

BOOK REVIEW

***Feminism, Law, Inclusion: Intersectionality in Action.* Gayle MacDonald, Rachel L. Osborne and Charles C. Smith (eds.). Toronto: Sumach Press, 2005; 254 pages; ISBN 1-894549-45-7; \$28.95 (paper).**

This book presents a collection of essays that address topics relating to "women and the law." In an effort to move beyond gendered essentialism, the editors have focused the papers around the theme of intersectionality, arguing that a fully gendered analysis of law includes "race, sexual identity, Aboriginal identity and disability" (10). Two introductory chapters, one by the editors and the other by Rebecca Johnson, lay out the intersectional landscape both in regards to legal battles and activism, and theoretical shifts in feminist scholarship. The substantive chapters, written by a range of academics, activists and those working in the legal system, are divided into three sections: Theory in Action, Organizations in Action, and Law in Action. They focus on legal issues relating to gender, race, Aboriginal identity, sexuality and sexual orientation, as well as women in the legal profession, judicial impartiality and international human rights.

A great strength of this book lies in its focus on intersections of identity and experience, although at times it falls short of fully encompassing the spheres outlined in the introduction. For example, there is no chapter on class or disability. Having said that, this book is admirable in how it pushes the limits of gendered analysis beyond an additive approach that one that is more integrative. In this sense, the chapters fully grapple with intersectionality. At the same time, the book does not revolve around a simplistic rejection of essentialism; rather the editors have acknowledged that common experiences can be used as a strategy of resistance. This theme is particularly well articulated in the chapter by Rebecca Johnson.

The sections themselves - on theory, organizations and law - illustrate the axes in which feminist legal reformers must work. Too often we have looked to only one of these axes and feminist legal activism is replete with example of the unintended consequences of legal reforms that did not account for these particular intersections. For this reason, and because it focuses on Canadian legal cases, *Feminism, Law, Inclusion: Intersectionality in Action* would be a useful addition to a course on women and the law, especially for those in a law school looking to move beyond jurisprudential analyses of case law.

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