

Bonita Lawrence. *'Real' Indians and Others: Mixed-Blood Urban Native Peoples and Indigenous Nationhood*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004. Pp. 303.

'Real' Indians and Others is an important contribution both to the emergent study of mixed-blood Native identity in Canada and to the debate over Aboriginal self-government especially as it relates to urban Native communities. Its author, Bonita Lawrence, writes from the perspective of an urban mixed-blood herself, framing her analysis with the compelling story of growing up poor and "white" in post-World War II Montreal. Denying her Aboriginal identity while claiming a "white" one became an act of survival for her French-speaking, Catholic, Mi'k-maw mother, a strategy that kept the social workers from her door after Lawrence's father, a working-class expatriate Brit, left the family of six children to fend for itself.

Lawrence, like so many other mixed-blood urban Aboriginal peoples in Canada, early on internalized the negative colonial stereotypes of her people, the embodied symptoms of which she now recognizes were drug and alcohol abuse and a penchant for abusive relationships. Living as an outsider in both Aboriginal and non-communities, however, has given Lawrence a necessary insight and perspective on issues concerning mixed-blood identity, specifically the tensions and silences concerning the question of "Who is/is not a 'real' Indian?" It also compelled her to search out other urban mixed-bloods, specifically those in Toronto, compiling their histories and experiences through interviews and analyzing them for her doctoral dissertation, now published as *'Real' Indians and Others*. That Lawrence is now an assistant professor at Queen's University's Institute of Women's Studies is an extraordinary testament to her courage. There is also much to celebrate in the fact that an indigenous scholar's voice is telling this story and engaging in fields traditionally the preserve of white academics.

Lawrence's book is divided into three sections. The first is a short history of Aboriginal and white relations from early Contact to the present, the main point of which is to demonstrate the central role played by the Canadian government and this country's churches in the construction of the categories of Metis, status, and

non-status Indians. Deploying a Foucauldian analysis, Lawrence argues convincingly that Aboriginal identities in Canada, rather than rooted in land-based traditional teachings or tribal knowledges, are the product of government and church policies such as the Indian Act, numbered treaties, and residential schooling, all of which have worked to control and categorize Indigenous peoples through a colonial system of rules, regulations and surveillance. As a result, the majority of Indigenous peoples in Canada have been dispossessed of their tribal identities and communities as well as their traditional lands and cultures. Such dispossession, Lawrence argues, has created not only “generations of loneliness, isolation, and alienation” (p. xvi) but also a new category of Aboriginal identity in Eastern Canada – the contemporary urban mixed-blood. Alienated from Aboriginal reserve communities not only as a result of colonial policy but also because many bands now impose strict blood-quantum criteria for membership, urban mixed-bloods live in a dangerous space of racialized otherness, belonging nowhere and often internalizing racist attitudes as they attempt to come to terms with their ambiguous, in-between identities. Lawrence calls for the recognition of this new demographic. Such a project, she argues, will involve both the deconstruction of commonsense colonizing categories of “Indianness” that still prevail as well as the acknowledgement that mixed-bloods in Eastern Canada represent the “other half of the history of colonization” (p. 14), one that can no longer be ignored. As a result, Lawrence insists (in her final chapter) on the inclusion of urban mixed-bloods in discussions and proposals on Indigenous nationhood.

The second and third sections of *‘Real’ Indians and Others* focuses for the most part on the results of Lawrence’s interviews with the 29 participants in her study, all of whom are members of the Native community in Toronto. Some spent their childhoods on reserves, coming to Toronto as adults, while others are from families with one or more generations living off-reserve and with little connection to the land. All have Native-white ancestry and a family life “where a kind of warfare on Native identity has been waged and where white-skinned privilege, Eurocentric teaching, and/or pressures to assimilate have all made Native identity highly contradictory” (p. 255).

Here, with an immediacy that is often breathtaking, they discuss the painful effects on their lives today of their parents’ and

grandparents' experiences of adoption, fostering out, and residential schooling. Many angrily point their fingers at the sexist nature of the Indian Act which forced Aboriginal women and their children to leave their communities after marrying "out," arguing that, despite Bill C-31, this continues to be the most damaging aspect of government control on the lives of indigenous peoples. Certainly it is one of the key factors responsible for the large population of urban Native peoples in Canada today. Despite this catalogue of loss and dispossession, these interviews do not focus on victimhood. Instead, they offer a convincing testament both to the survival of Native identity in urban communities and to the hard work involved by their members in reclaiming Aboriginal heritages and cultures.

The strength and originality of these two sections, however, are the moving, often passionate, first-hand accounts that Lawrence's participants provide of living the urban Aboriginal life. Here western scholarship meets Indigenous culture, the result a form of "in-between" or "mixed-blood" text where binary colonist categories of Aboriginal/"white," academic/non-academic, self/other, and orality/writing are interrogated and destabilized. Rather than using the interviews to provide a detailed, "objective" ethnography of Toronto's Native community, Lawrence treats them as a form of storytelling where she, like the other 29 participants, becomes a trusted and empathetic "insider" and part of an oral community she is at great pains to understand. By deploying such an academically unconventional methodology, Lawrence succeeds in gaining access to a contemporary urban Native community and its experience of the effects of colonization. Via this approach, both Lawrence herself as well as her participants gain invaluable insight into the issue of mixed-blood identity and its everyday, often painful, always complex effect on their lives. Neither the access to this community nor the understanding of its experience of loss and alienation would have been possible had she approached her subject via the objective methodology of conventional anthropology. In the process, of course, traditional Aboriginal cultural and spiritual values that centre on community, reciprocity, and storytelling are revitalized and celebrated.

'Real' Indians and Others is an invaluable work, and not just for scholars and students of Native Studies, who will find that it both engages with many of the most complex and difficult issues facing Aboriginal peoples today and stands side-by-side in

importance with the work of Native American scholars Gerald Vizenor and the late Louis Owens on contemporary Indigenous mixed-blood identity in the United States. Because of its accessible language, its resistance to traditional forms of academic research, and its storytelling format, *'Real' Indians and Others* should also attract an audience of urban and reserve Natives in Canada, who will find it a tool of empowerment in their struggle to undo centuries of colonial domination.

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Serge Gauthier. *Laure Gaudreault. La syndicaliste de Charlevoix.* Montréal, Éditions XYZ, Collection «Les grandes figures », 2005, 171 pages.

Les Éditions XYZ ont lancé en 1994, la collection « Les grandes figures », dont l'objectif est de présenter à la jeunesse des biographies de personnages variés de l'histoire et de la littérature québécoises. À ce jour, 44 titres figurent dans la collection. Voulant délibérément rejoindre un public plus jeune, les directeurs de la collection autorisent les auteurs à introduire des éléments de fiction dans leurs récits biographiques, notamment, des dialogues. Les critiques que l'on peut formuler à l'égard de cette biographie de Laure Gaudreault s'adressent principalement à ce concept, mais dans le cas précis de ce volume, on peut reprocher aussi un manque évident de recherche dans les documents originaux et des lacunes d'interprétation.

Serge Gauthier, spécialiste de l'ethnographie de Charlevoix, a sous-titré sa biographie : « la syndicaliste de Charlevoix », et il a mis l'accent sur les divers personnages de Charlevoix qui accompagnent le parcours de Laure Gaudreault. « Elle fut surtout une femme enracinée dans un milieu où elle demeura volontairement toute sa vie, soit sa ville de Clermont et la région de Charlevoix ». (p. 17) Il ajoute : « Elle n'était pas une féministe