

## BOOK REVIEWS

Adams: Howard: *Prison of Grass: Canada from a Native Point of View*. Revised Edition, 1989. Saskatoon: Fifth House Publishers, 208 pp. ISBN: 0-920079-51-2. Paper, \$18.95.

Howard Adams's *Prison of Grass* first appeared in 1975, a scant seventeen years ago. To many observers of Canada's contemporary Native affairs scene, however, 1975 properly belongs to another century, a distant era when the taint of the infamous "White Paper" was still evident and the prospect of entrenched Aboriginal rights and of self-governing First Nations was little more than a dream. Yet on the eve of the national referendum to decide the fate of the Charlottetown constitutional accords, prominent politicians have been speaking authoritatively and convincingly about just how far things have come in this country. And perhaps justifiably so: with independent Native participation having supplanted the customary practice of proxy representation by DIA officials, Ovide Mercredi and other Native leaders came to the table in their own right, negotiating with the country's First Ministers for the means to end generations of Canada's colonial domination of its Aboriginal peoples.

That domination, and particularly its insidious effects on the culture and psychology of Indians and Métis, provides the motif of *Prison of Grass*. Part autobiography and part history told from a Native perspective—Adams is a Saskatchewan Métis—the author examines the "intersections" with colonialism of his own experience and those of Aboriginal peoples more generally in an effort to "unmask the white supremacy" that pervades the Native sense of self and collective identity (1989:6). When it first appeared, the book received so-so reviews for its historical scholarship and for its tendency to over-generalize about the commonalities of Native cultures and expectations. Nowadays the value of a Native history less burdened by the cast of Eurocentrism is widely recognized, the craft of writing such history well advanced, as Olive Dickason's *Canada's First Nations* (1992) amply attests. But whatever its shortcomings as a work of history *per se*, Adams's book stands as an early and valuable commentary on the connections between historiography and colonial context and as a challenge to the political "truism" that history belongs to the victor alone.

Notwithstanding its mediocre reception as a piece of alternative Native history, the first edition of *Prison of Grass* caused a sensation nonetheless, in part because of its radical critique of the enduring racist and capitalist underpinnings of Canadian colonialism and the ineffectual Native leadership spawned by that system, in part for its concluding chapters demanding

liberation (de-colonization) by means of revolutionary struggle. Native writers in Canada were rare enough at the time, slightly less so now. But this was not Harold Cardinal arguing for reforms because of the evident failure of federal Indian policy. It was more like Pierre Vallières in FLQ incarnation, an insightful attack against pervasive “Uncle Tomahawk-ism” and a programme to build red nationalist consciousness, an intensely angry polemic against the established order of oppression and an impassioned plea for nothing short of revolutionary change. Adams’s many political and rhetorical debts to like-minded liberationists of the sixties, among them Franz Fanon, Malcolm X, and the Black-power advocates at Berkeley where he first became cognizant of his own Native identity, are evident throughout. Whatever its merits as history, its politics were clear enough.

Which brings us back to the Charlottetown accord and to events preceding it, the maneuvers and negotiations and compromises and confrontations that have gone on in the fourteen years between the first and second editions of Adams’s book and that together comprise the most current chapters in the story of Native-White relations in Canada. Given his track record the first time out, it would be wonderful to have the author’s views on developments in the most recent period. Has his thinking changed about the interests Native leaders now represent, about the links between cultural revival and nationalist consciousness, about social and economic separation, or is he holding fast to his mid-seventies analysis? And what about the conception of Aboriginal self-determination as an alternative to the revolutionary liberation that formed so central a part of the original argument? Unfortunately, Adams does not give us even the slimmest of clues in this regard, making only a few minor editorial revisions to the original text instead of adding a new chapter or even a revamped preface that updates his views on the more critical of these questions. As a result, the main accomplishment of the second edition is to call attention to the historical value of the first—a value found in its application of a radical political agenda to Native issues at a time when few, if any, viable alternatives for real change were at hand.

*Prison of Grass* is worthwhile for anyone who has yet to read it. But the new edition adds practically nothing to the arguments made in the seventies, surely a disappointment for those familiar with the original book and looking to the revised edition for a more up-to-date statement.

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1975 *Prison of Grass: Canada From the Native Point of View*. Toronto: General Publishing.

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1992 *Canada's First Nations: A History of Founding Peoples From Earliest Times*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart.

Buckley, Helen: *From Wooden Ploughs to Welfare: Why Indian Policy Failed in the Prairie Provinces*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992. ix + 209 pp. ISBN 0-7725-0893-7. Cloth, \$34.95.

With this book Helen Buckley is attempting to make Indian history more accessible to mainstream Canadians who too easily accept high unemployment and poverty conditions among the Aboriginal population. Her purpose is to provide an answer to those who might say, "My ancestors came to this country with nothing and were able to make a good life for themselves. Why can't Indians do the same?"

Accordingly, the tone of the book is somewhere between that of a research article, and a meeting of a church social action committee. It is a short book which presents a thumbnail sketch of the history of treaty Indians in western Canada. This history lesson is used to support the author's argument that only when Indians have real control over their own affairs, supported by vastly increased government expenditures on economic development, will Indian people as a group become a successful part of Canadian society.

Buckley's argument goes something like this. (My apologies to the author for this over-simplification.) Treaties on the prairies were pretty much a sham, hastily carried out, with little room for negotiation. Following the signing of the treaties, Indians were not given the assistance they needed to make the transition to an agricultural economy. As time went on government policy became more rigid and controlling, and was dominated by a combination of harsh paternalism and a desire to avoid spending money.

The “wooden plough” in the book’s title is a reference to the unwillingness of the Canadian government to provide funding or permission for the purchase of improved agricultural equipment. Consequently, Indian farmers were prevented from participating in the agricultural revolution which took place on the prairies during the 1900s.

Over the period from the signing of the treaties until the 1950s Indians suffered from not-so-benign neglect. The promise of Indian education was never fulfilled, children endured harsh conditions in poorly funded residential schools, Indian culture was suppressed, and Indian agents and teachers justified their efforts by supporting a favoured few in the schools, churches and in government administration, creating a small Indian elite.

This approach reflected the prevailing racism of Canadian society. When Indians tried to enter into the work force or the social life of the country they encountered personal and institutional racism. This caused them to become more defensive, more isolated in their Reserves, and resulted in reduced opportunities in education and employment.

