

modules in qualitative research. They make specific suggestions for how to assess learning by being clear about expectations, planning, and organizing time. Rather than citing only positive experiences of evaluation, Fenwick and Parsons confront concerns such as those that distance educators have about mis-communication over tone or content, and learning anxiety, as well as the technical issues that are inherent in this mode of learning. As someone who works in a distance format, I smiled when I read that "tone is important, and sometimes our more direct, quick replies can be interpreted as brusque and abrupt" (p. 217). Their attention to real-life issues and concerns will be of particular interest to educators who have read the principles of evaluation but who crave the specifics of how to do it. This is a great book to use in understanding and practicing evaluation. I highly recommend it to educators.

Leona M. English

Department of Adult Education

St. Francis Xavier University

Antigonish, Nova Scotia, CANADA

Battiste, M. & Youngblood Henderson, J.S. (2000). *Protecting Indigenous Knowledge and Heritage*. Saskatoon, SK: Purich Publishing. 314 pages.

Although one of the stated purposes of this volume is to encourage dialogue (p. 291), the polemic nature or the discussion is probably too offensive to encourage open debate. The authors come on a bit too strongly, essentially laying the blame for all cultural dysfunctions in contemporary Aboriginal society on what happened in Europe after the Industrial Revolution. This stance effectively wipes out 500 years of North American philosophical evolution, by inferring that Eurocentric determinism has constrained North Americans from thinking on their own.

This book is heavy reading and obviously targeted at academics, educators, politicians, and policymakers. The contents are delivered in four major parts (plus a conclusion), as follows: a) The Lodge of Indigenous Knowledge in Modern Thought, b) Towards an Understanding of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to Their Knowledge and Heritage, c) Existing Legal Régimes and Indigenous

Knowledge and Heritage, and, d) The Need for Legal and Policy Reforms to Protect Indigenous Knowledge and Heritage.

The first part of the book contrasts the philosophies of the good guys and the bad guys (Aborigines and Europeans), and the latter lose by a long stretch. Apparently all emigrating Europeans and their descendants, including those who founded Harvard University, (the Alma Mater of the authors), believe that most human communities are uninventive except for a few who once resided in Europe. They are driven by an intense desire to know, and their resultant conclusions affect all notions of self, morality, society, and law (pp. 28-29). By contrast the Indigenous world-view appreciates understanding more than classifications and is grounded in an immense knowledge of the environment based on centuries of living close to nature. One wonders, could a similar world-view have once prevailed in Europe before that continent developed the philosophy of Eurocentrism? Many European descendants would probably think so.

Part two of the book targets the repression of Native rights in language, education, religion, and science, evoking familiar themes in complaints such as these: "No research has yielded a successful national or regional approach to curbing Indigenous language loss and to maintaining Indigenous knowledge and language" (p. 83), "the dominant society has a tendency to take elements of Indigenous knowledge out of context and claim them for itself" (p. 87), and, "Eurocentric thought has deprived us of any firm sense of how we fit into the environment and society around us. And we suffer a consciousness of aversion" (p. 104).

In part three of the book, the authors elaborate the loss of Indigenous rights in three chapters dealing with international responsibilities for Indigenous intellectual and cultural property, the Canadian Constitution, and the Canadian legislature. Part four denotes a similar legal contest by posing a series of recommendations to be carried out by governments as means of protecting and promoting Indigenous rights and cultures.

It is useful to underscore that contrary to the book's thesis, Eurocentrism as defined was not always the forte of Europeans, and never of all of the nations resident there. Even today there are many communities in Europe who would not recognize the *Weltanschauung* that is ascribed to them by the authors. My own ancestors, the Dutch Anabaptists, arrived here 130 years ago and brought with them a very *unEurocentric* way of thinking and lifestyle. They lived

according to an uncomplicated cosmology which included respect for the earth by dutifully tilling the soil without adding chemicals. They were socially responsible and were not competitive. They migrated to several different countries to escape persecution – Holland, Prussia, Poland, and Russia, and dwelt in homes built of natural substances like logs, stones, and home-made plaster. Thousands of members of this particular subject still live according to this philosophy in the prairies, in Mexico and in South America. When they emigrated to North America, they were typical of many peasant Europeans who came here only later to be “scape-goated” for the malicious deeds foisted on the unsuspecting First Nations by *some* Europeans who may have been Eurocentric in philosophy. Methinks the brush of the authors takes too wide a stroke.

The substance of the book’s discussion is founded on the premise that all institutional life in North America is currently guided by the philosophical demon of Eurocentrism which is defined as “an imaginative and institutional context that informs contemporary scholarship, opinion and law” (p. 21), but apparently without effect on the thinking of the authors. Their task appears to be to illuminate the essence of Aboriginal thinking but without having been contaminated by their Harvard and Stanford degrees. How can we be sure that their conceptualizations, which are couched in admirable academic prose, represent classical Indigenous thinking? This seems a bit too good to be true.

After being raised in Indian country near Duck Lake, Saskatchewan, and having been a frequent visitor to many Aboriginal communities over the last three decades, I have been privileged many times literally to have sat at the feet of welcoming Indian Elders to learn from them. Based on these very positive experiences, I can honestly say that I have never witnessed nor sensed from them any of the spirit of blame and chastisement that this volume fosters.

If the intended purpose of this book is to stimulate debate by promulgating racism, it has surely succeeded.

John W. Friesen
Faculty of Education and
Faculty of Communication and Culture
University of Calgary
Calgary, Alberta, CANADA