

**Making Space for
INDIGENOUS FEMINISM**

2nd Edition

edited by
JOYCE GREEN

Fernwood Publishing
Halifax & Winnipeg

Copyright © 2017 Joyce Green

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form by any means without permission in writing from the publisher, except by a reviewer, who may quote brief passages in a review.

Editing: Jessica Antony
Text design: Brenda Conroy
Cover image: Christi Belcourt
Cover design: John van der Woude
eBook: tikaebooks.com
Printed and bound in Canada

Published by Fernwood Publishing
32 Oceanvista Lane, Black Point, Nova Scotia, B0J 1B0
and 748 Broadway Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3G 0X3
www.fernwoodpublishing.ca

Fernwood Publishing Company Limited gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Government of Canada, the Manitoba Department of Culture, Heritage and Tourism under the Manitoba Publishers Marketing Assistance Program and the Province of Manitoba, through the Book Publishing Tax Credit, for our publishing program. We are pleased to work in partnership with the Province of Nova Scotia to develop and promote our creative industries for the benefit of all Nova Scotians. We acknowledge the support of the Canada Council for the Arts, which last year invested \$153 million to bring the arts to Canadians throughout the country.



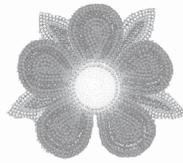
Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Making space for Indigenous feminism / edited by Joyce
Green — Second edition.

Includes bibliographical references.
ISBN 978-1-55266-883-2 (softcover)

1. Indigenous women—Political activity.
2. Indigenous women—Social conditions.
3. Feminism.
4. Women political activists.
5. Indigenous women—Biography.
6. Feminists—Biography.
7. Women's rights. I. Green, Joyce A. (Joyce Audry), 1956-, editor

HQ1161.M34 2017 305.48'8 C2017-903116-3



Contents

About the Authors.....	xi
Acknowledgements	xv
1 Taking More Account of Indigenous Feminism: An Introduction <i>Joyce Green</i>	1
Indigenous Feminism	4
Feminism	7
Colonialism and Patriarchy.....	9
The Transformative Potential of Feminism.....	12
Reclaiming and Renewing Traditions.....	13
Feminism and Liberation.....	15
2 Being Indigenous Feminists: Resurgences Against Contemporary Patriarchy <i>Gina Starblanket</i>	21
Contextualizing Indigenous (Feminist) Resurgence.....	22
Resurgence and Cultural Memory	25
Gender on the Ground.....	28
Everyday Acts of Resurgence	33
Being Indigenous Feminists	38
3 Feminism Is for Everybody: Aboriginal Women, Feminism and Diversity <i>Verna St. Denis</i>	42
Aboriginal Women’s Critique of Feminism.....	46
Reflections	50
Conclusion	59
4 My Hometown: Northern Canada, South Africa <i>Emma LaRocque</i>	63
5 Being an Indigenous Woman Is a “High-Risk Lifestyle” <i>Mary Eberts</i>	69
Policing and (In)Justice.....	72
Violence by State Actors	73
The Ultimate Objectification.....	76

	Over-criminalization.....	77
	The Indian Act.....	78
	“To Be an Indian Is to Be a Man”	82
	Married Women on Reserves.....	84
	The Drive for Reform.....	85
	Finally, Change — or is it?.....	87
	Regulating Women (Not) Declaring Paternity.....	88
	Another Round of Litigation.....	90
	High-Risk Lives.....	93
6	Politics of Gendered Violence in Indigenous Communities	
	<i>Rauna Kuokkanen</i>	103
	Indigenous Women in Canada.....	107
	Sámi Women	110
	Silencing and Distorted Practices	114
	Conclusion	116
7	Métis and Feminist: Contemplations on Feminism, Human Rights, Culture and Decolonization	
	<i>Emma LaRocque</i>	122
8	Deploying and Disputing Aboriginal Feminism in Australia	
	<i>Megan Davis</i>	146
	The Bell/Huggins Debate.....	147
	Race over Gender	148
	Northern Territory Emergency Response.....	150
	Exploring the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.....	155
	Land Rights in Australia and Canada.....	157
	A More Nuanced Gendered Approach to Self-Determination.....	160
9	ReBalancing Strategies: Aboriginal Women and Constitutional Rights in Canada	
	<i>Joyce Green</i>	166
	Confronting Colonial Power Relations.....	173
	Engaging the Constitution.....	176
	Charter Litigation for Aboriginal Women	181
	From Equality to Decolonization.....	185
10	Spare a Thought for Métis Women Elders:	
	Illness and Poverty in Elderhood <i>Diedre A. Desmarais</i>	192
	Colonial Destruction of Indigenous Particularity (Theory Weds Empirics).....	195
	Excavating Métis Health Data.....	198
	Hearing the Voices of the Elders.....	200
	Jolene.....	201
	Angelica	203
	Mary	206