After the 1950s, health and education services were improved, increasing the Indian population dramatically and inducing Indians in northern areas to settle in permanent villages. Up until this time there had been a market for unskilled labour in rural areas which Indians could take advantage of. However, this labour market collapsed in the 1950s and 1960s. With a growing population, few jobs, and little or no investment in economic development, Indian people were forced to migrate from the Reserves to the cities in increasing numbers. However, there were also few jobs for unskilled and under-educated Indians in the cities. Welfare dependency in both the Reserves and urban areas became a fact of life, along with attendant social problems.

Government programs and expenditures for Indians increased dramatically during the 1960s and 1970s, but without adequately addressing the key issue of economic development. Indian Bands were increasingly given responsibility for administering government programs, but they were not given authority to design and control the programs or to define and manage their own forms of government. Some improvements occurred in areas such as education and social services, and an increasing number of Indians were employed, both on and off Reserves. In the 1980s government began for the first time to give serious attention to Indian economic development. The vast majority of the Indian population, however, remained unemployed, and social problems persisted. Government refused to give real power to the Indians.

Buckley identifies five major constraints to Indian development: the low

priority placed on economic development, ineffective programs, dependency, exclusion of Indians by White society, and the quality of the stewardship of Indian resources by the Department of Indian Affairs. She proposes that four major strategies are required: support for Indian self-government, economic development, a poverty strategy and an urban strategy.

Buckley concludes by arguing that the best hope for improvement of the situation is an approach based on Indian self-government and massive expenditures on economic development. She argues that such expenditures would be cost-effective by reducing duplication, eliminating ineffective government-run programs, and reducing social costs. In any case, she argues that Indian people are owed such assistance because of the poor treatment they have received from Canada over the past 100 years. Through this approach, Indian people would achieve greater success and would be able to become fully a part of Canadian society. Examples of how Indians would fare in charting their own future can be seen in the success of the James Bay Cree, Dakota-Ojibwa Child and Family Services and other Indian governments and organizations.

The general line of argument presented by Buckley will not be new to most readers of this journal, although she brings a few new twists and pieces of information to the discussion. She has attempted to incorporate recent research, and she makes good use of a recent book by Sarah Carter (1990). She also appears to have done some of her own sleuthing, and in the endnotes includes references to personal communications.

However, there are several problems with the book. First, in her desire to be an advocate for Indians, Buckley has passed very lightly over the problems which have emerged within Indian communities and organizations. While she does recognize these problems, she views them only as the consequence of the colonial Indian Affairs regime. She also appears not to recognize any potential dangers in Aboriginal self-government. Her examples of success are often undermined by actual experience, as in the case of the Dakota-Ojibway Child and Family Services Agency, which has been severely criticized in a recent inquest report. She wrote the book well before this inquest took place, but there have been warning signs in other Aboriginal-run organizations of which she should have been aware.

The tendency of Buckley, and other advocates of the Aboriginal self-government cause, to ignore the problems encountered on the road to self-government undermines their argument. While it may be correct that the problems of emerging Aboriginal institutions stem in large part from the colonial past, at what point do Aboriginal organizations take responsibility for their failures as well as their successes? We cannot in one breath say

that a major obstacle to progress is the failure to give authority and responsibility to Aboriginal leaders, and in the next say that whenever responsible Aboriginal leaders have problems it is not their fault. To do so is to continue to treat Aboriginal organizations as pawns of the federal government. Advocates of Aboriginal self-government would do better to define the forms which self-government can take, the problems associated with these forms, and ways of addressing these problems.

A second issue which the book raises is the assimilation/isolation dichotomy. Buckley suggests that the isolation of Indians on Reserves as wards of the federal government has been a major part of the problem. Then again, she seems to be sympathetic to the arguments against the 1969 *White Paper* policy which would have eliminated Reserves and special Status. These two points of view are, at least superficially, contradictory, but she doesn't attempt to resolve the issue. What seems to be closest to her own point of view is that Reserves and special Status are acceptable so long as they are somehow incorporated into the Canadian system. If one accords Reserve governments greater powers while helping them develop economically, this will improve local services and reduce dependency. These changes will, in turn, facilitate greater participation of Indians in the social and economic life of the country.

A third issue for readers is the general tone and style of the book. As a wide-ranging overview of a large body of information, the book attempts to move quickly, picking out key bits of information to support the general argument. Many summary statements are made about the successes of various types of programs, or some of the factors which have affected Indian development. Within the scope of the book Buckley does not have time to explore these issues at length. Perhaps this is inevitable in a book intended for a general readership and covering as much ground as this one. However it gives one a sense that it is all still a bit undigested.

In sum, this is a book which makes an ambitious attempt to synthesize the history of Indians on the prairies in a way which will be understood and accepted by the Canadian public. Not exactly a summary of research, and not exactly a policy statement, the book is particularly strong in describing the failure of the Canadian government to provide economic development assistance to the Indian people over the years. While raising many interesting issues, it does not attempt to explore these issues in detail and avoids some of the fundamental questions concerning Aboriginal self-government.

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Carter, Sarah

1990 *Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Burnham, Dorothy K.: *To Please the Caribou: Painted Caribou-Skin Coats Worn by the Naskapi, Montagnais, and Cree Hunters of the Quebec-Labrador Peninsula*. Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 1992, xiv + 314 pp., foreword by Adrian Tanner. Paper, ISBN 0-88854-396-4, \$35.00. Cloth, ISBN 088854-399-9, \$60.00.

This is a classic example of a monograph produced from research on ethnographic collections in museums. As a longtime curator of the Textile Department at the Royal Ontario Museum (which owns fourteen examples of this striking spiritual and artistic tradition), author Dorothy Burnham is certainly well-qualified in the area of ethnographic textiles and dress, but she makes no claim to being an ethnologist. She has produced an incredibly detailed examination of what is acknowledged as one of the most significant cultural objects produced by the Aboriginal peoples of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula.

Having studied many of the one hundred and fifty known painted caribou skin coats scattered in museum collections across North America and Europe, Burnham presents sixty of these elaborately decorated garments. From the work of Frank G. Speck and other ethnographers it is known that this type of clothing was originally produced for ceremonial purposes to give power to the hunter and to honour the caribou which was the staff of life for the Naskapi, Montagnais, and Cree peoples of the region. Each coat treated in the book has been photographed; construction and painted design details for each accurately sketched; and catalogue data provided. The catalogue in the second half of the book is arranged chronologically beginning with the finely executed coats dating from the 1700s and ending with the less well painted examples produced as late as the 1930s. Also included are general chapters on the history, mammalogy, construction, sewing, applied decoration, design layout, colours, painting

tools, and design motifs associated with these marvellous cultural products.

