Chapter One

TAKING ACCOUNT OF ABORIGINAL FEMINISM

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Aboriginal (or Indigenous[1]) feminism is a subject that is hotly debated. Some critics say there is no such thing, while others say that feminism is un-traditional, inauthentic, non-libratory for Aboriginal women and illegitimate as an ideological position, political analysis and organizational process. However, I know some Aboriginal feminists. They exist; they choose the label, the ideological position, the analysis and the process. Aboriginal feminists raise issues of colonialism, racism and sexism, and the unpleasant synergy between these three violations of human rights. Aboriginal feminists illuminate topics that, but for their voices, would not be raised at all. Therefore, despite the very small numbers of Aboriginal women who identify their work as feminist, and the small body of literature and theory that can be identified as Aboriginal feminist, these contributions are important.

Feminism is an ideology based on a political analysis that takes women's experiences seriously, and it is played out politically by women's groups that generally have characteristic processes of organization and of action. There are several different kinds of feminism, and it is beyond the scope of this chapter to explore them.[2] Yet, in all of the work on feminism, the women's movement and feminists, there is very little published on or by Indigenous women.[3] Judy Rebick is one of the few published feminists who has paid attention to Aboriginal women (see her chapter, "Indian Rights for Indian Women," in Rebick 2005). Kim Anderson and Bonita Lawrence's collection *Strong Women Stories* (2003) is not about feminism or the women's movement, but it is about Aboriginal women, some of whom are activist in ways that are consistent with feminism and who can be implicitly characterized as feminist. There is virtually no explicit writing on Aboriginal feminism, with the exception of Rosanna Deerchild's discussion of artist Lita Fontaine's notion of tribal feminism as "approaching feminism through a culture lens" (Deerfield 2003: 100) and Andrea Smith, Chapter 5 in this volume, revised and reprinted from Spring 2005 *Feminist Studies*. This gap in the literature points to the invisibility of Indigenous women in the women's movement and, beyond that, to the unthinking racism of a movement that has often failed to see Indigenous women in their full historical and contemporary contexts: as

simultaneously Aboriginal 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.

I argue that the emerging Aboriginal feminist literature and politic, while the terrain of a minority of activists and scholars, must be taken seriously as a critique of colonialism, decolonization and gendered and raced power relations in both settler and Indigenous communities. I also argue that the intolerance for feminist analysis in Indigenous communities is problematic, particularly when it takes the form of political intimidation of a marginal segment (critical women) of those communities. This chapter, relying on activists' accounts and the articulation of Aboriginal feminists at the 2002 Aboriginal Feminism Symposium,[4] documents the existence and parameters of Aboriginal feminism in Canada. It concludes that Aboriginal feminism is a valid and theoretically and politically powerful critique of the social, economic and political conditions of Aboriginal women's lives.

LOCATING ABORIGINAL FEMINISM

So what is Aboriginal feminism? The characteristic of feminism — be it socialist, maternal, radical, liberal, Aboriginal, ecofeminist — is that it takes gender seriously as a social organizing process and, within the context of patriarchal societies, seeks to identify the ways in which women are subordinated to men and how women can be emancipated from this subordination. Feminism is theory that seeks to "describe and explain women's situations and experiences and support recommendations about how to improve them" and is based on "respect for women's own perspectives and authority" (Frye 2000: 195). Feminism is also a social movement fuelled by theory dedicated to action, to transformation — to praxis. Feminism is usually viewed as multiple: *feminisms* analyze the diversity of women's cultural, political and in other ways specific experiences. Marilyn Frye argues that across feminisms, the commonality comes from the analytical approach to social concepts about power relations (196).

Feminist analysis only arises in conditions of patriarchy, as a response to oppression and as a prescription for change. Thus, it is not surprising that women who do not experience patriarchy as oppressive, such as members of the reactionary group REAL (Realistic, Equal, Active for Life) Women, reject and malign feminism. Nor is it surprising that women who consider their communities and cultures to be free of patriarchal oppression and/or to have cultural practices available that recognize the power, dignity and agency of women, also view feminism as irrelevant. Some First Nations historically placed a high value on women's roles in society; indeed, women

in most Aboriginal cultures historically enjoyed far more respect, power and autonomy than did their European settler counterparts.

