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Review of *Black Eyes All the Time: Intimate Violence, Aboriginal Women, and the Justice System* by Anne McGillivray and Brenda Comaskey

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Black Eyes All the Time: Intimate Violence, Aboriginal Women, and the Justice System. Anne McGillivray and Brenda Comaskey. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999. xiv+200 pp. Notes, references, index. \$55.00 cloth (ISBN 0-8020- 4206-6), \$18.95 paper (ISBN 0-8020-8061-8).

Many books have documented the history of colonization and oppression faced by Aboriginal people in Canada, often within the context of discord between First Nations communities and the prevailing justice system. *Black Eyes All the Time* pushes this analysis to a new and challenging level. Based on a study of twenty-six Aboriginal women interviewed in Winnipeg, this work provides an in-depth and sensitive consideration of the painful topic of intimate violence within Canadian Aboriginal communities.

The women interviewed had all been victims of spousal violence. Quotations from these interviews are effectively interspersed throughout the text. The authors' research findings are presented and interpreted with the aid of a thorough review of academic scholarship respecting both intimate violence and Aboriginal justice issues. Opening with a historical overview of the colonization of Aboriginal people in Canada, the book traces the damaging effects of reserve life and residential schools on Aboriginal people but also questions how this "cultural devaluation" has affected the status and safety of Aboriginal women within their broader community. The authors argue strongly that the current reality of many Aboriginal women cannot be allowed to continue regardless of its roots: "Historical processes help to explain intimate violence in Aboriginal communities but cannot excuse it or justify its continuation."

At the book's core is a consideration of the tension between the collective searching for self-determination and autonomy by all Aboriginal people on the one hand, and the rights of Aboriginal women to be protected from spousal violence and to regain their historical position of community power and status on the other. This study provides some interesting results, especially regarding the view of most women interviewed that punishment by jail is an appropriate sentence for their abusers. As the authors note, this

stands in contrast to previous studies involving Aboriginal women and spousal violence. Despite the work's revealing and depressing personal accounts, the authors provide hope through suggested reforms to the justice system and within Aboriginal communities. By citing examples of apparently successful initiatives such as the Hamilton Abuse Prevention Project in New Zealand and Community Holistic Circle Healing in Hollow Water, Manitoba, the authors propose that a co-ordinated, holistic, and victim-centered approach to intervention and treatment may provide an alternate response to the myriad issues raised by intimate violence.

Black Eyes All the Time stands out as a searching, interdisciplinary discussion of a pressing subject, bridging the fields of history, sociology, criminology, law, and feminist and native studies. As a result, it will be of interest to a wide range of readers including academics, lawyers, judges, students, and employees within government and Aboriginal services. It serves as a new and vital consideration of an obvious problem that cries out for attention and redress. **Ross Gordon Green, LL.M., Melfort, Saskatchewan.**