Other Métis Women.....	208
Illness and Poverty.....	209
Being Elderly, Métis and a Woman.....	210
11 The State Is Not a Saviour: Indigenous Law, Gender and the Neoliberal State in Oaxaca <i>Isabel Altamirano-Jiménez</i>.....	215
Indigenous Normative Systems and Gender.....	217
Recognizing Rights/Alienating Land.....	220
Women' Rights and "Traditions" in Oaxaca.....	224
Indigenous Women's Politics.....	228
Unsettling the State as Women's Saviour.....	230
12 "Empowerment, Revolution and Real Change": An Interview with Fay Blaney <i>Fay Blaney and Sam Grey</i>.....	234
13 Perpetual State of Violence: An Indigenous Feminist Anti-Oppression Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls <i>Robyn Bourgeois</i>.....	253
An Indigenous Feminist Anti-Oppression Framework.....	255
MMIWG: The Scope of a "National Tragedy".....	257
State of Perpetual Violence.....	260
The Violence of the Indian Act.....	261
Human Trafficking and Extermination.....	263
The Injustice System.....	265
Colonizing Indigenous Women's Resistance.....	267
Conclusion.....	269
14 Looking Back, Still Looking Forward <i>Shirley Green</i>.....	274
15 Colleen Glenn: A Métis Feminist on Indian Rights for Indian Women <i>Colleen Glenn with Joyce Green</i>.....	294
16 Culturing Politics and Politicizing Culture <i>Shirley Bear</i>.....	303
Images on Words.....	303
Women's Ceremony.....	311
Fragile Freedoms.....	315
Yesterday.....	318
17 Long Way From Home <i>Emma LaRocque</i>.....	321
Index.....	326

This book is dedicated to its readers, who will be transformative in the world.

It is dedicated to the many Indigenous women and children who suffered and continue to suffer exile from communities and families because of colonialism, patriarchy and racist, sexist Indian Acts and band councils.

It is dedicated to the many Indigenous women, especially the elders, who suffer from poverty and exclusion.

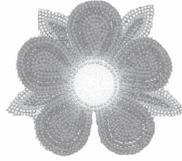
It is dedicated to every Indigenous person who has learned to hate herself — and then to respect herself.

It is dedicated to every Indigenous scholar in the halls of colonial universities.

It is dedicated to every woman everywhere who has lived with violence — for which there is no justification, even if there is an explanation.

It is dedicated to the memory of the missing and murdered and the incarcerated ones.

May peace be with you all.



About the Authors

ISABEL ALTAMIRANO-JIMÉNEZ is Zapotec from the Tehuantepec Isthmus, Oaxaca, Mexico, and associate professor of political science at the University of Alberta. Her research interests include the connections between resource extraction, land, body and consent. Her recent publications include *Living on the Land: Indigenous Women's Understandings of Place* (co-edited with Nathalie Kermaal, 2016) and *Indigenous Encounters with Neoliberalism: Place, Women and the Environment* (2013).

SHIRLEY BEAR is a Maliseet elder and artist, and a traditional healer and political activist. She was born on the Negootkook First Nation. "I grew up weaving baskets and drawing pictures whenever and wherever I could. In my first introduction to petroglyphs in the 1960s I found, in these images, a history and an ancient story that continues to be my strength and sense of foreverness on this continent."

CHRISTI BELCOURT is a Michif visual artist and author whose ancestry originates from the Métis community of Lac Ste. Anne, Alberta. She celebrates the beauty of the natural world while exploring nature's symbolic properties. Christi was named the 2014 Ontario Aboriginal Art Laureate by the Ontario Arts Council and in 2016 received the Governor General's Award for Innovation and the Premier's Arts Award.