Yet, contemporary Aboriginal women are subjected to patriarchal and colonial oppression within settler society and, in some contexts, in Aboriginal communities. Some Aboriginal cultures and communities are patriarchal, either in cultural origin or because of incorporation of colonizer patriarchy. For example, Gail Stacey-Moore, a Mohawk woman, writes: "The *Indian Act* abolished the traditional matriarchal society for a patriarchal one. Our men turned to the *Indian Act* to get back into a position of strength, and they still use it today" (quoted in Rebick 2005: 112). Fay Blaney (2003: 162) writes: "Present-day systemic and institutionalized patriarchy ensures that the privileged male status in mainstream Canadian society is mirrored in Aboriginal communities." Most Aboriginal women also live with the endemic sexism and racism in the dominant society.

Feminists in all patriarchal societies are denigrated, for they question the common understanding of what it means to be a good woman (and a good man), and they challenge the social, political, economic and cultural practices that validate, perpetuate and enforce these roles. As the British writer Rebecca West said in 1913, "people call me a feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a doormat" (Feminismquotes). Challenging the dominant consensus is always difficult. Feminists are viewed with deep suspicion at best, with hostility at worst, by most others in their communities. Thus, the American religious fundamentalist and prominent Republican Pat Robertson claimed, in a caricature that too many believe to be true of this misunderstood ideology, that feminism is a "socialist, anti-family political movement that encourages women to leave their husbands, kill their children, practice witchcraft, destroy capitalism and become lesbians" (Freeman 2005: A3).

Aboriginal anti-colonial political struggle confronts the dominant myths and political, social and economic practices that dignify, deny or perpetuate colonialism — the enforced appropriation of Aboriginal nations' land and resources and the denial of the conditions for self-determination. These colonial processes are primarily initiated by settler state governments, corporations and institutions — to the detriment of Aboriginal peoples, in all their diversity of history and contemporary social experience. As with feminism, anti- and post-colonial analysis and activism attracts hostility, denial and minimization. It too contests the myths and justifications of the economic and political *status quo* of settler states and demands restitution, self-determination and participation in political and economic activity. Fundamentally, this struggle challenges the legitimacy of settler states' claims to sovereignty.

Colonialism is closely tied to racism and sexism. These twin phenomena exist in the context of colonial society, directed at Indigenous people, but they

have also been internalized by some Indigenous political cultures in ways that are oppressive to Indigenous women. Liberation is framed by some as a decolonization discourse, which draws on traditional cultural and political mechanisms. It is conceptualized as thoroughly Indigenous in character, while also honouring women in their gendered and acculturated contexts. But Indigenous liberation theory, like so many other liberation movements and theories, has not been attentive to the gendered way in which colonial oppression and racism function for men and women, or to the inherent and adopted sexisms that some communities manifest.

Aboriginal feminism brings together the two critiques, feminism and anti-colonialism, to show how Aboriginal peoples, and in particular Aboriginal women, are affected by colonialism and by patriarchy. It takes account of how both racism and sexism fuse when brought to bear on Aboriginal women. While colonial oppression is identified, so too is oppression of women by Indigenous men and Indigenous governance practices. Aboriginal feminists are the clearest in linking sex and race oppression. They are identified as political adversaries not only by colonial society but also by male Indigenous elites whose power they challenge. And they are also criticized by some Aboriginal women, who deny their analysis and question their motives and authenticity.

DEPLOYING ABORIGINAL FEMINISM

Some critics allege that Aboriginal feminists use a "white" or "colonial" theoretical approach. Aboriginal feminists counter that they use feminist analysis as a tool for challenging racism and colonialism. Their work looks both at the genesis of colonialism and its consequences, and at the internalization and perpetuation of colonial practices within Aboriginal communities, especially male dominance over women and children. Aboriginal feminist analysis goes further than other Aboriginal libratory critiques in suggesting that not all pre-colonial Aboriginal social practices were innocent of oppression, including sex oppression. This questions the veneration of tradition and also leads to prescriptions for contemporary political formulas for Aboriginal liberation (Green 2001; Dick 2006).

Feminism is also about building bridges to other movements working for social justice. As Aboriginal Women's Action Network (AWAN) activist Fay Blaney (2002) said in her summation of the first roundtable at the Aboriginal Feminism Symposium, "Aboriginal feminists work with non-Aboriginal women, with labour, anti-poverty and environmental groups as well as within Aboriginal communities and focus on issues of social justice; and this attracts political backlash." In another example, Colleen Glenn, a Métis woman who devoted years to the struggle to end sex discrimination in the *Indian Act*, did so because of feminist solidarity and principled commitment to equality, even

though the issue did not affect her personally (see the interview with Glenn, Chapter 15).