Burnham argues that the painted caribou skin coat was not simply a small scale craft, but rather demonstrated the "breath-taking workmanship" of a major art tradition. European influence on the shape of these garments is apparent, but it is shown to be related to visual outline only since these coats were neither cut nor made up in the same manner as the non-Indian fashions which they superficially resemble.

Although an excellent example of its type, this book clearly shows the inherent limitations on the study of museum collections. As is typical with much museum ethnographic material (Reynolds, 1970:10) the garments under study have a frustrating lack of reliable data on provenance, history, and symbolism associated with them. The author cannot be blamed for this state of affairs; it is the fault of the original private collectors and/or the museums who added them to their holdings attending only to their striking visual properties while neglecting their crucial informational context. As a result, this book is strong on description of the physical objects, for example identifying stitch counts and reproducing measured diagrams of significant elements of the painted designs, but it is weak in the area of symbolic interpretation. This is in contrast to the specific identification of symbolic elements employed in beadwork of the Plains peoples or in the two- and three-dimensional art of the Northwest Coast (cf. Lyford, 1979; Barbeau, 1990).

This is understandable given the fact that designs were first dreamed by a hunter and then passed on to his wife who painted them on the coat, possibly with little understanding of their meaning. Burnham recognises that it is next to impossible to interpret the meaning of these designs in the absence of solid ethnographic reporting. However, an attempt to argue that one stemmed triangle design "must surely be interpreted as a flower" (p.91) is a dangerously ethnocentric assumption without data of any description to back it up. On the other hand, she has used ethnographic sources to identify the importance of the triangular back gusset as the symbolic centre of the coats representing the Magical Mountain where the Naskapi believed the Lord of the Caribou lived (p.13).

Another shortcoming is Burnham's failure to address the significance of the fact that some of these coats seem to have been manufactured for the ethnographic trade. Other than noting this fact, she makes no real attempt to examine the importance of a clear divergence in motives for production and the consequent implication for the meanings of these garments. She merely adds the European-purchased coats uncritically to the Native-worn series (e.g. p.135). This approach should be questioned if motives have any relationship to meaning.

Despite these minor shortcomings, Dorothy Burnham has certainly made the most of the frustratingly limited data available and, by close scholarly observation, has done justice to this magnificent cultural tradition of the Naskapi, Montagnais, and Cree peoples.

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Chartrand, Paul L.A.H.: *Manitoba's Métis Settlement Scheme of 1870*.

Native Law Centre: University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, 1991, xxviii + 233 pp. ISBN 0-88880-242-0.

Non-Native Canadians have assumed that Métis claims were long settled since the *Manitoba Act, 1870* specifically made provision for settling land claims in Manitoba. The present work (initially a thesis for a law degree), challenges this assumption by presenting a detailed legal analysis of the *Manitoba Act, 1870*, as well as related statutes, which supports the author's thesis that the government did not fulfil the conditions as outlined in the *Act*.

The text is short (150 pages) and readable, although it would be easier to read if much of the legal jargon were replaced with ordinary English. An additional 100 pages of appendices make up the remainder of the book. The appendices are crucial to the reading and understanding of the text and the author was wise in including them, e.g., *Manitoba Act, 1870*, *Rupert's Land Act, 1868*, Governor Archibald's Despatch on the Half-Breed Land Grant, 27 December 1870. Arguments invoking sections of various documents are at the reader's fingertips to refer and assess for him/herself. Finally, the author has carefully documented his claims, with nearly 600

footnotes.

Six chapters make up the text. Beginning with an introduction to the settlement strategy of the federal government, the author moves on to tackle such mundane but crucial questions as “The Beneficiaries of Section 31,” “Selecting the Lands” and “A Gradual, Regulated Land Settlement Scheme.” Chapter 5 focuses on a more abstract issue of “Group Rights Protected in the Constitution.” The final chapter clearly and succinctly outlines the government breaches of obligations; fourteen items are documented. The book concludes with suggested remedies by the author.

The central thesis of the book is that the government failed to implement Section 31 of the *Manitoba Act, 1870* according to its true intention and “because the *Manitoba Act* was accepted by the government as the basis for joining Confederation, there is a basis for asserting the illegitimacy of the Constitution on the part of the ‘Half-Breed’ descendants, the Métis of 1990” (p.6). The author has undertaken a careful review of historical documents (both legal and other) in an attempt to support Métis claims now before the courts. Previous authors have argued that Métis claims have been settled under the *Manitoba Act 1870*, not on the basis of a thorough analysis of historical documents, but through misunderstanding specific statutes as well as using flawed logic and utilizing erroneous assumptions in their arguments (at least assumptions that are ill informed). As the author points out, in one case, the argument against the Métis is based “upon a misconceived application of judicial tests respecting constitutional conventions” (p.145). But the text is not used to refute the arguments of previous authors working for the government. Rather, the author focuses on the substantive issue of whether or not the government fulfilled the condition of the *1870 Act*! His detailed analysis identifies many violations of the *Act* which suggest retribution of some sort is in order.

It is a useful book for both practitioners and academics alike. Students interested in Native affairs will find the finely crafted material easy to follow and follow up on the references. The author has made a substantive contribution to the ongoing debate regarding the legitimacy of Métis land rights. Nevertheless, the author is aware of the realities of today when he notes, “At the end of the day, the resolution of the question... will reflect the values this society is willing to assert or deny... because of the unconscionable breach of promise by former governments” (p.149). *Manitoba's Métis Settlement Scheme of 1870* is an extremely important and significant book. Other authors have attempted to address the question but none has done so with the level of clarity and the degree of specificity evident in this book which illustrates, convincingly, how the government of Canada was able to extinguish Métis land rights in clear violation of its own statutes.

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Doherty, Robert: *Disputed Waters: Native Americans and the Great Lakes Fishery*. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1990, vii + 172 pp. ISBN 0-8131-1715-1.

