

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

---

Great Plains Quarterly

Great Plains Studies, Center for

---

Fall 2001

**Review of *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision* Edited by  
Marie Battiste**

Dennis Martinez

*Indigenous Peoples' Restoration Network*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsquarterly>



Part of the [Other International and Area Studies Commons](#)

---

Martinez, Dennis, "Review of *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision* Edited by Marie Battiste" (2001).  
*Great Plains Quarterly*. 2197.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsquarterly/2197>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Great Plains Studies, Center for at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Great Plains Quarterly by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

*Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision*. Edited by Marie Battiste. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2000. xxx + 314 pp. Appendices, contributors, index. \$75.00 cloth, \$29.95 paper.

The eighteen essays collected in *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision* provide, finally and in one volume, a substantive and reasonably comprehensive analysis by the first generation of Indigenous scholars of the present and future role of Indigenous Knowledge and the emerging Indigenous cultural renaissance in the global context of neocolonial Western culture and science. The book springs from an International Summer Institute at the University of Saskatchewan on the cultural restoration of oppressed Indigenous peoples held in 1996 and attended by mostly Indigenous scholars from Canada, the US, India, and New Zealand.

This is not yet another book, produced by Western scientists, preoccupied with the current fashion of proving whether Indians were “good” or “bad” land stewards—with Western science analyzing Indians and perpetuating the cognitive imperialism and unequal balance of power that have been the principal cause of Indigenous academic marginalization (as in Shepard Krech’s *The Ecological Indian*). As Asha Varadharajan of India notes, “the confusion of multiculturalism with political correctness, with a mealy-mouthed sop to guilty consciences, has precluded genuine debate. . . . [Indigenous scholars] do not engage in an empty valorization of subjugated cultures; instead, they restore these cultures to history. . . .”

As editor Marie Battiste—a Mi’Kmag educator and professor in the Indian and Northern Education Program at the University of Saskatchewan—writes in the Introduction, “[the book] urges an agenda of restoration within a multidisciplinary context for human dignity and collective dignity of Indigenous peoples.” She has organized the volume around the Medicine Wheel of the Plains tribes, with each of the four directions of the Sacred Circle

Wheel providing an interrelated historical episode in the colonization—and the future, postcolonial cultural and epistemological recovery—of Indigenous peoples: mapping colonialism, diagnosing colonialism, healing colonized Indigenous peoples, and visioning the (postcolonial) Indigenous Renaissance.

Indigenous scholars from Plains tribes are represented by Leroy Little Bear of the Blood tribe of the Blackfoot Confederacy (Alberta) and former Director of the Native American Program at Harvard University, and by James (Sa’Kej’) Youngblood Henderson, Cheyenne (Oklahoma), one of the leading tribal philosophers, educators, and strategists of North American Indians. Henderson’s four essays provide an incisive and far-reaching critique of European colonialism. “Postcolonial Ghost Dancing: Diagnosing European Colonialism” revisits the Plains Ghost Dance, explaining this ceremony of the late nineteenth century not in messianic terms but rather “as a vision of how to release all the spirits contained in the old ceremonies and rites. The dance released these contained spirits or forces back into the deep caves of Mother Earth, where they would be immune from colonizers’ strategies and techniques. . . . In time, through postcolonial ghost dancing, these forces would foster a new vision of Aboriginal renewal, thus restoring the traditional consciousness and order.”

In “Postcolonial Ledger Drawing: Legal Reform” Henderson uses the true account of how the Cheyenne, imprisoned on a reservation in Oklahoma, were given financial ledger books by whites to teach Indians about business accounting; the Cheyenne used the ledger books instead for drawing iconic images of their experiences, ceremonies, and visions. Sa’Kej’ concludes that “Like our ancestors, we need to continue the spirit of ledger drawing on Eurocentric legal texts, explaining why these texts deny our knowledge and heritage and regulate our destiny. We need to dream and realize new visions in the old ways.”

The reader will be assured of engaging and thoughtful discussions by Indigenous scien-

tists of tribal cosmologies and knowledge, current tribal legal reform and education methodologies, as well as some uncommon historical insights into Western colonialism by Third World thinkers like Albert Memmi, Lise Noel, and Franz Fanon.

The volume includes two appendices: "Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of the Heritage of Indigenous Peoples" and "Saskatchewan Declaration of Indigenous Cultural Restoration and Policy Recommendations on Cultural Restoration Developed at the Saskatchewan Summer Institute."

DENNIS MARTINEZ  
Indigenous Peoples' Restoration Network  
Glendale, Oregon