

Coburn, Elaine, ed. 2015. *More Will Sing Their Way to Freedom: Indigenous Resistance and Resurgence*. Halifax: Fernwood Publishing. ISBN: 9781552667804. Pages: 264.

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As they work to trace Indigenous resistance and resurgence in Canada and to argue that colonial-capitalism is a fact but not an inevitability, the dozen chapters in this carefully edited volume make a significant contribution to the Canadian socio-political landscape. As the collection's editor, Elaine Coburn, makes clear in her preface, the issues the contributors consider—politics, economics, culture, technology, activism, research—are treated as personal, political, and practical matters, and “all the chapters emphasize Indigenous voices and perspectives ... whether written by Indigenous or non-Indigenous scholars” (3). While the contributions are not evenly excellent, from Emma LaRocque's (Cree/Métis) foreword to Alex Wilson's (Cree) afterword, there is something to be commended in each of them. If there is a mild critique to be offered, it is that the publisher chose not to include an index, a trend that one sadly observes among other academic publishers.

As it traces the ethical impulse in Indigenous research and pedagogy, LaRocque's introduction is a reflection on the core of her work, “resistance writing and teaching,” and stands as an apt summary of her long and stellar career. Her scholarship forms a cornerstone of Native Studies in Canada, as have her steady moves to deconstruct colonialism in its myriad forms and establish Indigenous presence. I would counter LaRocque's objections to the use of “settler”: on the one hand, she is correct in pointing out that “Indigenous peoples were the original settlers of the Americas” (11). On the other hand, Indigenous peoples uniformly connect their origins to the origin of this land itself; oral traditions consistently depict both land and people coming into being at or near the same time. The *Oxford English Dictionary* notes the oldest meaning of the word settler as “one who settles in a new country; a colonist,” and dates it to 1696, just when Europeans were beginning to colonize the Americas. To my mind, one is either indigenous to or settler of a territory or nation; you can't have it both ways. Overall, there is no way to overstate LaRocque's contributions. If Native Studies came into being because of oppression, LaRocque's strategies have been as much about rebuilding Indigenous cultures and establishing new intellectual traditions even as she has challenged those systems of oppression. “Resistance scholarship,” as she points out, “requires ethical and critical study, engaged research, and intellectual freedom,” characteristics of all the essays in this collection (13). She has lived her mandate that

scholarship must be rigorous but never aloof, and her work has inspired the many scholars who follow her, including those contributing to this collection.

Elaine Coburn provides both the introduction to the book and coauthors a chapter. In the former she traces movements of Indigenous resistance and resurgence, the governing theme for the collection. In the latter and in keeping with the theme, she and Doulas Durst offer a sensitive study of Aboriginal persons with disabilities, setting out the research and realities, and then strategies for change. The rest of the chapters each respond to this theme in meaningful and intersecting ways.

I find those chapters that analyze First Nations cultural responses among the most compelling. In terms of Indigenous oral traditions, Hayden King (Anishinaabe) works to resist generalizations and looks towards specific tribal traditions and stories to revitalize and reimagine healthy Indigenous relationships. As King puts it, the pursuit of Indigenous reconceptualization “might offer Indigenous peoples diverse, unique, but very old renewed visions of emancipation and political relationships” (181). In terms of Indigenous visual arts, Jennifer Adese (Oitpemisiwak/Métis) traces the ways in which Indigenous artists challenge colonial visual imperialism and stereotyping with work that is highly politicized and personal (and varying from the intensely joyful to the heatedly radical). As Adese argues, “If we are pictured as no more than grotesque caricatures ... our earth, air, water and animal relations as less deserving of respect and substantively equal treatment than peoples of European descent, we can be violated, discounted, ignored, commodified and consumed” (131). And, in terms of First Nations writing, Christine Walsh (settler) and Shirley Aarrestad (Cree) offer a poignant portrait of Aboriginal women who have faced incarceration. Through various poems and personal narratives, these collaborators share stories that delineate struggle and resilience in the face of nearly overwhelming disadvantages.

Other notable contributions focus on the socio-political. James (Sa’ke’j) Youngblood Henderson (Chickasaw) traces the experiences of his generation of “the sons and daughters of World War II warriors,” calling them “split headed” people who lived with dual cognitive, language and cultural systems who learned to combat oppression and reclaim seemingly lost rights (53, 50). Other chapters study various First Nations “resistance events” as processes of decolonization, examine the Nuu-chah-nulth peoples’ political economies and Aboriginal economic development trends more widely, trace the Idle No More movement in the light of political theory and decolonizing consciousness, and consider Chief Theresa Spence’s hunger strike as a resonating moment of self-determination. All of them conclude that these developments are only beginnings; much has been done in terms of resistance and resurgence; much remains to be done. Drawing on Lee Maracle, Coburn affirms that we all “have responsibilities for healing relationships with all our relations in the human, animal, natural and spirit worlds. This means that justice is not conceived in the mainstream language of autonomous liberal individual (or

human) rights” (44). This collection of essays goes some distance in reconceiving justice in the light of Indigenous experiences and traditions.