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.

[1]Because 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. Albright[1]

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

other communities or that Native feminists "necessarily see themselves in alliance with white feminists." This is an interesting analysis, leading to a discussion of the construction of binaries, feminist politics, and the use of "strategic" feminism garnered through interviews with Native activists.

The construction of this binary is intellectually easy and relies upon a superficial analysis of what feminism(s) and Indigenous womanhood(s) mean. To her credit (and many other of the authors in this work), there is a complex relationship between women and community that very seldom results in totalizing. In saying this, I also acknowledge that as Indigenous peoples and Indigenous women's advocates and activists, we do need to address meaningful and respectful critique; this critique includes a commitment to not categorizing and simplifying complex structures and understandings (i.e. "traditional" Indigenous relationships or teachings, ethical relationships and teachings, and feminist relationships and teachings). Learning this through example in the work has been a really important lesson for me. As important is the resonance within the work of the understanding that as Indigenous peoples we need to be a number of things, but among those things we must be gentle and humble.[4]

The most important lessons that I take from this work, and they are really challenging understandings, are: that it is important that we try to fully understand the political associations or ideological spaces that people occupy; that we do not diminish the rationales that we or others have; and that we do not conclude, without research, reflection, and analysis, that the choice made is predicated on societal pressure (Indigenous or non-Indigenous) or a perceived lack of choices. It is also simplifying to address the affiliations, associations, or categorizations made as ones due to perceptions of backlash, misconceptions, and without proper information (although these of course may occur in some instances). It is just as important that we do not diminish the rationale or conclude, without analysis, that making a choice to define oneself was made due to a lack of community allegiance, a lack of commitment to nationhood, or a lack of understanding regarding traditional teaching.

Chapters by Verna St. Denis ("Feminism is for Everybody", in which she "re-evaluate[s] my earlier rejection and dismissal of feminism"), Joyce Green ("Taking Account of Aboriginal Feminism"), and Denise Henning ("Yes, My Daughters, We Are Cherokee Women") ask the readers to address our assumptions about "traditionalism," notions of equality, and sexism. In my understanding, this requires that we acknowledge the places that people occupy, that we constantly try to understand and research these notions, and that we self-critique and address our own intellectual shorthand in arriving at a respectful discourse. In learning about the way in which we critique each other, I am reminded to be ever cognizant of the need to support the work of Indigenous women as part of my politic of Indigenous inclusion. In reading this work, I come to know that this does not mean unanimity—that we will differ and disagree, move together and apart. However, one important lesson I learned from this work was that we cannot underestimate the nature of the intent, the information possessed by, or the commitment of other Indigenous women. We cannot establish a binary or a false political chasm between ourselves. I think we may be working on the same bridge; we have just selected different tools. We may often choose to use the same ones. Any work that initiates this discussion about our shared responsibilities is well worth your time.

This is a profound discovery for me and I am so in awe of the women who were able to deliver this message with spirit, respect, and gentleness. I want to take particular note of the pieces that were delivered through poetry (Shirley Bear and Emma LaRoque) and through interviews and interaction (Tina Beads with Rauna Kuokkanen; Colleen Glenn with Joyce Green; Sharon McIvor with Rauna Kuokkanen). Each of these reminds us to just do the work—an elemental and fundamentally important understanding.

Making Space for Aboriginal Feminism is suitable for use in Indigenous Studies, Canadian Studies, Women's Studies and Legal Studies courses.

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

[1]Ambassador April H. Foley, Remarks at the "Successful Women–Career and Family in the 21st Century" Conference. Mathias Corvinus Collegium, Budapest on April 23, 2008. Embassy of the United States, Hungary webpage <http://hungary.usembassy.gov/foley_corvinus2.html>. Last accessed: 15 May 2008.

[2]Lindberg, Tracey. "Not My Sister: What Feminists Can Learn about Sisterhood from Indigenous Women." *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law/Revue femmes et droit*, vol. 16, no. 2 (2004), pp. 342-352.

[3]I use the terms emancipation and liberation as I understand them and rely on Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (London: Continuum Publishing Company, 1970) in my analysis and definition of the same.

