

Amanda Gebhard, Sheelah McLean, and Verna St. Denis (eds.), *White Benevolence: Racism and Colonial Violence in the Helping Professions*. Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2022. 256 pages. ISBN 9781773635224. \$28.00 paperback.

White Benevolence: Racism and Colonial Violence in the Helping Professions unpacks how the “interlocking institutions of education, social work, health care and justice” have furthered settler colonialism in so-called Canada (257). Editors Amanda Gebhard, Sheelah McLean, and Verna St. Denis expose “the everyday work of white settler professionals who often profess to support Indigenous peoples yet reproduce colonial narratives that uphold white supremacy” (1). Generatively grounded in the histories, cultures, and landscapes of the Prairie provinces, this volume is a powerful indictment of white benevolence – a “form of paternalistic racism” tied up in Canadian myths of innocence and reliant upon forgetting the settler colonial violence that it has enacted for centuries (1). Authors weave together storytelling, qualitative research, and historical analysis to successfully expose many ways that racism and colonialism manifest beneath a “guise of doing good” (19).

There are, as Willow Samara Allen astutely notes, “everpresent and irreconcilable tensions and risks” (89) inherent to the project of critically examining whiteness. Attempting to understand and challenge the dominance of whiteness can let it take center stage yet again. The danger of not doing so, however, is that whiteness remains an “invisible backdrop” (McLean 39), positioning its own histories, practices, cultures, institutions, and norms as ‘neutral’, ‘natural’, and beyond reproach. White social workers, nurses, teachers, and judges so often evade scrutiny by casting themselves as a solution rather than a problem, as experts who can objectively surveil and intervene into Indigenous, Black, racialized, and poor communities. By casting a critical gaze on these white, middle-class “helpers”, this book denaturalizes settler authority and exposes the violences that operate despite and through pretenses of help. Without denying the hazards or complexities of this undertaking, *White Benevolence* makes a compelling case for the urgency of its orientation. Colonial violence is not just an Indigenous story, St. Denis reminds readers, but the “sons and daughters of colonizers need, even more than us, ... to dismantle your colonial constructs, to own all your history” (quoting Emma LaRocque, 26).

The contributions in this collection are concise – 18 chapters in 250 pages. Although some pieces are stronger than others, this structure allows for a wide range of experiences, perspectives, and areas of inquiry to be given their due. A number of chapters focus on specific professions and sites of encounter and will be of particular

relevance to those learning, working, or struggling within those sectors. Gebhard and McLean focus on white teachers. Sharissa Hantke, Barrie Lavalee and Laurie Harding on white healthcare providers. These essays help unpack how individuals learn and implement wider systemic, structural, and historical patterns of whiteness and colonialism. As Hantke notes, a 'bad apple' understanding of racism in care work positions white professionals in general as innocent, superior, and above reproach while ignoring the widespread nature and deep roots of anti-Indigeneity (179). Individual interventions are clearly not enough, as Jaris Swidrovich makes clear in his own chapter on pharmaceutical care in Saskatchewan, because discrimination is baked into the policies, processes, and structures: evidence-based medicine itself, he argues, is a "synonym for whiteness" (194). At the same time, "institutions do not come into being and take shape without human actors" (255); by reflecting concretely on the professional practices of frontline providers – the things said and unsaid, assumed and projected, enacted and withheld – these authors explore how colonial violence unfolds and how it can be interrupted.

What won't interrupt it, this collection makes clear, are the institutionalized approaches to 'wreckconciliation' (Joyce Green, quoted on 150) so pervasive in the caring professions right now. As Nisha Nath puts it, mainstream equity, diversity, and inclusion frameworks "do little to address systemic racism and ultimately centre the comfort and institutional power of white people" (150). Halvorsen, King, Lorenzetti, Wolfleg, and Haile reject cultural competency interventions that merely teach white professionals about various Others because they "reinforce voyeurism while sustaining white supremacy" (228). These educators developed an anti-racist anticolonial social work training series in an effort to push beyond such superficial moves, and reflect on how race-based caucusing – although met with resistance from white participants – made the learning both more transformative and less harmful.

