

It might be time to listen carefully to the voices of those excluded. And several authors provide tantalizing sources: speeches in the franchise debate or Black women's assertion that they were part of society and were short-changed by officials who only "gave their own" rather than all Canadians (p. 295). Under wardship, boys protested that they wanted to learn something (p. 324) and girls emphasized "I have certainly done my share" (p. 327). The Montreal immigrants studied by Micheline Labelle and Daniel Salée, the Aboriginal societies studied by Julie Cruikshank or Claude Denis, the children in wardship whose story Robert Adamoski recreates, or the women who participated in the citizenship debates and raised children – they all created feelings of belonging for themselves and they created Canadian societies and Canada's society in the process. We may find belonging and civic activity in everyday lives rather than in gatekeeper pronouncements. The anthology under review emphasizes pronouncements on who did not belong; the next step is to study those who paid no attention to moral, racial, or other exclusionary discourses and considered themselves Canadians.

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**Gillian Weiss, ed. *Trying to Get it Back: Indigenous Women, Education and Culture*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2000. Pp. 347.**

*Trying to Get it Back: Indigenous Women, Education and Culture* is a landmark book in the history of education. Most histories of Aboriginal education focus on the white male administration of colonial institutions. Most are based on printed records and composed by academic historians. The scholars have, at best, brief experience in case study areas. This book, edited by Gillian Weiss, is centred on the narratives of Aboriginal women over three generations in one Canadian family and one Australian family. The women speak about their educational experience in both traditional and dominant cultures. Gillian Weiss provides a history of the Sechelt of British Columbia, and the Adnyamathana of South

Australia, as well as sections on methodology and process. Her editorial collaboration with the six Aboriginal women grew out of a comparative study of the effects of colonization on art of Aboriginal peoples conducted by her husband Tony Rogers of the University of South Australia and Rita Irwin of the University of British Columbia. *Trying to Get it Back* draws on that project and Weiss' own research experience in both Australia and British Columbia.

Weiss introduces the Sechelt people as living in a rainy, forested coastal area. By the 1900s Indian reserves had been marked in their territory. Roman Catholic Oblate priests had established a mission in the 1860s and the Sisters of the Child Jesus a residential school in 1903. During the twentieth century the Sechelt continued living in their villages and fishing salmon or working in the forest industry. Over time the ferry link to Vancouver ended the rural character of Sechelt territory and Euro-Canadian labour competition soon limited job opportunities. The influence of the missionaries declined and residential schooling gave way to integrated public schools. By contrast, five groups of Aboriginal people in South Australia became the Adnyamathana people, the People of the Rocks, as white ranching settlers moved into their territory and took control of food and water supplies as well as the land. The Adnyamathana continued to camp out between sheep stations and carried on with cultural practices, thus avoiding mission schools. However, the non-denominational Protestant mission of Nepabunna, which was established outside traditional Aboriginal territory in 1930 and taken over by the government in the 1970s, did become an educational centre. Although most Adnyamathana "live elsewhere" they now consider Nepabunna "a symbol of [their] relationship to their land" (pp. 11-12).

Weiss makes the life histories of three Sechelt women and three Adnyamathana women the core of the book. The combined experience of Bernie Sound, Valerie Bourne, and Brandi McLeod in British Columbia, and Pearl McKenzie, Pauline Coulthard, and Charlene Tree in South Australia, spans the twentieth century. All the women have read "what has been written and made comments." The resulting text may not completely satisfy participants, but it does present "data...acceptable and useful to indigenous people and academe" (p. 54).

Weiss co-ordinated interviews in which the women talked about memories of childhood, informal learning, schooling, and educating children in both traditional and dominant cultures. The narratives appear in the Aboriginal women's own words speaking

directly to the readers. The women stress Aboriginal women's resistance, resiliency, and continuity in face of colonization. It is interesting to note that the Adnyamathana did not get British Columbia-style Indian reserves. They feel they have experienced less cultural loss over time and are thus less concerned with schools for passing on culture than with using less formal family methods. The Sechelt had a land base but feel missions and residential schools erased traditional culture. They are now concerned to use schools to educate their children on their culture.

The narratives are followed not only with Weiss' summative afterword, but also by a commendable discussion of the video-conference meeting of participants. Through that meeting Sechelt and Adnyamathana women shared experiences of colonization and current efforts to revitalize cultures. Weiss thus pioneers for educational historians a new approach for group discussion on oral history via the technology of video-conferencing.

The conclusions of Weiss and her collaborators on their project about indigenous women, education, and culture deserve to be quoted:

Learning to live well in any one culture takes a lifetime. Finding time for two, as Pearl said with wonderful understatement, is difficult. But the combination of aspects of both is possible as the lives of these six women demonstrate. Over three generations these families have incorporated those aspects of mainstream culture that have seemed to them most desirable and necessary and have retained, or are working to take back, aspects of the traditional that they value...Their identity as Sechelt and Adnyamathana women is not identical to that of their great-great-grandmothers, but perhaps in some ways it is stronger, for they have had to fight for it, to remake it for themselves. [When these women] talk about "trying to get it back" they are not simply expressing a desire to resurrect traditional culture...What they want is to forge an identity and a way of life that incorporates what they can regain and retain of their traditional cultures as well as what they value and find useful in mainstream culture. And there is a third aspect, I think, that consists of a blend of the old and the new that they and their people are constructing now in the present. It is through a process of combining the three into living cultures that their goals will be achieved in the future (pp. 311-12).

There is, however, one area that might be explored further regarding these Aboriginal women and the history of education. Religious women – Roman Catholic Sisters in Canada and Protestant missionary women in Australia – taught the first two generations. Were these women teachers mere assistants to male missionaries? Did they have their own organizations and histories? Did they bargain with patriarchy for scope for their own projects? How did the religious women's culture and history affect the Aboriginal women? The Sisters of the Child Jesus, who taught in British Columbia residential schools, were based in France but encouraged Irish and Aboriginal vocations. Some Carrier women chose to join these Sisters, as Jo-Anne Fiske has pointed out in publications about the Carrier and the Lejac Residential School. The Sechelt women involved in Weiss' project had relatives among the Carrier. Valerie Bourne's mother, Melanie, was a Carrier from Stoney Creek, a sibling of Mary John (pp. 212-16). Although residential school legal cases have closed religious archives to researchers, it is still possible to consult Department of Indian Affairs records. My notes on a letterbook of the Inspector of Indian Agencies in British Columbia for 1914 show that eight Sisters staffed the Sechelt Boarding School, including Sister Henriette (Indian). Were there Adnyamathana women who joined the Protestant women's missionary groups? Are their archives open to researchers?

That said, *Trying to Get it Back* is a great book. Anyone researching indigenous women, education, and culture should read it.

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**Norah L. Lewis. *Freedom to Play: We Made Our Own Fun*. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2002. Pp. 224.**

After a four-year hiatus in constructing books from letters written to early-twentieth-century rural Canadian newspapers, Norah Lewis has brought forth a new addition to her series with