ROBYN BOURGEOIS is a mixed-race Cree academic, activist and artist currently based in the traditional territory of Haudenosaunee of the Six Nations of the Grand River. She is assistant professor in the Centre for Women's and Gender studies at Brock University. Robyn is an Indigenous feminist whose research and activism addresses violence against Indigenous women and girls, particularly in the areas of sex trafficking and murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls.

FAY BLANEY, a Xwemalhkwa woman of the Coast Salish Nation, has devoted herself to education and activism on the gendered impacts of colonization, capitalism and patriarchy. She founded the Aboriginal Women's Action Network and has taught Aboriginal studies, women's studies and Canadian studies at Langara College and at the University of British Columbia's Centre for Research in Women's Studies and Gender Relations. She is currently the co-chair of the Women's Memorial March Committee, an organization she's worked with for over twenty years.

MEGAN DAVIS is a professor of law and director of the Indigenous Law Centre at the University of New South Wales, Australia. She is an acting commissioner of the NSW Land and Environment Court, a fellow of the Australian Academy of Law, a member of the NSW Sentencing Council and an expert member to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. She is the co-author with George Williams of *Everything You Need to Know About the Referendum to Recognise Indigenous Australians* (2015) and, with Marcia Langton, of *It's Our Country: Indigenous Arguments for Meaningful Constitutional Recognition and Reform* (2016).

DIEDRE A. DESMARAIS is Métis, born and raised in Regina, Saskatchewan. She is an assistant professor at the University of Manitoba, directing the Access and Aboriginal Focus Programs. She is an outspoken advocate of education for Indigenous students and is a twenty-five-year veteran of post-secondary education administration. She earned her Ph.D. at the age of 60. Her doctoral research focused on Indigenous identity and access to health care by Indigenous elderly people.

MARY EBERTS helped develop the equality provisions enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. She is a co-founder of the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund and served as litigation counsel to the Native Women's Association of Canada from 1981 to 2016. With her legal expertise she has performed a lifetime of allyship and solidarity with Indigenous women. Recognition for her work includes the Governor General's Award in Honour of the Persons' Case, the Law Society of Upper Canada Medal, the ywca Woman of Distinction Award, the Distinguished Service Award of the Canadian Bar Association—Ontario, the Women's Law Association of Ontario President's Award and several honorary doctorates. In 2017, Mary was awarded the Order of Canada "for her visionary leadership as an advocate and litigator advancing equality and women's rights."

JOYCE GREEN is of English, Ktunaxa and Cree-Scottish Métis descent. She is a professor in the Department of Political and International Studies at the

University of Regina. Her research interests have been focused on issues of race and racism, decolonization, and democracy. Joyce is the editor of *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism* and *Indivisible: Indigenous Human Rights* (2007). She lives in ʔa·kiskaqʔiʔit (Cranbrook, B.C., Canada), in amakʔis Ktunaxa.

SHIRLEY GREEN is of English, Ktunaxa and Cree-Scots Métis descent. Born and raised in Ktunaxa territory, she is a mother, grandmother and elder. Raised by her parents in an era when racism was prominent and dangerous, Shirley and her siblings were denied information about their Indigenous heritage and Ktunaxa language. Late in life she embarked on a journey of discovery to recover part of what she and her siblings missed, by studying the Ktunaxa language. She has also explored the relationship between experience, identity and gender in the context of her family and communities, and she has challenged some of the more evident racist and sexist impulses at play in ʔa·kiskaqʔiʔit (Cranbrook), where she now lives.

SAM GREY (Scots-Canadian) is a Ph.D. candidate in political science at the University of Victoria. Her primary research interests are political virtue, the politics of emotion, settler colonialism and reparations for historical injustice — engagements that converge in her current work on unforgiveness and irreconciliation in settler-colonial states. She has published on gender in the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Indigenous food politics, decolonization theory and praxis, traditional knowledge and the intellectual property paradigm and Indigenous women's human rights.

RAUNA KUOKKANEN is Sámi from Ohcejohka (Utsjoki), Northern Finland. She is an associate professor of political science and Indigenous studies at the University of Toronto. She is the author of *Reshaping the University: Responsibility, Indigenous Epistemes and the Logic of the Gift* (2007) and *Boaris dego eana: Eamiálbmogiid diehtu, filosofijat ja dutkan* (As Old as the Earth: Indigenous Knowledge, Philosophies and Research, 2009). Her book *Restructuring Relations: Indigenous Self-Determination and Governance in Canada, Greenland and Scandinavia* is anticipated in 2017.