Robert Doherty is a professor of history at the University of Pittsburgh. Doherty writes about the Great Lakes fishery and Aboriginal rights from firsthand experience as well as knowledge of the documentary evidence. He has represented Aboriginal groups in the courts, interviewed many of the participants in the struggles he recounts, and even operated his own fishing enterprise. This book consists of a short introduction, nine chapters, and an epilogue.

The first three chapters give a background detail of the early history of the Chippewa and Ottawa tribes. Doherty shows how the relationships of Aboriginals to the natural resources upon which they depended were altered by the fur trade, commercial fishing, and the exploitation of forests by logging companies. In each case, the Aboriginal peoples were drawn into a market economy which offered them few advantages. Profits usually were not invested in Aboriginal communities but flowed out of the area along with the fish and timber. Aboriginal communities lost control over their own environments and became a source of cheap labor for resource extraction industries. Both the fishing industry and the logging industry illustrate this pattern; as well, both exhibit the horrendous environmental costs associated with free market capitalism.

The development of the logging industry in Michigan is a paradigm of metropolitan-hinterland relationships typical in the capitalistic exploitation of natural resources. Between 1840 and 1900, nearly all the virgin timber in Michigan was cut down. Few profits from these ventures were invested in local communities. They flowed into large cities, such as Chicago, where the companies had their headquarters. By 1900, lumbermen began to abandon their holdings and leave their property to be appropriated for tax delinquency as they moved on to exploit more profitable forests. Attempts were made to farm many of these areas, even though the soil was unsuitable. Fires set by settlers burned out of control, ruining what timber stands remained. Only government reforestation programmes regenerated the forests, which now attract tourists to these areas. Government pro-

grammes were not specifically designed to aid the Aboriginal inhabitants—they were meant to produce attractive facilities for tourists, particularly those interested in hunting and fishing. This created a potential source of conflict between Aboriginals, who claimed traditional rights to hunt and fish, and non-Aboriginals interested in hunting and fishing for sport. This conflict was hardly new. As early as 1881, the Michigan Sportsmen's Association was able to have market hunting prohibited. As Doherty notes, the issue of who gets what is obscured under the cloak of a disinterested concern for wildlife preservation:

Habitat protection and seasonal restrictions served a general purpose, but elimination of commercial hunting merely allocated wildlife from one social group to another. Sportsmen simply made their interest and the public interest appear to be the same, and state regulation of wildlife served that part of the public interest represented by upper-class hunters (p.49).

Development of the fishing industry shows striking parallels with that of logging. The fisheries on the Great Lakes were quite extensive by the late 19th century as the growth of the railroads and new technologies such as refrigeration increased the markets for fish. Fishing became much more capital intensive and was soon dominated by outsiders who had the requisite capital:

Many of the outsiders who moved into the fishery in the upper lakes ran complex operations that required substantial investment and caught thousands of pounds of fish. They reaped large profits from the fishery while longtime local residents gained little...The great majority of fishermen languished in poverty. Most Indians remained poor, and none seems to have successfully competed in the complex fishery that developed in the nineteenth century (p.30).

Eventually the open access system of fishing led to depletion through overfishing. The spawning stock of whitefish, lake trout, and other desirable species was decimated. Lampreys moved in from Lake Erie during the 1930s and 1940s and further devastated the industry. More and more species disappeared as prey-predator relationships were upset. In the 1960s, alewives, a relatively small and commercially useless fish, dominated the lakes. The fishery was in ruins. The rebuilding was accomplished almost entirely by government intervention, through control of the lampreys and alewives and a vigorous stocking programme. The government also promoted a sportfishing industry to attract tourist dollars. Thus, there is nothing "natural" about the Great Lakes fishing industry; it is fostered and controlled by government. Aboriginals are certainly correct in claiming that the basic issue is not conservation versus exploitation, but who gets what

share of the fishery?

The bulk of Doherty's book deals with attempts by Aboriginal groups to maintain treaty rights to fish without state control. Doherty gives an engrossing account of the 1979 Michigan court case in which Judge Noel Fox affirmed the Aboriginal right to fish in the Great Lakes without regard to Michigan law. Michigan officials, with the help of sympathetic Reagan administrators, were able to regain much of their former control through negotiations with Aboriginal, state, and federal representatives who agreed the fishery would be allocated without further court intervention.

In his final chapters, Doherty suggests measures by which Aboriginals might maximize returns from the fishery while minimizing ecological damage. He recommends an Aboriginal-owned vertically-integrated fish industry involving everything from hatcheries to retail stores. Doherty reiterates a point he makes consistently throughout the book, that the core dispute between Aboriginals and others is not about conservation but about allocation of resources. Non-Natives concerned about sportfishing, and environmentalists, often do not recognize this basic fact. Doherty obviously sympathizes with Aboriginal claims, but this sympathy does not seem to cloud his judgment. He is well aware that extensive gillnetting by some Aboriginals substantially reduced the population of some species (p.107). He also points out a number of facts that tell strongly against the legal status of traditional fishing rights, even though he has testified as an expert witness for the Aboriginals!

I strongly recommend this book. Doherty's book is an excellent case study of the conflict between Aboriginal rights and other interests, a study which shows clearly the historical roots of this conflict. Capitalist development destroyed the economic base of traditional Aboriginal life, and left Aboriginals to live a marginal existence on the fringes of the market economy. The struggle for rights can be seen as part of a more general struggle by Aboriginal people to gain some control over their own lives and over resources which originally were theirs.

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Eastman, Charles A. (Ohiyesa) and Elaine Goodale Eastman: *Indian Heroes and Great Chieftains*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1918; reprint Bison Books 1991, paperback \$8.95 U.S. *Old Indian Days*. New York: McClure Company, 1907; reprint Bison Books 1991, paperback \$8.95 U.S. *Wigwam Evenings: Sioux Folk Tales Retold*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1909; reprint Bison Books 1990, paperback \$7.95 U.S.

Charles Eastman (Ohiyesa) was a major spokesman on Native issues in the first four decades of the 20th century. In collaboration with his wife, Elaine Goodale Eastman, he wrote nearly a dozen books on Native life and issues. *Indian Heroes and Great Chieftains*, *Old Indian Days*, and *Wigwam Evenings* are three very different examples of his work now available again in Bison Books after being long out of print. Charles Eastman was born in 1858 near Redford Falls, Minnesota. He was a Santee Sioux raised by his grandfather in the traditional manner, but also educated at Beloit College, Dartmouth College and Boston University Medical School. He was one of the first Native doctors and, just as significant, among the first Native authors to be published. In the fall of 1890 he met New England author and educator Elaine Goodale, whom he married in the late spring of 1891. Together they worked on bringing to the reading public stories about traditional Sioux life prior to the 20th century, although Elaine is given credit only for *Wigwam Evenings*. Charles would supply the rough material; Elaine would fashion it into publishable form.