The chapters analyzing the justice system may seem out of place in a volume ostensibly focused on care work. Given how residential schools and prisons exist "on a carceral continuum" (Van Styvendale, 70), however, their inclusion makes an important point: it exposes the many connections across the spectrum of settler state intervention. Differently situated state actors have often represented the same threat: "Our family feared the social workers and police... we feared being stolen in broad daylight," St. Denis remembers (32-3), or as Maria Campbell wrote decades ago, "how afraid we were of the relief people and the wardens and the Mounties" (quoted in St. Denis, 25)). Gebhard's chapter on the school/prison nexus exposes the relationships between education/discipline and incarceration/criminalization, and the ways that a constellation of "policies, prac-

tices and informal knowledges" in the public school system position Indigenous young people on the prairies as "uneducable public enemies" (105, 111). Timothy Stanley's piece, meanwhile, explores how beliefs about Indigenous people as threats to white landownership, cemented into settler common sense through primary school textbooks, contributed to a climate in which it was possible for the legal system to exonerate Colten Boushie's killer. While "official narratives depicting police officers as benevolent figures charged with the difficult task of managing so-called troubled and vulnerable Indigenous girls" (15) should ring immediately hollow to readers with any understanding of how policing has functioned in this country (see Megan Scribe's chapter if you still need convincing), this collection asks us to bring a similar skepticism to bear on sectors that have better maintained a façade of innocence.

White Benevolence is grounded in the premise that storytelling is a valid and essential methodology – a number of contributors share personal and familial stories, situating their self-reflection in wider sociohistorical frames while insisting that their experiences are an important source of both evidence and theory. S. J. Adrienna Joyce concretely traces white settler privileges through her own family history of land acquisition and racially exclusive citizenship access, and Allen draws on both personal experience and the "historical lineage of white women's positionalities within the settler colonial project" to call on fellow white women to reckon with their imbrication in violence through a feminized rhetoric of care (89). Meanwhile, Heather Carter painfully recounts how her white skin granted access to opportunities and solidarity from state agents that were denied to the rest of her Metis family. Jas M. Morgan reflects on how racist caricatures and scripts permeated and structured an experience of public school that was profoundly toxic. In arguably the strongest piece in the book, St. Denis grounds a rigorous analysis of the history of colonial 'help' in her Métis family's experiences of dispossession, surveillance, and terror.

While effectively demonstrating that the "colonial past remains present" (12), this volume does not fatalistically depict settler dominance as inevitable or uncontested. Nancy Van Styvendale's piece on Indigenous Prairie prisoner organizing centers the powerful theorizing of the late Cory Charles Cardinal to celebrate "models of anticolonial resistance that refuse colonial necropolitics and embody Indigenous laws of relationality on the Prairies" (82-3). Scribe and Morgan each engage with some of the powerful ways that Indigenous peoples are creatively and powerfully resisting colonial violence through story: from women and girls sharing their experiences of police violence as part of a fight to "dismantle oppressive structure in pursuit of liberation" (119), to youth using TikTok to "subvert racist

stereotypes” and “animat[e] their truths” (209). Alex Wilson’s closing interview offers a glimpse into queer and land-based pedagogies and the anti-kyriarchy energetics of Idle No More. While many of the chapters note the distinct forms of racialization and resistance of Black, migrant, and racialized communities, the collection does focus primarily on whiteness and its anti-Indigenous logics, making Shaista Patel and Nath’s collaboration an important intervention: their dialogue engages with the nuances of racialized migrants’ diverse positioning within the academy and in settler colonial contexts more broadly, and gestures to the powerful possibilities of undisciplinedness, solidarity, and “ethical relationship building between Indigenous people, Black people, and other racialized people” (148).

The whiteness analyzed in this collection is primarily middle-class in orientation. While this makes sense given the professions and spaces being interrogated, class could have been more explicitly integrated into the analysis, although St. Denis and Morgan do gesture to some of this complexity. Readers, especially white settlers in these helping professions, may also be left seeking more direction. This collection illustrates any number of harms to recognize and pitfalls to avoid, but is less forthcoming about what “care and repair outside the settler state and outside of cultural scripts of protection and helping” (Allen 99) could actually look like. The most inspiring possibility may be the cross-racial abolitionist organizing which Van Styvendale discusses. With that said, *White Benevolence* is an important contribution to the study of whiteness in the Canadian context, and offers a powerful assessment of an underexamined manifestation of historic and present-day colonialism.

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Kathryn Magee Labelle in collaboration with the Wendat/Wandat Women’s Advisory Council, *Daughters of Aataentsic: Life Stories from Seven Generations*. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2021. 210 pages. ISBN 978-0-2280-0529-2. \$34.95 hardcover.

In July 1907, Eliza “Lyda” Conley Jr. and her sisters, lineal descendants of the Wendat/Wandat (Huron) who were forcibly resettled in Kansas in the 1840s, occupied the Huron Cemetery located in Kansas City, Kansas. With the assistance of local Wyandot community members, the sisters constructed a makeshift structure in order to prevent the sale of the cemetery and the removal of the remains of their ancestors and family members. “Fort Conley,” as the small