Aboriginal women activists worked in solidarity with white and other women's organizations and feminists, especially in regard to women's status provisions in the *Indian Act*. For example, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC)[5] organized a day of mourning to protest the 1971 Supreme Court of Canada decision against Jeannette Lavell and Yvonne Bedard: Gail Stacey-Moore, of the Quebec Native Women's Association, called NAC "incredibly supportive" on the issue of women's status (Rebick 2005: 107, 110).

The groundbreaking *Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada*, filed in 1970, made a number of recommendations concerning the well-being of Aboriginal women, including a recommendation (#106) to end sex discrimination in the *Indian Act*. During the period immediately prior to the Canadian referendum on the constitutional amendments proposed in the Charlottetown Accord,[6] NAC and NWAC (Native Women's Association of Canada) worked closely, with NWAC taking the lead on negotiating positions. Thus, Aboriginal feminism educates movements unfamiliar with issues of colonialism, racism and sexism, and builds critical political consciousness and solidarity, thus contributing to citizenship and democratic development.

DISCIPLINING ABORIGINAL FEMINISTS

Aboriginal women stigmatized as feminist have endured political and social ostracization and threats of violence and of other punitive tactics, like being denied access to programs, funding and so on (see, for example, Caroline Ennis's 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 has tainted feminism for many women and has made the label something to be avoided. Addressing the hostility and misconceptions of what feminism is, one symposium participant stated "in our nation there's very little known about feminists.... I don't want to be feared" (Anonymous).

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*. 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).

Much of this is similar to what non-Aboriginal feminist women experience. But in addition, Aboriginal women's authenticity is challenged when they are defined as feminist (see Sharon McIvor's experience in Chapter 16).

It is as though some authority has decided that Aboriginal women cannot be culturally authentic, or traditional, or acceptable, if they are feminist. Indeed, some women find themselves criticized for being tools of colonial ideology or for being traitors to their communities. All of this stifles critique and also political debate.

The typical anti-feminist pressures are amplified for Aboriginal feminists because of their collective position as members of communities occupied and subordinated by settler populations and governments through processes of colonization. In such a relationship, there are very powerful impulses to turn internal allegiance and sustaining traditional social practices of authenticity, resistance and solidarity in the face of colonial assimilative forces. Thus, traditional or putatively traditional social relations are well insulated from critique. Even where contemporary social relations are understood to be shaped by colonial and patriarchal practices, Aboriginal women are reluctant to use a gendered analysis to criticize Aboriginal men. Indeed, feminist analysis is widely considered to be divisive, corrosive of family and community, culturally inappropriate and even colonialist. A number of prominent Aboriginal intellectuals have dismissed feminism's relevance for Aboriginal women while others have celebrated Aboriginal women's traditional and maternalist roles to the exclusion of any analysis of gendered power relations (see LaRocque, Chapter 3). Such analyses celebrate an historic, cultural and/or romantic mythic gender construct, while implicitly or explicitly dismissing a feminist critique of the construct or of its contemporary application.

THE POWER OF ABORIGINAL FEMINISM

Aboriginal feminism seeks an Aboriginal liberation that includes women, and not just the conforming woman, but also the marginal and excluded, and especially the woman who has been excluded from her community by virtue of colonial legislation and socio-historical forces. Thus, Aboriginal feminism is a theoretical engagement with history and politics, as well as a practical engagement with contemporary social, economic, cultural and political issues. It is an ideological framework not only of intellectuals but also of activists. It is an authentic expression of political analysis and political will by those who express it, who are self-consciously aware of their identities as *Aboriginal women* — with emphasis on the unity of both words. Aboriginal feminism interrogates power structures and practices between and among Aboriginal and dominant institutions. It leads to praxis — theoretically informed, politically self-conscious activism.

While Aboriginal feminists have focused largely on the impositions of imperialism, colonialism, racism and sexism from the dominant societies, the same body of thought has also illuminated impositions of power and practices within Indigenous communities, organizations and families. In

other words, it is principled, self-reflective and critical, in the best tradition of transformative thinkers as advocated by Edward Said (1996), and not simply doctrinaire. Aboriginal feminism provides a philosophical and political way of conceptualizing, and of resisting, the oppressions that many Aboriginal people experience. It provides analysis of Aboriginal women's particular experiences of oppression, and it offers some prescriptions for a post-colonial future for Aboriginal peoples. It is anti-oppressive in its intellectual and political foundations. It is not the only way of understanding the world, but it is a valuable, valid conceptual tool, whose practitioners should not be dismissed.