The three texts are quite different. *Old Indian Days* is a collection of fifteen short fictional stories, and in the opinion of this reader the weakest of the three books. The stories are divided into those on "The Warrior" and those on "The Woman," but the style is unfortunately purple at times. Although this style may have been the fashion in the early years of this century when these stories were first published, the reader today may well find it cloying. *Old Indian Days* deserves attention, however, because fully half of the stories are about Native women, a rarity in other treatments of Native culture at the time. It thus gives the reader a valuable glimpse into a little known facet of Sioux life. The "Warrior" stories are equally instructive of Sioux culture in the 19th century, even if the terrain covered is more familiar. There is a perceptive introduction to Eastman's life and the stories by A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff.

*Wigwam Evenings* is a collection of twenty-seven Sioux folk tales put into a loose narrative framework of stories told to children during winter evenings by the tribe's storyteller. The tales include stories of monsters, the

origins of war and strife, the origins of the human race in the figure of Little Boy Man, as well as Beast Fables strikingly similar in style and wit to those of Aesop. Some of the stories are given explicit morals, but such are not necessary to their success. Indeed, they often seem intrusive or blatantly obvious. It is better to see the folk tales as Michael Dorris and Louise Erdrich describe them in their introduction: "they are distilled conclusions of generations upon generations of Plains society, and point to the essence of what it is to be a decent, thoughtful, respectable human being—a Sioux *Tao* told in prose a child of any culture, of any time can comprehend" (p.x). The narration is crisp, and readers of all ages will enjoy this book.

The best of the three in this reader's opinion is *Indian Heroes and Great Chieftains*. This book is a collection of fifteen biographical sketches of great 19th-century Native leaders. Several of the accounts are given as personal reminiscences told to Eastman himself. Most of the men described in the text are Sioux, including such well-known figures as Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull and lesser-known figures such as Spotted Tail and Little Crow, but there are also sketches of Cheyenne, Nez Perce, and Ojibway leaders. Portraits accompany several of the biographies. Eastman is careful not to romanticize his accounts. He presents both the strengths and weaknesses of these men in an effort to "present some of the greatest chiefs of modern times in the light of the native character and ideals, believing that the American people will gladly do them tardy justice" (p.91). He is at all times defensive of the Native character and culture, and also implicitly critical of the White. Eastman emphasizes over and over again that Sioux "depredations" against Whites were actually defensive actions and only resorted to out of desperation against White greed and aggression. However, Eastman is also critical of 'hotheaded' Native leaders who involved their people in futile, violent resistance to White domination. Perhaps Eastman's own ambivalent attitudes can be seen in his analysis of Spotted Tail ('The White Man's Friend'): "while he could not help being to a large extent in sympathy with the feeling of his race against the invader, yet he alone foresaw the inevitable outcome" (p.35). But even if such resistance is futile, it is also heroic and that is the way Eastman presents it. One of the best and most valuable features of the book is the telling of the Battle of Little Big Horn from the Native perspective, surely one of the first such written accounts. In fact, there are four accounts of events at Little Big Horn which are told respectively from the points of view of Gall, Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull, and Rain-in-the-Face. Rain-in-the-Face's story is told in a particularly vivid first person account.

All in all, *Old Indian Days*, *Wigwam Evenings*, and *Indian Heroes and*

*Great Chieftains* provide striking glimpses into Sioux society of the 19th century. At their reasonable paperback prices, they are well worth reading.

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Hayman, John (Editor): *Robert Brown and the Vancouver Island Exploring Expedition*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press. 1989. ISBN: 0-7748-0322-3.

Narratives of colonial exploration provide primary evidence for the history of Native peoples. This data is often casually provided, larded with gross opinions, and is, all too often, only capable of re-interpretation from the Native point of view with considerable difficulty. Yet without the publication of such material, no interpretative history, such as Douglas Cole's work on the collection of Northwest Coast artifacts and the potlatch law, is possible (Cole, 1985; Cole and Chaikin, 1990). Hayman's volume of Robert Brown's explorations on Vancouver Island in the 1860s presents interesting and important information without interpretation or Native perspective.

Robert Brown, like Archibald Menzies, the surgeon and naturalist on George Vancouver's Voyage of 1790-1795, was a Scot. Like Menzies he was commissioned to obtain seeds of previously unknown plants for his sponsors back in Britain. In this Brown does not seem to have been particularly successful: the seeds were either already known or spoiled in transit. Early in life Brown had developed a taste for exploration, which took him as a nineteen-year-old on two Arctic voyages in 1861, before arriving in Victoria in 1863. As an enthusiastic traveller, and with the qualification of work on marine algae and botanical classification to his name, Brown was appointed to lead an expedition which criss-crossed the southeastern third of Vancouver Island between July and October 1864. This expedition, sonorously titled "The Vancouver Island Exploring Expedition," used what seemed for the most part to have been Native trails. While the expedition provided detailed geographical information about Vancouver Island south of the Alberni Canal and Comox, it also had, as an underlying purpose, the search for gold. However, Brown is noted particularly for renaming geographical features, and for sometimes measuring lakes, for instance Sproat and Grand Central Lakes, and only secondarily for identifying mineral

resources, including coal, copper and gold. But in the case of the last he was not personally responsible for the find at what was to become Leech-town. From the economic point of view of the colonist he also reported on farming, hunting, the Native trade in dog-fish oil and the colonial trade in turpentine.

At the time of Brown's arrival in Victoria James Douglas was jointly but separately Governor of Vancouver Island and mainland British Columbia. The Native population was undergoing what can euphemistically be described as a period of great strain. The population of Europeans and Euro-Americans was growing rapidly, in part as a result of the gold rushes of 1858, 1861, and then 1864. But there was no proper definition of appropriate Native-European relations, particularly with regard to land and property. Even more tragic, a situation arose because of the numerous epidemics which had already resulted in a catastrophic population decline. While not dwelling on Native matters, Brown provided in his journal, and latter popular accounts, detailed descriptions of his relations with Natives which refer to this situation. He seems to have implicitly understood that disease-led population decline cleared the land for colonial settlement. He also possessed an unprejudiced, if also unsystematic, interest in Native culture. He described, in some excellent detail, a potlatch at Alberni, which includes most useful descriptions of, for instance, the diplomacy and payment necessary when an unintentional insult—that of damaging a canoe prow—is felt by guests. He describes most beautifully the transfer of masks between the Opetchesaht and Sheshaht. He was also only too aware that receiving gifts entailed reciprocity, and was most anxious himself not to become involved in any system of exchange by, for instance, accepting berries as a present.