EMMA LAROCQUE originates from a Cree-speaking and land-based Métis family and community in northeastern Alberta. She is a scholar, author, poet and professor in Native studies at the University of Manitoba, where she specializes in colonization/decolonization, colonial misrepresentation, racism, gender roles, Métis history/identity and contemporary Indigenous literature. In 2005 Emma received a National Aboriginal Award for her contributions to education. She is author of *Defeathering the Indian* (1975) and *When the Other Is Me: Native Resistance Discourse 1850–1990* (2010), which won the Alexander Kennedy Isbister Award for Non-fiction.

GINA STARBLANKET is a lecturer in Native studies and women's and gender studies at the University of Manitoba. She is of Cree/Saulteaux and French/German ancestry, and is a member of the Star Blanket Cree Nation. Her scholarship is centred in Indigenous political theory and takes up questions of treaty implementation, gender, decolonization, resurgence and relationality. Her personal and intellectual commitments are informed by her family and community networks as well as her experience working as a community-based researcher and post-secondary program administrator. Her dissertation involves a critical analysis of the contemporary politics of treaty implementation with a specific focus on Treaty 4.

VERNA ST. DENIS was born into a Métis road allowance community on the southwest border of Prince Albert National Park, and she is also a member of the Beardy's and Okemasis First Nation. She is an associate professor of education in the College of Education, University of Saskatchewan, specializing in teaching anti-oppressive education. Verna is both a graduate and former faculty member of the Aboriginal Teacher Education programs in Saskatchewan. Her research includes promoting a critical race analysis in Aboriginal education.



Taking More Account of Indigenous Feminism

An Introduction

Joyce Green

When the first edition of this book was published in 2007, there was little scholarship on or activism mobilized by Indigenous¹ feminism, and very few Indigenous activists self-identified as feminist. Yet, those few voices have made space for more work about Indigenous feminism, and for explicitly feminist Indigenous voices. That space has produced better analysis of the conditions that affect Indigenous women's lives, in particular, of colonialism and the violence that attends it. Ten years later much has changed. There is a significant body of writing relevant to Indigenous feminism, and within some Indigenous and non-Indigenous political organizations there is some recognition that gendered analysis is critical for political legitimacy and for sound policy and strategy.

Briefly, this book was conceptualized after a number of incidents experienced by me and others in which our academic and activist claims respecting Indigenous women were dismissed because of their feminist fingerprints. Indeed, I've twice had the unsalutary experience of presenting on Indigenous feminism at conferences and being publicly rebuked by other Aboriginal women, who insisted that there is simply no such thing, despite my experiences and my data; and that, moreover, feminism as both a theoretical approach and as an activist stance is unAboriginal. I knew that wasn't true, but I appreciated both the depth of the resistance and its effect in silencing analyses and prescriptions that were remotely related to feminism. It seemed important to review the experiences of Aboriginal feminists and to take note of the positions that elicited such condemnatory responses.

Working with a feminist affinity group of which I am a member, the Kitchen Table Collective, and also with Status of Women Canada and the now-defunct Saskatchewan Institute of Public Policy, I held a symposium on Aboriginal

Feminism in 2002 at the University of Regina. The symposium was attended by self-identified Aboriginal feminists and some Indigenous women who were interested in women's issues but were not familiar with feminism. The presentations and discussions at the symposium impelled the edited collection, *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism* (2007). Ten years on, there are more things to say about this topic. The political climate for Aboriginal feminism has shifted, though there is more room for expansion. There are more alliances between Indigenous and settler activists and academics, united by common goals, shared analyses and solidarities. Yet there is still a fundamental hostility toward feminism in communities and in universities. Most of the Aboriginal women who identify as feminist remain cautious about claiming the label and about explicitly invoking the analysis. The lack of intellectual and political space for the vigorous and free exchange of ideas, including critical and oppositional ideas such as feminism, suggests that Aboriginal feminists do not enjoy enough security in either Indigenous or settler state forums to participate routinely in the freedoms of speech, thought and association that are considered minimums for expression of civil liberties and citizenship in contemporary Canada, nor for the practice of academic freedom in universities. One can also infer that it is difficult for feminist Indigenous women to contribute to the public and political processes in Indigenous communities and organizations.

