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Winter 2008

**Review of *Contact Zones: Aboriginal and Settler Women in Canada's Colonial Past* Edited by Katie Pickles and Myra Rutherdale**

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Gagnon, Anne, "Review of *Contact Zones: Aboriginal and Settler Women in Canada's Colonial Past* Edited by Katie Pickles and Myra Rutherdale" (2008). *Great Plains Quarterly*. 1386.

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balance of power between the two groups was rarely even and “[t]he process of ‘forming a community’ in the new land necessarily meant ‘unforming’ or re-forming the communities that existed already” (Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*. 1998, #2). Missionaries, government officials, and settlers attempted to transform Aboriginal women by imposing metropolitan ideals of domesticity, sexuality, and work.

Although most of the authors and one of the editors of this anthology can trace their origins to the Canadian West or currently work in western Canada, only two articles deal specifically with the Prairie West. Sherry Farrell Racette’s “Sewing for a Living: The Commodification of Métis Women’s Artistic Production,” in the volume’s first section, examines mid-nineteenth-century Red River Métis women’s successful negotiation of colonialism. These mixed-race women used their knowledge of both Aboriginal and white worlds to play a critical role in the fur trade economy by using their traditional sewing skills to provide clothing for employees of fur trading posts, settlers, and travelers in the Northwest. Other articles in this section show how Aboriginal women used their “in-betweenness” and their writing and performances to correct negative stereotypes of Aboriginal women (Carole Gerson and Veronica Strong-Boag on poet Pauline Johnson) and to speak out for First Nations people (Cecilia Morgan).

The articles in part two by Adele Perry, Robin Brownlie, and Joan Sangster examine the imposition of Euro-Canadian ideals and norms of sexuality, marriage, and work on Aboriginal women. Of particular significance for studies of the Prairie West is Sarah Carter’s “Creating ‘Semi-Widows’ and ‘Supernumerary Wives’: Prohibiting Polygamy in Prairie Canada’s Aboriginal Communities to 1900.” Despite the condemnation of polygamy by government officials and missionaries and their efforts to impose monogamy and reinforce appropriate Euro-Canadian gender roles through various incentive and coercive means, it was the arrival of Mormons in Alberta in the

*Contact Zones: Aboriginal and Settler Women in Canada’s Colonial Past*. Edited by Katie Pickles and Myra Rutherdale. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005. x + 308 pp. Photographs, notes, index. \$95.00 cloth, \$32.95 paper.

The articles grouped in *Contact Zones* examine the racial, class, and gender power relations that developed in nineteenth- and twentieth-century English Canada in the spaces where contact between colonizers and colonized occurred. The repercussions of contact were far greater for Aboriginals since the

early 1890s that brought about comprehensive antipolygamy legislation. Carter provides an interesting cross-border examination of Plains Aboriginal conjugal practices and Canadian and American social and legal responses.

The articles by Jean Barman, Dianne Newell, and editors Rutherford and Pickles grouped in the last section study the complex role of white women in colonialism and how they influenced Aboriginal women's clothing and appearance, their claims to public space, and the construction of "civic, national, and imperial identity" in the Pacific Northwest.

One may quibble with the overrepresentation of articles dealing with Ontario and the Pacific Northwest and the absence of a concluding chapter to bring readers to reflect on the larger structures of colonial rule and thought and how these affected women. Overall, however, the articles are well written and solidly grounded in context and theory, making *Contact Zones* a solid addition to the growing but still limited number of works on colonialism and women in Canadian history.

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