ForeWord Reviews

WOMEN'S STUDIES

Torn from Our Midst: Voices of Grief, Healing and Action from the Missing Indigenous Women Conference, 2008

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978-0-88977-223-6
(July 2010)

It is evident that editors Brenda A. Anderson, Wendee Kubik, and Mary Rucklos Hampton took a great deal of care in compiling and editing *Torn from Our Midst: Voices of Grief, Healing and Action from the Missing Indigenous Women Conference, 2008.* Using source material from the conference proceedings, as well as submissions from numerous participants, they have produced a tangible experience of interrelations among people and ideas.

The book offers a multifaceted and realistically imperfect picture of the societal and cultural contexts in which women—overwhelmingly racially marginalized women—vanish from the lives of their loved ones. No one voice is allowed to dominate, and the editors' choice to allow friction to occur between perspectives and to juxtapose rather divergent points of view creates space for tension. These conflicts of ideology or social location are made the more interesting by their shared proclamation that the targeted murders and unexplained disappearances of Indigenous women must end. And while some have been made experts on the subject through personal tragedies, the varied depths of analysis and of emotional impact expressed herein paint a vivid picture of the community those circumstances have produced.

Anderson et al have arranged the book thematically, encouraging the reader to make use of it as reference well after taking it in cover-to-cover. Organizers of similar conferences would do well to examine this approach as guidance for their own archival or publishing aims. In particular, this volume's inclusion of many oft-unheard voices while remaining concise and relevant is remarkable. The book affords the reader a sense of what it might have been like to participate in the conference and, in so doing, gives the reader an active role in determining its outcomes.

It is also worth remarking that the conference attendees represented interlocking

struggles in Canada and Mexico, and that colonial histories and contemporary economic relationships (NAFTA, e.g.) can be found to produce similar disparities in both countries. Even more fascinating are the ways this text demonstrates a burgeoning international solidarity: by being openly aware of and respectful of difference, and staying committed to the common goals identified through the conference, it seems these participants are building a foundation on which to effect real change.

Important questions arise when reading this collection as a whole: Who will continue to fight for justice in this arena? How are we, as academics, professionals, the media, or simply as fellow humans, complicit in perpetuating the circumstances that produce or allow for the disposability of women? Will we fight to learn and change? Overwhelmingly, the response seems to be yes.

Patty Comeau