In 2007, there was virtually no explicit writing on Indigenous feminism, although there was some work critiquing feminist solidarity across colour and colonial lines, such as Aileen Moreton-Robinson's *Talkin' Up to the White Woman* (2000). Subsequently, a number of important theoretical and activist contributions have bolstered this slim corpus. The gap points to the invisibility of Indigenous women in progressive social movements and in academia, and to the unthinking racism that has enabled some to fail to see Indigenous women in their full historical and contemporary contexts: as simultaneously Indigenous and female, and as contemporary persons living in the context of colonial oppression by the occupying state and populations of, for example, Canada, the U.S., Aotearoa/New Zealand and Australia, with their racist mythologies, institutions and practices. Thus, the impetus behind the 2002 symposium on Aboriginal Feminism and then *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism* was the need to make some space for Indigenous feminist voices.

Subsequently, a number of prominent Indigenous scholars have recognized the significance of feminist analyses and theories, and some are deploying them in their own work. Dene scholar Glen Coulthard, for example, writes, "the crucial interventions of Indigenous feminist scholarship and activism over the years have made it *impossible* for any credible scholar ... to ignore the impact that colonial patriarchy continues to have on our national liberation efforts" (Coulthard 2014: 157; emphasis in original). Anishnabe scholar John Borrows takes up gender

(though not feminism) in the context of colonialism and resistance in helpful ways (2016: 181–204). Moreover, there has been a rise in critical feminist post-colonial and anti-racist writing that frames Canada as a colonial settler state infused with racist conceptions about Indigenous peoples (see, for example, Thobani 2007; Dhamoon 2009; Mawani 2009; Razack 2002, 2016). Much important work has been done by non-Indigenous scholars tilling the fields of feminist, anti-racist and post-colonial theory. A number of Indigenous scholars have contributed work that, while not always explicitly or even implicitly feminist, provides important insights for Indigenous and other feminist scholars. Thus, the scholarly literature is more robust and the theoretical contributions are more likely to take up gendered and raced accounts of Indigenous peoples. And there are a few prominent Indigenous leaders who have incorporated gendered analyses into their politics. Yet, sexism, misogyny and racism continue to afflict Indigenous women, and serious engagement with these factors is not yet consistent or routine in either Indigenous or settler governments and communities. There is an urgent need for the consistent application of the analyses and tools provided by Indigenous feminism.

Indigenous feminism has routinely been denigrated as untraditional, inauthentic, non-liberatory for Indigenous women and illegitimate as an ideological position, political analysis and organizational process. However, the existence of powerful, theoretically informed and politically potent Indigenous feminist voices provides evidence to the contrary. *Making Space* documented a number of important Indigenous feminists (see also Blaney and Grey Chapter 12) who choose the label, the ideological position, the analysis and the process. Their work has been profoundly important for Indigenous women's issues. Moreover, a growing number of non-Indigenous and Indigenous scholars of critical race, feminist, ecological, socialist, Indigenist and post-colonial theory take up gender, race and colonialism. These additional theoretical and empirical tools are welcome and useful for both scholars and activists. The fear and marginalization that Indigenous feminists felt so keenly because of explicit hostility to the presence and analyses of Indigenous feminists are somewhat mitigated (though not erased) in 2017. More Indigenous women take the label, use the analyses and work for liberatory objectives consistent with feminism.

In 2017, there are both explicitly feminist Indigenous organizations and organizations that work for Indigenous women and either use feminist methodologies or ally with feminist organizations. A sterling case in point is the collaboration between the Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action (FAFIA) and the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC), who collaborated on a submission to the United Nations Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (2016). In their submission, FAFIA and NWAC draw on the earlier reports of international United Nations bodies critical of Canada's inability or

"Feminism is very important to me and produced a lot of healing for sisters around the world."

—Shirley Bear 2002

unwillingness to guarantee the human rights of Indigenous women and girls. They criticize the Canadian government's National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and

Girls (MMIWG), and make recommendations to improve the Inquiry and Canada's general political stance toward Indigenous women and girls. FAFIA and NWAC demonstrate that feminist analysis and solidarity can be important tools for improving the conditions of Indigenous women's lives through political action and solidarity over time. The Aboriginal Women's Action Network (AWAN) is another organization that uses explicitly feminist approaches to tackle important issues affecting Indigenous women in southwestern British Columbia (Blaney and Grey Chapter 12). More locally focused than NWAC and FAFIA, AWAN performs important work in its projects, many of which are deployed in the Downtown East Side of Vancouver, sometimes called Canada's poorest postal code. AWAN is also important for its ability to recruit women into organizing, encourage them in developing political and organizational skills, and mentor them into public and leadership roles.