Self-identified Aboriginal feminists see great potential for positive change through feminist praxis in an anti-colonial context. Following are some of the claims made by participants in the 2002 Aboriginal Feminism Symposium:

- "Aboriginal feminism is the tool that will bring about decolonization" (Blaney);
- "Feminism is very important to me and produced a lot of healing for sisters around the world" (Bear);
- "The larger picture of feminism is the genuine caring for humanity and the opposition to any kind of oppression" (McIvor);
- The way to "defend claiming the Aboriginal feminist identity begins by saying patriarchy and sexism is a problem in our community — not just a problem of generic colonialism" (St. Denis).

And now to what Aboriginal feminism is not: it is not a man-hating ideology, nor a unilateral rejection of cultures, traditions or personal and political relationships with men. It is not a subordinate form of other feminisms, nor is it a political stalking horse by colonial ideologies.

WHAT ABOUT TRADITIONS?

A common claim invoked to reject Aboriginal feminism is that it is un- or anti-traditional. Exploring this criticism means first considering what "traditional" means — and to whom. Tradition consists of valued inter-generational social practices. All societies have them; all venerate them. Not all of the members of a society are similarly faithful to them, nor are all societies monolithic in their identification and replication of them.

For Aboriginal peoples, subjected to colonial forces that have included public policy attacks on Aboriginal cultures and social practices, tradition has come represent a pre-colonial time when Indigenous peoples exercised self-determination. For the most part, this is assumed, and rightly so, to have been a good and appropriate path. But tradition is neither a monolith, nor

is it axiomatically good, and the notions of what practices were and are essential, how they should be practised, who may be involved and who is an authority are all open to interpretation. Women around the world have found themselves oppressed through a variety of social, religious, political and cultural practices. Feminism is foundationally about the importance of considering women's experiences, especially through social and cultural practices. Feminism has provided tools to critique oppressive traditions — and to claim and practise meaningful non-oppressive traditions.

Fay Blaney (2003: 167) writes: "The best defense against assimilation is to sustain culture and tradition, but what are we to do when reinstated tradition is steeped in misogyny?" Others have noted that certain Aboriginal elites invoke traditions to sustain *prima facie* violations of women's human rights (Dick 2006; Green 1985, 1993, 2001; LaRocque 1997). Unless we can have conversations about what traditions are, how they affect men and women in their gendered roles and what the implications of this are, we are moving a powerful socio-political critique off the table. Any impulse that represses critical conversation is problematic.

Today, there are a number of versions of tradition in Aboriginal communities. There are many who claim to be authoritative on this subject. They don't always agree, nor should they need to. But neither should they be permitted to deny others a voice. Too many Aboriginal women have been silenced or had their social and political roles minimized by invocations of appropriate tradition relative to women's voices and choices. Sharon McIvor, a symposium participant who had been vice-president of the Native Women's Association of Canada, a national Aboriginal 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 [Aboriginal 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 Aboriginal if you can do this.'"

Rejecting the rhetoric and institutions of the colonizer by embracing the symbols of one's culture and traditions is a strategy for reclaiming the primacy of one's own context in the world, against the imposition of colonialism. But, in the absence of an analysis of the power relations embedded in tradition, it is not necessarily a libratory strategy. Each choice must be interrogated on its own merits, relative to the objective of a contemporary emancipatory formulation that will benefit Aboriginal men, women and children. Feminist critique is an essential part of this process.

At issue, then, is who decides what tradition is — and for whom. Many of us have multiple cultural heritages and historical experiences, and so there can never be a single cultural version of tradition. Secondarily, we need to

have conversations about the fact that not all Aboriginal people will choose traditional formulas. Aboriginal feminist voices have much to contribute to these important conversations and to shaping an inclusive future.

FEMINISTS AND ACTIVISTS

For many years, the few Aboriginal and Indian women who advanced women's issues in the political arena were often criticized for their activities. Always, they sought to locate their claims as thoroughly Indigenous and culturally authentic, while providing a gendered analysis of public policy, political practices and life experiences. In this, they were radical. Here, I document a few of the Canadian organizations and activists whose influence resonates with feminist analysis and action.

