

Canada is very much determined by a lack of understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal culture, on the part of "whitestream" Canada and that there is a very uneven power structure involved here.

Somewhat of a groundbreaking book, *We Are Not You* is most difficult to read, as Denis himself admits in his discussion of poststructuralist theory. A basic understanding of the systemic racism Aboriginal people face on a daily basis, of the Indian Act, and of shamanic traditions might help the reader make better sense of some of this book. It is thought provoking and should make "whitestream" Canadians look more closely at the institutional arrangements within their country.

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Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Astchee). *Never without Consent: James Bay Crees' Stand Against Forcible Inclusion Into an Independent Quebec*. Toronto: ECW Press, 1998.

review by James B. Waldram

*Never without Consent* is an extraordinary book. Its intent is very simple: to set out the position of the Cree of James Bay on the issue of Quebec sovereignty. It is based on an earlier work, a massive and highly technical report called *Sovereign Injustice: Forcible Inclusion of the James Bay Crees and Cree Territory into a Sovereign Quebec* (1995). This report was a largely inaccessible, primarily legal study of the various issues surrounding Quebec sovereignty as they were perceived by the Cree. In *Never without Consent*, the Cree have produced a highly readable version that is sprinkled with poignant political cartoons, photographs, and excerpts from speeches by leaders such as Matthew Coon Come. This book opens up the Cree position to Canadians as a whole, and does so in a way that is possibly without parallel in Canada.

The main argument that the Cree present is that their territory cannot be included within the boundaries of an independent Quebec without their consent. The book takes stands on some of the most fundamental issues plaguing the debate, including that a unilateral declaration of independence would be illegal. In doing so, the Cree must walk a fine line. They appear to acquiesce to Canadian law and the Constitution when it benefits them, while maintaining their position that the Cree are themselves a self-determining people. This apparent contradiction is characteristic of the discourse on Aboriginal self-determination in general, and it would be safe to infer that the Cree (and other Aboriginal peoples) do not see any contradiction at all. Nevertheless, it is amusing to see the Cree in effect

defending the Canadian Constitution so vigorously given the maudlin response of Canada to the issues raised in the book. Post-modern politics indeed!

This is a book that is relevant to non-Aboriginal as well as Aboriginal Canadians. The Cree are not afraid to take on the issues and to take a stand. They address the complex issue of who constitutes a "people" within the context of United Nations declarations, and ask how the French-speaking people of Quebec can be a sovereign "people" while, in the view of the sovereigntists, the Cree cannot. The book argues that Quebec is prepared to use violence to establish and maintain control over the current territory, a strategy that the Cree abhor. Indeed, the Cree resent the implication made by the media and the sovereigntists that they themselves will declare "war" if Quebec attempts to usurp their territory without consent. The book also challenges the concept of a simple-majority referendum and argues that the sovereigntist movement is playing loose with their own rules to achieve their desired outcome. Indeed, the book is a scathing critique of the sovereigntist movement in Quebec that is relevant to all Canadians, both sovereigntists and federalists alike.

In a concluding chapter, the book presents "110 Cree sound bites about Quebec secession," wherein they address in succinct fashion various issues raised throughout the book. For those pressed for time, this chapter lays out the Cree position clearly and informatively, and may be the single most valuable aspect of the book. Tired of having their views misconstrued and mischaracterized, the Cree end this book leaving little room for misunderstanding.

I am always frustrated by corporately authored books (someone must have actually written the text), and the volume clearly sets out the position of the Cree as a political entity with little attempt to assess and present diverging individual views (for instance, a small number of Cree voted against the separatist agenda. Who are they? Why did they support Quebec sovereignty?) These issues in no way detract from the main message of the book, however, and we must always remind ourselves that all governments produce corporately-authored position papers.

In taking such an informed and forceful stand, the Cree have presented a volume that is a mandatory read for all those interested in the future of Canada. The volume easily crosses discipline boundaries in its appeal: scholars in Native Studies, anthropology, political science and history will find the book especially useful.