[4]While this lesson has been orally taught to me, I refer specifically to the Elders of Treaty 6, whose teachings were documented in Cardinal and Hildebrant, *Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan: Our Dream Is That Our Peoples Will One Day Be Clearly Recognized As Nations* (Calgary: University of Calgary, 2000). In doing this, I want to acknowledge that Indigenous people's traditional teachings, Indigenous women's traditional teachings and women's histories are impacted by the same colonial real-

ity (although differing in degree): our stories were not written and our teachings are often undocumented and harder to "prove". Critique and analysis are traditional, too, I think. How we engage in those exercises in ways that employ ethical standards is a difficult discussion.

IN THE DAYS OF OUR GRANDMOTHERS: A READER IN ABORIGINAL WOMEN'S HISTORY IN CANADA

Mary-Ellen Kelm and Lorna Townsend, Eds.
Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006

REVIEWED BY PRISCILLA CAMPEAU

When asked if I would be interested in doing a book review, I agreed to it once I found out it would be on Aboriginal women. The title of the book was intriguing; I would get the opportunity to learn more about the *grandmothers,* those who have gone before me and those who still teach me.

As the editors say in their introduction, they hope to prompt dialogue and debate that will inspire students to add their own voices to this important and growing field [Aboriginal women's history] with this collection of essays. It certainly had that effect on me and brought memories to the surface that were long buried. When I was a child I was told that I was not to refer to my *kokom* and *mosom* by those terms when we were in town, I was to call them grandma and grandpa, two foreign terms to me at that time. There was no explanation given when I asked why, and as I read through these chapters I thought how I could expect my parents or my *kokom* and *mosom* to explain colonialism and its effects to me when they were living through it. As I read through these chapters and thought about what messages they were trying to convey to me as the reader, as an Aboriginal woman, I was at a loss, for the messages are relevant to me as a person who happens to work in an academic centre in a university. While I can read them, understand, and synthesize their concepts with my own understandings, I wonder what my *kokom* or my *grandmothers* who have taught me would think about these chapters. They are all learned women in their own rights but would they understand the viewpoints of a cultural anthropologist, an historian or a professor of Women's Studies or Native Studies—and would these academics understand their viewpoints? We are at a point in academia where Indigenous traditional knowledge and oral testimonies are as relevant as historical accountings and archival records.

The editors have chosen fourteen contributors ranging from such topics as women in the fur trade, religion, sexuality, stereotypes, law, and settlement. As we know, all fields are interrelated when discussing Aboriginal women's history. The reader must question the sources used in the articles and whether they are from an Aboriginal voice, as Jean Barman states: "However much we pretend to read our sources 'against the grain,' to borrow from the cultural theorist Walter Benjamin, we have become entrapped in a partial world that represents itself as the whole world." And the reader must remember that historical records on Aboriginal peoples were made by non-Aboriginal men who focused on their Aboriginal male subjects and thus grouped Aboriginal women within that same purview. They did not have training in First Nations protocols, traditions or language. One wonders what the Aboriginal women whose pictures appear in Carol Williams' essay regarding the Tsimshian Methodist Converts or the women who appear in the archival photographs in Sylvia Van Kirk's founding families of Victoria would say to their circumstances as they are presented. Is it a case of Aboriginal women adapting and living by whatever means possible to ensure their survival and that of their offspring? How accurate are the voices attributed to them?

The collection raised questions involving First Nations protocols: I question the inclusion of ceremonial knowledge in the reader. In particular, I find the information on the women's lodges in Mary C. Wright's "The Woman's Lodge: Constructing Gender on the Nineteenth–Century Pacific Northwest Plateau" fascinating and at the same time questionable. While I can appreciate the subject matter, the research, and the writing involved in such an essay, I also wonder if the proper protocols of that First Nations group were observed and I wonder whether they are comfortable with the information as it is presented. As we are given access to more information on Aboriginal peoples' cultural traditions and protocols, we have a responsibility to acknowledge, respect, protect, and preserve those sources.

Mary Ellen Kelm and Lorna Townsend have undertaken a great endeavour, to compile a collection of essays to explain Aboriginal women's history in Canada. While the essays give us a foundation of knowledge to work with, the subject matter is too vast for just one book. This collection raises as many questions as it answers and propels the reader to further explore issues raised within the essays. In this regard, the editors have achieved their goal of inspiring debate and dialogue within Indigenous women's histories.

Priscilla Campeau is the Interim Director and Program Administrator of the Centre for World Indigenous Knowledge and Research at Athabasca University.