



aboriginal policy studies

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aboriginal policy studies Vol. 1, no. 3, 2011, pp. 96-98

This article can be found at:

<http://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/aps/article/view/12214>

ISSN: 1923-3299

Article DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5663/aps.v1i3.12214>

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There is a growing body of historiography about the Canadian West that has described the governance of its Aboriginal people in colonial terms. Renisa Mawani's *Colonial Proximities: Crossracial Encounters and Juridical Truths in British Columbia, 1871–1921* is part of that historiographical tradition, and makes a valuable contribution to mapping the historical strategies of colonial governance and their ongoing legacy. Focusing on Aboriginal and immigrant Chinese communities, Mawani shows that their proximity and interaction in shared spaces—workplaces, urban landscapes, and sites of intimacy—shaped the very nature of the colonial governance of race.

Mawani suggests convincingly that racial governance in this period should be considered as a project of global empire, intended to construct a distinctly colonial society that would see Aboriginal people civilized while marginalizing inassimilable racial groups. Mawani's particular interests lie in the spaces of racial heterogeneity that troubled this societal order—where Aboriginal and immigrant Chinese groups co-existed and intermingled—and in describing the anxieties that these spaces occasioned among colonial administrators. These spaces fostered ambiguities that posed a challenge to the colonial racial order: for example, Aboriginal and mixed-race prostitution fostered anxiety not only that sexual corruption by Chinese men would undermine efforts to civilize the Aboriginal population, but also that “white slavery,” or the slavery of white-resembling mixed-race girls, made the boundaries of whiteness less distinct. Such anxieties, in turn, lent support to specific strategies for governing colonial spaces. These included the segregation of living space (ironically, through distancing Aboriginal people from white communities), and the legal clarification of racial boundaries through the Indian Act, which defined Indian status in terms not only of blood quantum but of way of life. This required Indians seeking enfranchisement to relinquish a lifestyle and, Mawani argues, to accept no less than a cultural death.

Mawani suggests that the racial anxiety of colonial administrators was intertwined with an overt concern for the maintenance of population health, characterized by the viability of a distinct British-Canadian cultural mode. Using the logic Mawani describes, the colonial order that sought to preserve the possibility of Aboriginal assimilation therefore also sought to neutralize the corrupting influence of the inassimilable Chinese. To illustrate this point, Mawani describes industrial salmon canneries in which Aboriginal and Chinese labour coexisted as having a subjugated workforce, but also as places where anxiety emerged over the idea that the presence of the Chinese corrupted Aboriginal labourers and, tellingly, compromised the hygiene of neighbouring white communities. This anxiety played out in various ways, such as the racial segregation of industrial living quarters to limit the

potential for cross-racial intimacy and alliance. Mawani uses this particular example to demonstrate that there was an important incongruity between colonial governance and the global commodity economy: capitalist interest in the maintenance of a low-wage, undifferentiated labour force was not wholly aligned with colonial anxiety over cross-racial intimacy on the cannery floor.

Colonial Proximities is an important contribution to the task of understanding Canadian colonialism in global terms. Mawani's emphasis on intimacy and affect builds particularly upon the work of Ann Laura Stoler (2002), who has argued extensively for attention to such intimacies of empire in the Dutch Indies and, moreover, for intimacy as a basis for comparative histories of colonialism. Mawani's work also belongs within a body of Canadian scholarship in which several historians (Carter 2008; Perry 2001) have highlighted that Canadian governance of Aboriginal people in the West in this period sought to advance a cultural model that belonged self-consciously to a transnational imperial project. Mawani, however, makes a distinct contribution to this literature. While situating post-Confederation British Columbia in the context of empire, she shows that colonialism as applied in the Canadian West was shaped also by localized interracial intimacies and ambiguities, and therefore has an irreducibly local history. Moreover, in de-coupling colonialism and global commodity capitalism, Mawani nuances our understanding of the role of these forces in the histories of Aboriginal and immigrant communities in British Columbia, and implies that colonialism and capitalism have differing (albeit related) legacies that need to be grappled with in the present. This is an important insight for contemporary politics of resistance.

However, *Colonial Proximities* may miss an opportunity to consider the relationship between imperial and national interests in shaping racial governance. Other historians (e.g., Raibmon 2005) have shown that the construction and assumption of Aboriginal identity was motivated by imperial as well as national interests, including overt nation-building as well as international political rivalry with the United States over differing strategies for the civilization of Aboriginal people. While Mawani is highly cognizant of the roles played by national institutions in colonial governance, she might have more explicitly considered whether the colonial anxiety she describes was likewise inflected by political discourse about national interest. This is not to undermine Mawani's argument but, rather, is to suggest that she might have gone further to situate colonial racial governance in a political discourse that has had lasting relevance.

Nevertheless, *Colonial Proximities* should be of high interest to scholars of Aboriginal history, and offers a significant contribution to a burgeoning literature on empire and colonialism in Canada. Mawani ends the book with an account of present-day encounters in which Chinese and Aboriginal communities have emphasized their historical intimacy and have sought to build a shared future through reclaiming past affinities. She suggests that the persistence of these ties is a testament to the limits of a colonial regime's ability to suppress interracial intimacy. If this is the case, then *Colonial Proximities* provides a model for histories seeking to reclaim such ties, and the book has much to offer scholars who seek to imagine futures of reconciliation.

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