Jeanette Corbiere Lavell and Yvonne Bedard mounted a challenge to the infamous section 12(1)(b) of the pre-1985 *Indian Act*, which stripped Indian women who married anyone other than a status Indian man of their Indian status, right to reserve residency and ability to pass status on to their children.[7] The Supreme Court of Canada ruled against Lavell and Bedard in 1973. The case was the catalyst for the formation of a number of Native women's organizations. However, a group of treaty women from Alberta actively opposed the case and any change to the sexist membership provisions of the *Indian Act*. There is no single political position of Indian women. Similar to the situation sketched out by Sharon McIvor in Chapter 16 concerning government funding of organizations to participate in constitutional change, the Department of Indian Affairs was funding the mainstream (malestream) Indian organizations, but Indian women couldn't access federal money to work for *Indian Act* revision and had to raise money through bake sales to lobby the federal government for human rights and justice (Lavell 2005). Thus, the federal government practised discrimination against Indian women in its legislation and again in its selective consultation practices, recognition and support of Indian organizations.

Recounting the aggression, hostility and near-violence by some Indian politicians against women activists, Lavell said the women continued because, "If you believe in principles and values of our people, [it's] worth standing up for.... Our responsibility as women [is] to make things better for our children" (Lavell 2005). And children are still being affected, differentially, by *Indian Act* discrimination (see Green, Chapter 8).

The Tobique-based[8] women known as the Tobique women's group (TWG) emerged as a political force in the mid-1970s to "improve local living conditions for women and children" (Silman 1987: 9). Shirley Bear (see Chapter 14) was part of that group. In 1979 the women organized the 100-Mile Native Women's Walk from Oka, Quebec, to Ottawa, the seat of the Canadian government, mobilizing Indian women across Canada

and raising public consciousness about the plight of many Indian women, particularly on the consequences of the sex discrimination of the *Indian Act* membership provisions and on the punitive tactics of some band politicians (Silman 1987: 149–72). Some of the Tobique women participated in the organization, Indian Rights for Indian Women (IRIW), which also focused on the discriminatory membership provisions of the *Indian Act* (Silman 1987: 174–75). Colleen Glenn (Chapter 15), a Métis woman, was part of IRIW.

The Tobique women's group also took the case of Sandra Lovelace (now Lovelace Nicholas and a senator in the Canadian Parliament) to the United Nations Human Rights Commission, and in 1981 succeeded in having Canada declared in violation of section 27 of the Convention on Civil and Political Rights, which guarantees the right to enjoy one's culture in one's community. In the process, Aboriginal women educated the mainstream feminist National Action Committee on the Status of Women about the discrimination facing Indian women, and that in turn generated more education of and support by non-Aboriginal feminists for Aboriginal women (Silman 1987: 177–78).

The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) worked to place Aboriginal women's human rights on the Canadian political agenda and in the Canadian constitution by fighting against sex discrimination in several sections of the pre-1985 *Indian Act*, by arguing for protection of Aboriginal women's rights in the Constitution and Charter of Rights and Freedoms and then again in the constitutional amendments proposed in the failed Charlottetown Accord of 1990. Some former NWAC activists are now involved in the Feminist Alliance for International Action (FAFIA),[9] which works on behalf of women's rights generally and Aboriginal women's rights specifically.

Feminist organizing has served as a political expression of commitment to community and has provided political education and experience for Aboriginal women. The Aboriginal Women's Action Network (AWAN), based in Vancouver's impoverished downtown Eastside, found that organizing created a learning process that was as important as the research and issues on which the organizing was focused. AWAN has struggled to maintain a collective model with consensus-based decision-making, though this has not always been easy or successful. Through AWAN activities, many Aboriginal women have been able to develop their leadership and political skills, as well as their knowledge of the "political opportunity structure." This kind of learning improves individuals' self-confidence as political actors, thus increasing their political efficacy and ability to engage in other political arenas. Tina Beads demonstrates how Aboriginal feminist activism can play out in a mainstream feminist organization, in her case the Vancouver Rape Crisis Collective (Chapter 14).

And yet, in most cases, instead of supporting these political initiatives, the Aboriginal political elites seemed more inclined to challenge their legitimacy, their motives, their analyses and their objectives. Troublingly, Aboriginal women have found themselves under attack for seeking to defend Aboriginal and treaty rights and fundamental human rights for Aboriginal women (see McIvor, Chapter 16). Colleen Glenn recalls hostility from leaders of the National Indian Brotherhood and the Indian Association of Alberta (Chapter 15). Silman recounts numerous incidents of harassment of the Tobique women.