INDIGENOUS FEMINISM

Indigenous feminism draws on core elements of Indigenous cultures — in particular, the nearly universal connection to land, to territory, through relationships framed as a sacred responsibility (Chambers and Blood 2012; Stewart-Harawira 2005: 136) predicated on reciprocity (Kuokkanen 2007: 145; Coulthard 2014: 77–78) and definitive of culture and identity (Chambers and Blood 2012; Palmater 2011: 168). For Indigenous decolonization and for Indigenous feminism, the connection with and alienation from land remain major political factors. Colonialism and its successor settler states are predicated on the theft of and exploitation of Indigenous lands and the oppression of Indigenous peoples, justified by the racist myths that are still encoded in settler cultures.

Inevitably, identity is also a central factor for Indigenous feminists. Specific identity connects people to particular territory. And particularly in Canada, Indigenous women have been socially and legislatively deprived of their connections to their territories through colonial practices. These range from the sexist, racist iterations of the Indian Act — which continues to discriminate against classes of Indians in the matter of status and entitlement to programs and rights — to the dispersal and subordination of the Métis, and including policies such as racist and genocidal education and child "care" practices of colonial governments, both of which have fractured Indigenous families and denied children their family relationships, languages and cultural frameworks.

Indigenous feminism is inextricably bound to the experiences of Indigenous

peoples with colonialism, with its legitimating ideology of racism and white privilege and with the oppressive reality of the contemporary settler state that is infused with the ideology and thus enacts it in political culture and policy. Colonialism affects both Indigenous men and women, but not identically. Maile Arvin et al. write: “Native feminist theories centrally address two intertwined ideas that are significant but often overlooked in feminist discourses: the United States and many other Western countries, including Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, are settler colonial nation-states, and settler colonialism has been and continues to be a gendered process” (2013: 9; see also Brownlie 2012). That gendered colonial process has produced insidious stereotypes of Indigenous women, whose objectification “by Europeans in the nineteenth century has left a legacy of marginalization within indigenous societies as much as within the colonizing society” (L. Smith 1999: 46). One consequence of this marginalization is the heightened vulnerability to physical and emotional male violence and to being murdered. As Andrea Smith (2005: 1) notes, “gender violence is not simply a tool of patriarchal control, but also serves as a tool of racism and colonialism.” And, it is “intimately linked with the broader colonial context” (Borrows 2016: 188). Another consequence is the frequency of alienation from the very land that inscribes duties and cultural relevance on Indigenous women.

Indigenous feminism is similar to other feminist positions in its foregrounding of women’s experiences and advocacy for women’s rights and interests, in its recognition of the gendered and raced nature of social experiences, and in its identification of the oppressive nature of patriarchy. It is distinct from other feminisms in its fundamental familiarity with the oppressions enacted through colonialism and in its formulation of a feminist critique derived from that experience. In Canada and in other settler states, colonialism is indubitably the single most urgent structural condition affecting Indigenous women. There is no doubt that colonialism was shaped by patriarchy and racism and that Indigenous peoples were subjected to the consequent normative assumptions and structural processes (LaRocque Chapter 7; see also Anderson 1991; Dhamoon 2009; LaRocque 2010; Kauanui 2008; Lawrence 2004; Mawani 2009; McCallum 2014; Palmater 2011, 2015; A. Smith 2005; L. Smith 1999; Suzack et al. 2010; Thobani 2007).