Beyond the description of the Alberni potlatch, and the rather heavily edited Native stories, he also provides a supremely unconscious picture of European attitudes to Native peoples. He felt quite free, for instance, to borrow Native rancherrias, a California term then used in British Columbia for Native houses, and to borrow boats, and also house planks to turn into rafts. Indeed one of the delightful woodcuts with which the book is illustrated shows two of the explorers forging rapids on such a raft. He is aware of the unreasonableness of stealing Native materials, since he compares his behaviour to the borrowing of a European official's horse. Perhaps more interestingly he was constantly aware of how difficult it was to best a Native in bargaining for supplies or transportation—particularly if there was a potlatch or fishing season in the offing. Brown was aware of Native discontent, particularly about the non-payment for Native resources, especially land. Elsewhere he is told in no uncertain terms and apparently on

more than one occasion of complaints at the way the British impregnated and abandoned Native women, took land, deer and salmon, introduced diseases and then sought to prohibit the sale of alcohol. At one stage he noted that the Whites who had taken Native consorts did not deserve the excellence with which these women managed their non-Native husband's business affairs. Yet in a difficult situation, as on the West Coast of Vancouver Island where the Ditidaht made him feel the insecurity of his isolated position, he chose to regard the people as a "bunch of bullies." On this occasion he was, to all intents and purposes, an intruder whose ability to communicate accurate information about the geography of the island would facilitate the dispossession of the original inhabitants.

After the heady triumphs of the Vancouver Island Exploring Expedition, Robert Brown's career went downhill. He spent a few more years exploring, visiting Oregon and California in 1865, the Queen Charlotte Islands and northern Vancouver Island the following year and, after returning home, went to Greenland in 1867. After that, and as a result of his failure to obtain an academic job, he became a journalist working in London from 1876 until his death in 1895. He does not seem to have collected much in the way of Native art or artifacts, although, when back in London, he provided not wholly accurate comments on the items already in the Christy Collection of the British Museum. As a journalist he was a prolific writer who employed his knowledge of the people of Vancouver Island in popular works which provided the public with standard caricatures of the devious, dishonest Native.

When all is said and done, it is hard to regard Brown's explorations on Vancouver Island in 1863-66 as particularly remarkable. While the expedition did suffer from hunger, and from the necessity of forging through the thick forest, they were never far from the reassuring might of HMS Grappler, always apparently ready to ferry them to or from Victoria. In many areas farmers seem to have preceded Brown. The expedition always had plenty of assistance, Native and non-Native, and most of the routes were riverine or else followed ancient Native trade routes. One Native, a part-Iroquois called Tomo Antoine, with mapping, linguistic and hunting ability, was particularly important in assisting the party. However the journal of 1864, and the accounts of the potlatch and Native stories from popular sources, are succinctly edited, with copious detail, by Hayman. But there is little interpretation of the Native situation at the time and the introduction does not sufficiently contextualise British Columbia history. The implication left at the end is that this expedition was a rather genteel damp tramp through beautiful scenery. The achievements of the expedition are not comparable to those in the Arctic at the same period. One excellent and significant

feature of this volume is the inclusion of Frederick Whymper's sketches of the Island. While these are quite slight, they are one of the rare sources of visual information from the period. In all, while this is a vital publication for understanding the history of Native-European relations, it does not introduce any new ideas for overcoming the practical difficulties in presenting a Native perspective on this tumultuous period.

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Mojica, Monique: *Princess Pocahontas and the Blue Spots*. Toronto, Ontario: Women's Press, 1991, 86 pp. ISBN 0-88961-165-3. Paper

*Princess Pocahontas and the Blue Spots* is a lyrical and poetic search for identity. It is a journey into the past through myths and legends of Aboriginal women both fictional and actual. The search through this collection of icons and symbols is undertaken, on our behalf, by characters referred to as Contemporary Woman #1 and #2. These women operate under the principle stated in the play that, "It's time for the women to pick up their medicine in order for the people to continue" (p.20). The play seeks to help us find the truth in the past which will allow Aboriginal women to heal themselves. It is a particular and singular journey within the larger question of a whole gender's awakening. The title of the play itself denotes the uniqueness of this task. The "blue spot" symbolizes Aboriginal blood. Contemporary Woman #1 describes it this way:

When I was born, the umbilical cord was wrapped around my neck and my face was blue.

When I was born my mother turned me over to check for the blue spot at the base of the spine—the sign of Indian blood.

When my child was born, after counting the fingers and the toes, I turned it over to check for the blue spot at the base of the spine.

Even among the half-breeds, it's one of the last things to go (p.20).

From the title character to the mistress of Cortez to a contestant in the Miss North American Indian Beauty Pageant, the playwright illuminates today by examining the past through thirteen scenes or transformations, "one for each moon in the lunar year" (p.16).

Monique Mojica is described in the supplied biography as, "a Kuna-Rappahannock half breed, a woman word warrior, a mother and an actor" (p.86). And the play reflects the political activism inherent in a warrior battling sexual and racial stereotypes. Ms. Mojica comes to the trenches with a proven record in her chosen artform. She is a noted stage and film actor and past Artistic Director of Native Earth Performing Arts. Her association with that company dates back to 1983 when she performed in *Double Take/A Second Look*. That production, from Spiderwoman Theatre Company featured her mother, Gloria Miguel. That artistic family bond arose again most recently when both were featured in *The Rez Sisters* by Tomson Highway. *Princess Pocahontas* proves the strength of that lineage and experience by providing us with material that is both challenging and accessible. This "word warrior" knows that you must entertain in order to educate.

