to find some way of managing the intolerable pressures on their identities that come from being always surrounded by white people, in a society that has offered little protection for Native people in the face of white violence.

This is not the only complexity for urban peoples as any study of “status” under the *Indian Act* must

examine the power and privilege it created *between* Aboriginal people. Lawrence’s work is a very brave approach to the topic and any commitment to decolonization requires acts of courage.

The breadth of Lawrence’s scholarship is also as noteworthy as the scope of her study. She combines the perspectives and practices as well as the extensive literatures of sociology, law, history, Native Studies, and Women’s Studies to produce an interdisciplinary text, which demands scholarly respect. Her command of the literature in each of these fields is impressive. But failing to acknowledge the real value of the work beyond western scholarly rigor would be a mistake. Lawrence also commands a knowledge of herself as an Indigenous woman and clearly understands herself as part of the continuum of communities and traditions she writes about. As a result she is able to blend the knowledge system of academics with the knowledge systems of Indigenous persons. This is another significant contribution to the scholarship.

Although the breadth of her work is remarkable, it is not the reason I value this book as much as I do. Lawrence has delivered a first class challenge to Aboriginal peoples to consider some very hard questions. Her first challenge is to the meaning Indians themselves attach to registration under the *Indian Act*. After all, the idea of “Indian” is one that was imposed on us in the early colonial period. As part of the process of decolonization, we must recognize this and challenge the way that some of us now embrace it. Once we take this first step in decolonization, Lawrence recognizes that it is in urban centres where “status” and “non-status” Indians work side by side with each other and a unique opportunity exists for the sovereignty movement to be strengthened. She asks:

On a deeper level, another important issue is how urban Native people, particularly those

who are mixed-race, might be involved in struggles for self-determination. How can the sovereignty goals of contemporary First Nations, and the desires and aspirations of urban individuals who consider themselves members of Indigenous nations “in the abstract” be brought together?

Her challenges go to the heart of what community, collectivity, land, and Indigenous nationhood are about. Far too much of the Canadian scholarship in this area has focused on the debates about the legal parameters of our rights and not on what matters most to Indian people.

The other significant gap in the scholarship on Aboriginal governance is gender and Lawrence also weaves this expertly in and out of the text. She repeatedly challenges us to broaden our thinking. She strips away the rhetoric around the individual and collective rights debate with this recognition:

It is crucially important, then, to understand the central role that the subordination of Native women has played in the colonization process, in order to begin to see the violation of Native women’s rights through loss of Indian status, not as the problem faced by individuals, but as a *collective* sovereignty issue.

Gender is at the centre of Lawrence’s discussion in all the necessary places and her work adds a refreshing new voice to old dialogues on self-government and membership that often dismiss the central roles of women. This book is a must read for Aboriginal persons.

Non-Indigenous peoples should also be picking up this book and I would encourage university teachers across the disciplines to include it in their course materials. Lawrence challenges white privilege and the historic ability of fair skinned persons to as-

sume the power of defining Indian identities. Until white people challenge this power and the myth that “real” Indians are a dying race losing our culture at a rapid pace and urban mixed-blood identity is meaningless then little transformative change will take place. Non-Indigenous people should be more concerned about the impositions their governments have imposed on Indigenous nations.

Patricia A. Monture is a citizen of the Mohawk Nation, Grand River Territory. In the Department of Sociology at the University of Saskatchewan where she teaches, Professor Monture is also the academic director of the Aboriginal Justice and Criminology program. In 2008, she received the Sarah Shorten Award from the Canadian Association of University Teachers.

¹Because the focus of this work is the relationship between identity and the legal rules under the *Indian Act*, Indian is the correct term.

MAKING SPACE FOR ABORIGINAL FEMINISM

Joyce Green, Ed.
Black Point, Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publishing, 2007

REVIEWED BY TRACEY LINDBERG

...I do not consciously engage in writing or speaking from a feminist position. This is not due to any deliberate decision. I simply am what I am—Indigenous woman, activist, grandmother.
—Mekere Stewart-Harawira (124)

I understand feminism as a struggle to end sexism and gender-based inequality in society.
—Emma LaRocque (53)

There is a special place in hell

for women who do not help other women.
—Madeleine K. Albright¹

Some of us have complex relationships with the notion of feminism.² After reading Green's *Making Space for Aboriginal Feminism* it surprises me to discover that fewer of us likely have concerns about the practice of feminism.

The reasons that people define themselves as feminist are as complex and intellectually compelling as the reason that people do not define themselves as feminist.

What I have come to, after reading this work, is that I don't think there is such a clear defining line between feminist and non-feminist. Rather, there may be the possibility of a decision (or no decision) to apply or, in some instances, not to apply the feminist template or nomenclature to your politic coupled with the choice to participate in an engaged and active commitment to women's roles in Indigenous (and perhaps Canadian) societies. In her contribution to the book, “Practising Indigenous Feminism” (referenced in her quote at the outset) Stewart-Harawira tells us that who you are is what you are. The understanding of feminism as an act, not an entity or definition, is really an intriguing one. Makere calls this a “feminine-oriented political framework.” The possibility that women-centred activism and advocacy can exist with or without a label, and the activist's right to name the politic and/or the act—or not name it—speaks to a coexistence of goal and action that is elemental. When considered in this manner, some of the complexity noted above dissolves.

This is not to detract from the intricate analysis and thought-provoking discussion in the work. In her chapter, “Balancing Strategies: Aboriginal Women and Constitutional Rights in Canada,” Joyce Green considers the role of women and Aboriginal organizations in addressing the legally enforceable rights of Aboriginal peoples

in light of colonial power relations. She also addresses and undresses the power relations with male-dominated Aboriginal political organizations in a manner which exemplifies the active commitment to women's roles and participation in Indigenous and Canadian societies. Thoughtfully constructed, the piece examines the actions and inactions of Canadian governments and Indigenous governments and political bodies in giving effect to and obstructing meaningful constitutional change for Aboriginal women. Addressing the history and multiplicity of Aboriginal women's actions and reactions in constitutional discussions and litigation, she writes: “Unsurprisingly, Aboriginal women don't have a unified political analysis, either on decolonization strategies or on feminism.”

This is indeed unsurprising and it reminds readers that we should, rather than looking for uniformity in our approach, celebrate that there are enough of Indigenous us—activists, womanists, feminists, and wimmins—to participate in a dialogue about differing approaches to emancipation and liberation.³ In “Native American Feminism, Sovereignty and Social Change” Andrea Smith considers the argument that addressing feminist/Indigenous women's concerns diminishes the capacity of Indigenous governmental bodies to advocate for Indigenous sovereignty. Quoting an activist, she writes:

If it doesn't work for one of us, it doesn't work for any of us. The definition of sovereignty [means that] ... none of us are free unless all of our (sic) free.

In her article, Smith addresses concerns that are important to Indigenous communities (boarding schools, silence, and violence) and does so through a filter of womanhood. Importantly she notes that some people believe “that “feminism” is white, and then suggests that Native feminist politics are not necessarily similar to the feminist politics of