

possible to live these traditions today.

In a jacket comment, Sherman Alexie says he could "smell the rice" in this book.<sup>8</sup> Like Alexie, I, too, "smell the rice" and the water and the forest and, most important, the cedar smoke. *Chi meegwetch dibaajimokwe* – I hope your grandmothers and grandfathers are proud of your work here.

#### Notes

- 1 It is true that when I think of Anishnaebae people I think of them in terms of songs and singing the prayer songs.
- 2 I have heard the Anishnaebae traditional teachers frequently use the English term "carry" to explain how the people were meant to live their responsibilities. For more on this, see "Dear Wynonah," *Native Studies Review* 11, no. 2 (1996): 116–124.
- 3 For more on this, see Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, *Why I Can't Read Wallace Stegner and Other Essays*. See also Carter Revard, *Family Affairs and Tribal Matters*, and Robert Warrior, *Tribal Secrets*.
- 4 I could explain this reference, but I want to leave you all intrigued enough to read (and, it is hoped, buy) the book.
- 5 This is not to forget about other important works such as Jeannette Armstrong's *Slash*, which is clearly about resistance to the contemporary forces of colonialism. It is only to note that that collective action has not been a frequent theme for many other Indian fiction writers.
- 6 I would also like to admit here to having a hard time coming up with what to say after "stolen." Since I am talking here about the skeletal remains of people, neither "goods" nor "artifacts" seemed to be respectful words to use, though I am aware they are the *proper* archaeological or anthropological terms.
- 7 See footnote 2. And buy the book.
- 8 I assume he, too, is talking about the smell of wild rice cooking.

---

Connie Fife (anthologizer). *The Colour of Resistance: A Contemporary Collection of Writing by Aboriginal Women*. Toronto: Sister Vision Press, 1993.

review by Dorinda M. Stahl

It is time to listen.

Without a doubt, this is the strongest and most powerful message derived from Connie Fife's *The Colour of Resistance: A Contemporary Collection of Writing by Aboriginal Women*. The anthology, which features a wide variety of literature in the form of poetry, fiction and non-fiction, discloses much of the anger and pain that many Aboriginal women experience in their lives.

*The Colour of Resistance* demonstrates a brilliant coalescence of traditional oral storytelling and contemporary literary tools that are combined and used as an unique form of expression by the Aboriginal women featured in the anthology. The various contributors use this newly contrived medium as a way of expressing themselves and asserting their reflections on themes and issues central to their lives as Aboriginal women. It is this notion of integrating the traditional with the contemporary, and the Aboriginal with the colonial, that is clearly one of the most creative and resourceful aspects of the work. As Fife herself articulates in the foreword:

Within the pages of this anthology are words that carry their own life, having been birthed through the voices of Indigenous women who have chosen to reinvent how we resist, how we refuse to be silenced, and how we use contemporary tools to express old beliefs in order to lay the seeds for future generations. . . . We have found that the written word does not have to be wrapped in the thoughts of the colonizer, but rather can convey the resilience of our survival.  
[p. 2]

The work consists of three separate, yet interrelated sections. The first section, which focuses exclusively on "Poetry," brings to light themes such as the misrepresentation of First Nations people in museums, the misuse and abuse of First Nations people in the English language, as well as the misinterpretation of First Nations people in "history." The second section of the anthology, entitled "Fiction," communicates particular versions of traditional stories from First Nations culture such as the story of the vision quest and the story of sky woman. The final section, "Articles and Non-Fiction," introduces themes such as homosexuality and AIDS in the Indian community and offers, from the Aboriginal women's perspective, the truth regarding severely misunderstood historic and contemporary issues such as the consumption of alcohol.

The time to listen is now.

In the spirit of this message, I felt it would not be appropriate to attempt to summarize *The Colour of Resistance* in my own words but, rather, for Connie Fife and the Aboriginal women of the anthology to continue the dialogue initiated in their work:

*The Colour of Resistance* is a testament to our lives, a re-invention of our survival. In this book, Native women proclaim that "settler" literature is no longer acceptable as representative of our own creative process, nor does its confines do justice to our journey through the history of colonialism in our homeland. . . . *The Colour*

*of Resistance* has been a personal journey for me, one that will remain with me for a long time. I am grateful to each writer, each sister who sent in material and offered words of encouragement and hope. Each and every one of you made this collection possible; you are why *The Colour of Resistance* was born. Walk in beauty. [p. 3]

---

James (Sakej) Youngblood Henderson. *The Mikmaq Concordat*. Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 1997

review by Laurie Meijer Drees

Relations between northeastern maritime First Nations and the French fishers, explorers, traders, missionaries and colonists who arrived to the area in the sixteenth century have been analyzed by numerous scholars. Ethnohistorians including L.F.S. Upton, Harold F. McGee, Ralph Pastore, Calvin Martin and, more recently, Ruth Holmes Whitehead, Bruce Bourque and Harald Prins have attempted to describe the intra- and cross-cultural relations of this early contact period.<sup>1</sup> Of these works, Whitehead's has been the most innovative in its use of oral traditions and material culture from the region in an attempt to offer a new perspective on this past. Henderson's work "The Mikmaq Concordat" is a noteworthy addition to these existing studies, because it also attempts to challenge the standard approach to Algonkian history through use of a multidisciplinary analysis.

In his work, Henderson attempts to present a "new" interpretation of some of Mikmaq history. Specifically, he seeks to correct previous Eurocentric histories of Mikmaq-French relations and to "decolonize" the historical documents pertaining to this Mikmaq past. In doing so, Henderson seeks to "validate Mikmaq worldview and knowledge in its own right, without interference of Eurocentrism" (p. 24) by synthesizing Aboriginal experiences and Eurocentric thought into a new perspective. Henderson desires to give Mikmaq views of this history precedence over the European view, an idea ethnohistorians have struggled with since Calvin Martin openly challenged the ability of Euroamerican historians to write history from an Aboriginal perspective.<sup>2</sup> Henderson's ultimate aim is to define a "just order between the European discoverers and the Aboriginal peoples" as a way to remedy damages done to Aboriginal peoples by colonialists (p. 25). To accomplish this goal, Henderson combines information from oral tradition – the Putus traditions of the Sante Mawiómi – and European accounts.