

Chapter 24

Gender, Sovereignty, and the Discourse of Rights In Native Women's Activism Joanne Barker



Questions for Critical Reading

1. Fundamentally, the Indian Act is a repressive piece of legislation, but at times it has also been used by Aboriginal people and groups to protect their status. How have Indigenous women used it to their advantage?
2. Barker argues that, ultimately, the 1983 and 1985 amendments failed to enact any substantial change for Aboriginal women. What issues and ideas informed this conclusion?
3. Pick a contemporary Aboriginal issue (land claims, residential schools, poverty, violence, etc.) and consider how the issue is “gendered.” Why is that particular issue important to Aboriginal women?
4. Why does Aboriginal feminism differ from the other second wave feminist movements discussed in this volume? How are they the same?

List of Primary Sources

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- “If only we could have our stories told.” Poitras, Jane Ash. Mixed Media. 2004.
http://collectionscanada.gc.ca/pam_archives/index.php?fuseaction=genitem.displayItem&lang=eng&rec_nbr=3949060&rec_nbr_list=3949060
- “The Revenge of Pocahontas.” Walker, Jason. Poster. 2006.
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- “Three Mohawk Women at the Base of the Joseph Brant Memorial.” Shelley, Niro. c.1991.

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http://collectionscanada.gc.ca/pam_archives/index.php?fuseaction=genitem.displayItem&lang=eng&rec_nbr=3804963&rec_nbr_list=3804963
- “Two Aboriginal Women Working at the old Nursing Station.” Photograph. 1975.
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- “Indian Treaties Revised Map.” Map. 1977.
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- “We palavered...” Norris, Len. Drawing. 1974.
http://collectionscanada.gc.ca/pam_archives/index.php?fuseaction=genitem.displayItem&lang=eng&rec_nbr=2869901&rec_nbr_list=2869901

Suggested Videos and Websites

- Finding Dawn (NFB film)
www.nfb.ca/film/finding_dawn
- Assembly of First Nations
www.afn.ca/Assembly_of_First_Nations.htm
- Indian Act Denies Women and Children Status Unfairly
http://owjn.org/owjn_2009/jasons-test-submenu-page/249
- Bill C-31
<http://www.sicc.sk.ca/archive/saskindian/a85oct09.htm>