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Review of "*I Thought Pocahontas Was a Movie*":  
*Perspectives on Race/Culture Binaries in Education and  
Service Professions*. Edited by Carol Schick and James  
McNinch.

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**“I Thought Pocahontas Was a Movie”: Perspectives on Race/Culture Binaries in Education and Service Professions.** Edited by Carol Schick and James McNinch. Regina, SK: Canadian Plains Research Center, University of Regina, 2009. xxi + 191 pp. Notes, references, index. C\$29.95 paper.

This edited volume argues that a race/culture binary lies at the heart of Canada’s ongoing relationship with the descendants of the country’s First Peoples. In looking at the service professions, editors Carol Schick and James McNinch trouble taken-for-granted assumptions based upon racial, cultural, and ethnic difference, arguing that representations of Indigenous peoples as culturally inferior, a trope that has replaced the idea of biological inferiority, is highly instrumental in the social positioning and unequal power relations that exists today in Canadian society. In turn, the editors tie this discussion back to Canada’s colonial history and the social, material, and ideological conditions produced in previous eras.

In comparing “race as biology” to “culture as destiny,” the editors refer to the early 20th-century shift in thinking (in large part, the legacy of early ethnographers) whereby culture rather than race comes to be seen as the determining factor in a people’s fate. Following Australian scholar Aileen Moreton-Robinson (*Talkin’ Up to the White Woman: Indigenous Women and White Feminism*,

2000), who describes the concepts of race and culture as constituting “a priori essential meanings and biological essentialism,” the editors make the case that Canada’s Indigenous peoples continue to be burdened by these ideas in the 21st century.

There is a definite Canadian perspective offered by authors in areas such as education, health care, and law enforcement. Contributors deal with the problems associated with the “management of difference”; for example, Joyce Green’s chapter, “From Stonechild to Social Cohesion,” highlights the fact that ongoing colonialism, racism’s feeding ground, has yet to be sufficiently named in the Canadian prairie context; hence, the job of dismantling it has yet to begin. Contributors also raise serious questions regarding the push to commodify knowledge in the academy. Andrea Smith speaks to this issue in her chapter “Native Studies Beyond the Academic-industrial Complex,” perhaps the most important in the collection given its proffered strategies for countering the domination of the academic-industrial complex and tying the work of decolonization and Indigenous resistance to movement building and collective action for social change at the community level. Smith argues for the need to move past antiracism, or what she describes as “taking power,” and into the realm of movement building for sovereignty and social justice—in other words, “making power.” She points to instances, for example in Latin America, where this work is already under way.

The scope of this book asks the reader to consider the problems associated with current approaches to addressing social injustice and inequality that rely on race (e.g., antiracism) and culture (e.g., cultural competence). This reminds the reader that the service professions remain too often focused on social justice at the level of the service professional, and too often caught up in the mechanics of overcoming ethnic, cultural, and racial difference, while in the process losing sight of to whom and to what we should be accountable, and also of what decolonization truly means. The book is an important opportunity to begin to reflect upon these much larger ideas. **Tracy L. Friedel**, *Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy, University of British Columbia*.