Book Review/Compte rendu

Lynne Davis, ed., *Alliances: Re/Envisioning Indigenous-non-Indigenous Relationships*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010, 426 pp. $37.95 paper (978-1-4426-0997-6)

"We are all here to stay." Thus begins the 2005 statement between the British Columbia government and First Nations leadership in the province. It is certainly the orientation of Davis' edited collection. Across a wide range of case studies and reflective essays, the contributors try to envision better relations of cooperation as answers to the question: How do we live well together?

A quick perusal of the table of contents might lead one to believe that this is a book on social movements and movement coalitions. Instead, *Alliances* is a much richer trove and the University of Toronto Press is to be commended for its willingness to publish such a large and varied text. Lynne Davis, a faculty member in Trent University's Indigenous Studies department, has put together 24 essays covering a wide gamut of indigenous and nonindigenous ways of reimagining relations. *Alliances* is a smorgasbord of loosely connected case studies. It can be sampled repeatedly over time and adds up to a satisfying intellectual meal.

In the introduction, Davis describes three types of current relations between indigenous and nonindigenous peoples: as partners walking side-by-side, in paternalistic governance, and where indigenous partners take the lead. Relating is not as simple, of course, and the case studies are vital to identifying some of the complex tensions. For the most part, "the authors collectively point to the failure of imagination in Euro-Canadian society to move beyond its colonial past" (p. 14). Central to living well together is decolonizing. Systematic inequality cannot be overcome merely through relations between individuals or groups. Canada was created as and remains a settler society, growing out of appropriation (sometimes "legally") of indigenous lands. That we are all here to stay does not mean we simply move forward from existing positions that privilege those already advantaged by those appropriations and their consequences. As one community member explained what she learned while trying to be an ally over Aboriginal fishing disputes, "It really was the white people's job to take care of their own racism" (p. 105). Others came to understand that they had to acknowledge colonialism, and un-

learn habits and attitudes, and challenge institutional manifestations of racism and paternalism.

Alliances originated in Davis' SSHRC-funded research and a conference held in 2006 from which many of the contributions are drawn. The chapters in *Alliances* range across personal reflections, individual accounts of praxis, philosophical treatises (from both Euro-Western and indigenous epistemes), and social science case studies of alliances and attempted alliances. Examples include Canadian cases such as controversies at Grassy Narrows and Caledonia, the environmentalist-indigenous coalitions on the British Columbia coast, and the labour-church-indigenous work in Owen Sound. Other examples come from Guyana, a US Hopi legal aid centre, the account of developing an American Indian Studies program in Virginia, and Native American-Bulgarian artistic collaboration.

Some chapters are uncomfortable to read, such as Christian and Freeman's painfully honest frustrations with each other across years of attempts to bridge the colonized-colonizer roles into which they had been socialized. In other chapters, theory and practice intermingle, as in Barker's essay in which he draws from Taiaiake Alfred and Albert Memmi. This chapter is an excellent starting point for undergraduates as Barker depicts trying to be an ally. Similarly, FitzMaurice writes, "I became a white person in 1990," narrating his growing awareness of his white socialization. Decolonization is ongoing, insists this Native Studies professor in a chapter that should be read *especially* by those who think themselves well on the way. It is not the first time that I realized that I am not very radical in my antioppressive efforts, and still just too of a well-meaning liberal. Jafri's case study of antiracist coalition work points out the consequences for praxis under liberal and critical frameworks. "Colonization and white supremacy do not subordinate people of colour and Indigenous peoples in the same ways" (p. 264). Re/Envisioning relations also means overcoming ethnocentrism, including the bias toward academic knowledge and Euro-Western understandings of the world. Gkistedtanamoogk demonstrates this without declaring it in "Finding our Way despite Modernity."

Unfortunately, I found the details of each contribution blurring together as I combed the book. It would have been helpful if each chapter had had an abstract to help the reader recall specific content. As I hope the above summaries indicate, the contributions are quite loosely collected under the broad framework of re/envisioning relations; as is often the case, the variability is both a problem and a benefit as it enables diverse angles on the revisioning quest. Nevertheless, I began to lose track of what I could learn, other than that I still have far to go (and am glad

to be reminded). Davis and Shpuniarsky provide something of an overview in chapter 20. They highlight three key lessons about indigenous/nonindigenous coalitions: such coalitions are microcosms of colonial relationships; they are sites of learning and transformation; they are also sites of pain. Reading much like a traditional conclusion, the chapter is not located at the end of the book as is usual, which further emphasizes the ongoing process of discovery and re/envisioning relations. Gratefully, the final chapter is uplifting. After all, we are all here to stay, so a book like *Alliances* becomes a useful resource. It will be of value in the areas of Canadian studies, social movements, race and ethnic studies, and political sociology. Chapters could also be used in social inequality and even introductory sociology courses. The readability makes it appropriate for undergraduates as well as social activists, while it is challenging enough for graduate students and faculty.

The King's University College Randolph Haluza-DeLay

Randolph Haluza-DeLay is an associate professor of sociology at The King's University College in Edmonton Alberta. He is co-editor of *Speaking for Ourselves: Environmental Justice in Canada* (UBC Press, 2009) and conducts research on environmental and antiracism social movements. He is vice-chair of the Centre for Race and Culture in Edmonton