The play's main strengths are its use of language and its juxtaposition of cultural archetypes from both the White and Native worlds. The script is less composed of dialogue than it is by verse as if each of the scenes combine to form a long lyric poem. An example of this cultural collision is provided by Princess Buttered on Both Sides; during the talent portion of the beauty pageant she sings:

(a la Marilyn Monroe) Way ya hiya!  
 Captain Whiteman, I would pledge my life to you  
 Captain Whiteman, I would defy my father too.  
 I pledge to aid and to save,  
 I'll protect you to my grave.  
 Oh Captain Whiteman you're the cheese in my fondue.  
 Captain Whiteman for you, I will convert,  
 Captain Whiteman, all my pagan gods are dirt.  
 If I'm savage don't despise me,  
 'cause I'll let you civilize me.  
 Oh Captain Whiteman, I'm your buckskin clad dessert.  
 Although you may be hairy,

I love you so-oo,  
 You're the cutest guy I'll ever see.  
 You smell a little funny,  
 But don't you worry, honey,  
 come live in my tee pee.

Captain Whiteman, I'm a little Indian maid,  
 Captain Whiteman, with a long ebony braid.  
 Please don't let my dark complexion  
 Inhibit your affection.

Be my muffin, I'll be your marmalade (repeat 3 times).

Way ya hey yo.

(During the muffin refrain the Blue Spots run up the center aisle screaming)

**Blue Spots:** Capitan! Capitan! No te vayas, Capitan!

Don't leave Me!

**Princess:** May you always walk in beauty my dear sister.

Now was that not spiritual? Many, many thanks, you have made my heart soar like the noble rabbit. My heart, your heart, bunny heart, one heart. Um humm.

I would like us to be friends, real good friends, you know what I mean? I mean like blood brothers, and blood sisters. Um hmm.

I have many names. My first name was Matoaka. Some people call me Lady Rebecca, but everyone knows the little Indian Princess Pocahontas, who saved the life of Captain John Smith (pp.26-27).

This one short scene illustrates Mojica's skill with the swords of satire, humor and pathos. She makes us laugh at the same time as she drives straight to the heart of the guilt and appropriation involved in five hundred years of European contact.

But the overall feeling of the script is that of a rallying cry. It must be the playwright's hope that everyone who sees this play will be moved to action, that the medicine will be picked up in order that a culture and a people can continue. She urges Native men to, "Stand up! Stand up and walk next to me...there is a war being waged on the cement prairie..." (p.40). There are lessons to be learned from the past, she feels, but there is no longer any time to wait.

The play concludes with these lines from Contemporary Woman #1 and #2.

A nation is not conquered until the hearts of its women are on the ground.

Then, it is done, no matter how brave

it's warriors, nor how strong its weapons (p.60).

This volume also includes the radio play *Birdwoman and the Suffragettes: a Story of Sacajawea*. Sacajawea was the Native guide for the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific coast. In the play her life story has been corrupted to create a heroine for the suffragette movement. But in her real history we see courage and strength that needs no embellishment. This short piece provides a small glimpse into the issue of appropriation. It lacks the sophistication of the larger work but it does offer another example of Mojica's technique of mixing verse, song, and docu-drama into a coherent whole.

As an interesting sidelight, both plays come with their own bibliography. Works cited are divided into recommended and not recommended categories and provide possible study and discussion topics. *Princess Pocahontas and the Blue Spots* is on my recommended reading list for students of Drama, Native Studies, and Women's Studies.

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Parsons, Elsie [Worthington] Clews (Editor): *American Indian Life*. Illustrated by C. Grant LaFarge. 2nd Edition reprinted from the 1922 edition published by B. W. Huebsch, Inc. (Bison Book.) Introduction to the 2nd Edition by Joan Mark. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press. xv + 419 pp. ISBN: 0-8032-8728-3. Paperback, \$12.95.

This reprint, of an interesting 1922 collection of fictional stories about a wide range of American Indian tribes by anthropologists actively studying each group at the time, is welcome both as evidence for the history of American anthropology (a theme emphasized by Mark) and as the introduction for the general public to how American Indians really lived which it was originally intended to be. After the compiler's preface and an introduction by Alfred L. Kroeber (intelligent and comprehensive, as usual), which sketches in general terms what was then believed about the history of the American Indian, the 27 stories are divided into 8 geographical sections (in parentheses we find the tribes and authors of the stories), enough to give a good idea of the geographical and ethnological diversity which exists: 1) The Plains (Crow: 3 stories by Robert H. Lowie; Blackfoot: Clark Wissler); 2) Middle West (Menomini: Alanson Skinner; Winnebago: Paul Radin;

Meskwaki [Fox]: Truman Michelson); 3) Eastern (Montagnais: Frank G. Speck; Iroquois: Alexander A. Goldenweiser; Lenape [Delaware]: M.R. Harrington; Creek: John R. Swanton); 4) the South-West (Apache: P.E. Goddard; Navaho: A.M. Stephen; Zuñi: Parsons and Stewart Culin; Havasupai: Leslie Spier; Mohave: A.L. Kroeber); 5) Mexico (Tepecano: J. Alden Mason; Aztec [Naua]: Herbert Spinden; Maya: Sylvanus G. Morley and Alfred M. Tozzer); 6) Pacific Coast (Shellmound [Mutsun/Costanoan]: N.C. Nelson; Yurok: T.T. Waterman; Nootka: Edward Sapir); 7) Northern Athabaskan (Chipewyan: Robert H. Lowie; Ten'a [Ingalik]: T.B. Reed and Parsons); 8) Eskimo (Franz Boas). There follows an appendix with useful notes and scholarly references on each tribe (which were not updated for this edition!) and notes by the illustrator.

As Mark indicates in her introduction, the authors represented here were a majority of the small group of practicing anthropologists in North America at that time. Almost all American anthropologists worked on Native groups at that time, partly because of their proximity, and partly to "salvage" dying cultures and languages. As they were nearly all influenced by Boas and his ideas, the emphasis is on showing at least one aspect of the complexities of each culture, on the one hand, and why the Indians behave and react as they do, on the other hand. The list of authors is an indication of the apparently high class of researchers which entered anthropology at this time, or perhaps of the beneficial influence of association with or training by Boas and his students. They are also a guarantee that these stories (most of them entertaining as well as interesting) are solidly based on the facts of each culture.

In short, this book is insightful, useful, enjoyable and highly recommendable.

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Pocklington, T.C.: *The Government and Politics of the Alberta Métis Settlements*. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, University of Regina, 1991. xv + 162 pp. ISBN: 0-88977-060-3. Paper, \$26.00.