Throughout the 2002 Aboriginal Feminism Symposium it became clear that the attending women experience a profound lack of security in their professional, political and personal lives as Aboriginal women and as self-conscious feminists; as racialized Others in a racist society; and as Indigenous persons located in (and sometimes, excluded from) colonized Indigenous communities. The very label “Aboriginal feminist” was fraught for symposium participants. The high degree of popular antipathy to feminism makes many women anxious about being identified with it. The entirely ludicrous stereotypes (see the Pat Robertson quote below) that

have been attached to the term repel many women, who do not want to be similarly stereotyped. And for Indigenous women, the likelihood of being challenged for being inauthentic or as settler state fifth columnists makes identification as feminist especially dangerous. Speaking at the 2002 Aboriginal Feminism Symposium about the pressures exerted against Aboriginal feminists, Sharon McIvor said that once Aboriginal women identify publicly as feminist,

You don't have a place anymore because there's no one else around like you ... so it is a very, very lonely place to be ... Even those women and men who support you can't do it publicly because it's not safe ... Even in the academic arena (when) you're presenting papers, it's unusual to do a presentation and not have an Aboriginal woman academic get up and challenge what you've said and invariably it will be "You're not traditional. You're destroying the foundations of our nations because you are saying what you're saying." (Green 2007: 16–17).

Indigenous women stigmatized as feminist have endured political and social ostracization and threats of violence and of other punitive tactics, such as being denied access to programs, funding and so on. For example, Caroline Ennis provides a moving account of the inequality of women's access to services and benefits in her community and the threats made against activists (Rebick 2005: 112–15; see also LaRocque 1997; Silman 1987). This pressure, together with homophobic taunts about "man-hating," have tainted feminism for many women and made the label something to be avoided. Addressing the hostility and misconceptions of what feminism is, one 2002 symposium participant said: "in our nation there's very little known about feminists ... I don't want to be feared."

Women who have complained about band politics, or distribution of resources, or violence against women and children, sometimes find they are slapped with the label feminist as a pejorative. Jeannette Lavell and Yvonne Bedard, whose challenge to sex discrimination in the pre-1985 Indian Act went to the Supreme Court of Canada in 1973, were "attacked by Indian leaders and labelled 'white-washed women's libbers' who were undermining their Indian heritage" (Silman 1987: 13; see also Rebick 2005: 108). The AWAN and community activist Fay Blaney (see Blaney and Grey Chapter 12) has experienced similar attacks. Indeed, few Indigenous feminists have not experienced this kind of denigration. Sharon McIvor, a 2002 symposium participant who had been vice-president of NWAC, the national Canadian Indigenous women's organization whose most prominent political objectives had been equal band membership rights and Canadian constitutional protection for Indian women, spoke of her experience: "The first line of offence when you are talking to the [Indigenous male] political leadership

is ‘you’re destroying our traditions and you’re not really traditional. You’re not really an Indian and you’re not really Indigenous if you can do this’” (McIvor and Kuokkanen 2007). Much of this is similar to what non-Indigenous feminist women experience. But in addition, Indigenous women’s authenticity is challenged when they are defined as feminist.

Identity, recognition of identity and access to the rights attached to Indigenous identity are central matters for Indigenous feminists. Colonial states have enforced standards for female behaviour everywhere, with further constraints on Indigenous women. In Canada, for example, the colonial recognition and regulation of “Indians” and then “Eskimos” has been on the basis of colonial registries and conditions tied to patriarchal forms, such as the practice of women being forced to assume the legal and social designation of their fathers or husbands and being deprived of their own identities and autonomy in the process (Green 1985, 1997, 2001, 2009). This has left Indigenous women who did not and do not fit the regulatory system — primarily the Indian Act — unrecognized by the colonial governments and, too often, subsequently by their own communities of origin. Métis have been particularly marginalized by state disinterest in their communities and state refusal to recognize Métis rights, though that is now slowly changing. For many Indigenous women, feminist organizing and analysis has been central to their struggles to claim their Indigenous identities and the social and political aspects of those identities. Their claims have met with indifference from most of colonial society, with resistance from state governments, and too often with explicit hostility and opposition from their Indigenous communities. There is much written about these issues (see Brodsky 2014; Green 1985, 1993, 1997, 2001, 2009; Jamieson 1978; Lawrence 2004; Mawani 2009; Palmater 2011).

FEMINISM

Feminism is both theoretically informed ideology and methodology — the two are inseparable, as feminism is directed at transformative action — based on a political analysis that takes women’s experiences seriously. It is concerned with male dominance and female subordination and other forms of domination that affect women in gender-specific ways; and it is enacted primarily by women’s groups that generally have characteristic feminist processes of organization and of action, including flatter organizational structures and more consensus-driven decision making.

Feminists generally form political groups because the mainstream (or malstream) organizations and governments are unresponsive to women’s concerns, and because “private sphere” (Code 2000) preoccupations leave little room for feminist conversations. All women typically find that the conditions of their lives