Aboriginal women have also engaged in feminist-like action in the international arena. For example, Indigenous women from around the world participated in the Beijing United Nations Conference on Women in 1995, producing an Indigenous women's declaration that shows much shared terrain with other feminists, while asserting the primacy of the colonial experience common to Indigenous peoples.[10] This declaration also makes it clear that for Indigenous women, liberation is in the context of viable decolonized societies with their own cultural particularities, on their own lands and sustained by their own formulas for economies and for healthy societies.

CONCLUSION

Aboriginal feminism provides a philosophical and political way of conceptualizing, and of resisting, the oppressions that many Aboriginal people experience. It is not the only way, but it is unique and anti-oppressive in its intellectual and political foundations. Above all, it is critical, in the best tradition of transformative thinkers. While the majority of the brain power has been directed at the imposition of imperialism, colonialism, racism and sexism from the dominating societies, Aboriginal feminism has also illuminated power abuses within Aboriginal communities, organizations and families.

The power of feminist analysis, solidarity and organizing allow women to both consider political and social conditions differently than malestream politicians do and to articulate different kinds of solutions. It enhances the ability of individuals to be political actors — to engage in the activities of citizenship that too few people pursue. And it is done in the service of women, but also of children, men and communities. Contrary to the anti-feminist stereotype, feminism was never articulated as a formula for female dominance and oppression over males. As a body of intellectual work, Aboriginal feminism is demonstrably a libratory critical theoretical approach, fitting comfortably with feminist and post-colonial thought and critical race theory. As a set of political analyses and practices, Aboriginal feminism is a part of the broad and deep stream of feminist activism, wherein theory fuses with strategic action and solidarities.

NOTES

1. In this chapter I use the term "Aboriginal" as it is the customary and constitutional term in Canada for reference to Indigenous peoples. I use the two terms interchangeably.
2. The interested reader is advised to consult resources such as Jill Vickers's *Reinventing Political Science: A Feminist Approach*, for its accessible language and clear definitions; Janine Brodie's *Politics on the Margins: Restructuring and the Canadian Women's Movement*, for its analysis of the women's movement in the context of contemporary neoliberalism; Penny Kome's *The Taking of Twenty-Eight*, for its documentation of the opposition to the inclusion of women's equality rights in the Canadian Constitution; Judy Rebick's *Ten Thousand Roses: The Making of a Feminist Revolution*, for its documentation of the contemporary Canadian women's movement; and Marilyn Waring's iconic *If Women Counted: A New Feminist Economics*, which shows the sexism inherent in the United Nations system of national accounts, which renders women's work and power invisible. This is not a complete or a systematic list; it simply offers an introduction into primarily Canadian feminist struggles. Rebick (2005: 21) writes that Canadian feminism mirrors two dominant orientations: "those trying to reform the system to improve the state of women and those who believe(d) that a more radical transformation of society was necessary to achieve women's equality." Feminism is associated with the social movement that has components around the globe: the women's movement. It is "one of the most significant and successful social movements in Canada" (Adamson, Briskin and McPhail 1988: 3).
3. This may be changing; a number of scholars from Canada, the U.S., Australia and New Zealand made presentations to the conference "Indigenous Women and Feminism: Culture, Activism, Politics," August 25–28, 2005, at the University of Alberta. Some of this work should find its way to publication.
4. For more discussion of the Symposium, see the Introduction to this book.
5. NAC in its heyday represented over 600 women's organizations across Canada, and regularly met with members of the Canadian government and civil service to lobby for legislation and policy change to improve the status of women. The organization was seriously weakened by systematic underfunding by hostile governments from the late 1980s through to the present, who subsequently also refused NAC regular access (and the consequent legitimacy in the eyes of the public) to policy-makers.
6. The Charlottetown Accord was a package of proposed constitutional amendments, presented to and rejected by Canadians in 1992. It included a section on Aboriginal government. The interested reader is referred to Joyce Green 1993.
7. For a discussion of this, see Jamieson 1978; Silman 1987; Green 2001, 1993; for a 2006 snapshot of the situation, see Dick 2006.
8. Tobique is the name of a reserve, a portion of the traditional territories of the Maliseet First Nation, located in contemporary New Brunswick, on the east coast of Canada.
9. See <http://www.fafia-afai.org>.
10. See <http://www.ipcb.org/resolutions/beijingdec.html> (accessed September 19, 2002).

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