The Métis in Canada have often described themselves as the "forgotten peoples" over the past few decades. Although formerly a major economic, political and military force in the Prairies throughout the 19th century, and having negotiated for the creation of the Province of Manitoba in 1870, the

Métis became the dispossessed of Canada after the defeat of the “Riel Rebellion” in 1885. Despite the legal commitments to ensure land for all Métis contained in the *Manitoba Act, 1870* and subsequently in Dominion land legislation elsewhere in the West, the Métis were largely landless by the dawn of this century due to fraud, breach of governmental obligations and the actions of speculators. The Métis were pushed to the margins of society and were frequently forced to live officially as squatters on road allowances and other Crown land.

The sole exception to this tragic situation occurred in Alberta during the “Great Depression.” After six years of intensive lobbying by the Métis Association of Alberta, now called the Métis Nation of Alberta or MNA, under the leadership of Joseph Dion, Malcolm Norris and James Brady,<sup>1</sup> and the positive recommendations of a provincial Royal Commission chaired by A.F. Ewing, the Social Credit government responded by passing the *Métis Population Betterment Act* in November of 1938. Through a series of Orders in Council over the following years ten settlements or “colonies” were established in western and eastern Alberta. Although two of these were later terminated by the Province in 1960 (Wolf Lake and Cold Lake), eight have survived (Big Prairie or Peavine, Gift Lake, East Prairie and Paddle Prairie in the western part of the province and Kikino, Elizabeth, Buffalo Lake and Fishing Lake in the east) as the only recognized land base for the Métis consisting of 1.28 million acres in all of Canada.<sup>2</sup>

The Métis have historically been excluded from virtually all federal initiatives undertaken by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND). Those Métis who had accepted scrip and their descendants were explicitly excluded from registration under the *Indian Act* until it was amended by Bill C-31 in 1985. The Métis have been somewhat of a political football for many years as the Federal Department of Justice and DIAND have continually asserted that they are not within federal responsibility under section 91(24) of the *Constitution Act, 1867* for “Indians, and Lands reserved for the Indians.” All provinces, with the noted exception of the situation described in this book, have taken a contrary view thereby arguing that they have no jurisdiction in the face of Parliament’s exclusive authority under section 91(24). This issue was proposed to be finally resolved to confirm their inclusion within section 91(24) by constitutional amendment as one part of the Charlottetown agreement of 28 August 1992, although that agreement was ultimately rejected by the voters.

The Métis of the 20th century have also largely been forgotten by Canadian scholars. While numerous biographies of Louis Riel have been written over the years, as well as histories of the Métis struggles in 1870 and 1885, the Métis as a people were almost completely ignored until the

last 20 years. This blank spot in the Canadian literature only began to be filled in the 1970s, and even then it was individual Métis<sup>3</sup> and Métis political organizations<sup>4</sup> that came forward to describe their experiences and their aspirations. Canadian academics have finally begun to turn their attention to the several hundred thousand Métis in terms of their history, legal position, social situation and political objectives.<sup>5</sup>

It is only now, however, that the unique and fascinating story of the Métis settlements has been told through this book. Professor Pocklington has provided a particularly timely account not only of the history of the settlements, which basically is only summarized in Chapter 1, but he has also closely examined the internal political institutions of these communities as well as the attitudes and desires for the future of their inhabitants. This is an especially welcome addition in light of the extensive debate that has occurred over the last ten years surrounding the issue of constitutionally recognizing the inherent right of the Indian, Inuit and Métis people of Canada to govern themselves. The *Government and Politics of the Alberta Métis Settlements* (*Métis Settlements* for short) offers highly pertinent information on the only experience of recognized Métis communities with a relatively secure land base, as opposed to the many other Métis communities in Canada that have no special status at law. While the literature on Indian First Nations has not exactly been overflowing, by comparison the current reality of the Métis situation has been almost completely overlooked. It is, in this reviewer's opinion, vital that Canadians in general, as well as the Métis in other parts of the country, be more fully aware of this important precedent so that the goal of Métis self-government becomes more readily obtainable.

After briefly giving an historical and legal overview, Professor Pocklington moves into the primary thrust of the book, which is to describe and analyze the government, politics, daily problems and opinions both of key actors and the "grassroots." Chapter 3 contains an overarching description of provincial government policy, the operations of the individual settlement councils, the purpose of the Alberta Federation of Métis Settlement Associations (FMSA) and the continuing role of the MNA. Professor Pocklington attempts in ten pages not only to summarize the influence of each of these four entities but also begins to look at how they relate to each other. This sets the stage for the next three chapters which individually examine in far greater detail the precise activities of the councils that provide local government in the settlements, the FMSA, and the main provincial government agency, the Métis Development Branch (MDB) of the Department of Municipal Affairs.

Chapter 4 draws heavily upon private interviews conducted in 1984 by

the author with 33 of the 40 settlement councillors. Using an interview form as a basis (a copy of which is not reproduced), Professor Pocklington engaged in detailed discussion that generated data on the social composition of the councils, the party voting records of the individual councillors in the 1980 federal and 1982 provincial elections, their attitudes toward federal, provincial and MNA officials, and their opinions of their own roles as councillors, on local problems and the attractiveness of obtaining greater political independence.

Chapter 5 looks at the work of the FMSA and relies primarily on observing a number of board meetings and personal interviews for its information. Besides recounting the nature of its activities in the mid-1980s, the author provides his assessments of why certain board members were particularly influential in internal decision-making. The following chapter has a similar purpose in relation to the MDB. One of the strong features of this chapter is the assessment by Professor Pocklington of the views of Métis leaders on the MDB as well as those of MDB officials about the Métis leadership.

Having broken somewhat new ground in this field by bringing social science interviewing techniques to Native Studies, Professor Pocklington goes a step further in the next two chapters by summarizing the results of extensive interviews with "rank-and-file" residents in one eastern and one western settlement. These chapters contain a very interesting discussion of the political opinions of the settlers about their own governments as well as those in the broader society along with the first hard data to be published on the demographic profiles of these communities.

The balance of the book takes the reader in a different direction as it moves into the realm of self-government and obtaining security of tenure for the settlement lands. Although obviously influenced by the opinions conveyed to Professor Pocklington in the interviews he conducted, Chapter 9 provides very much his own assessment of the differing rationales for self-government. Having indicated his own preference for the "well-being" or needs approach over the alternatives derived from legal and moral arguments, he then analyzes the application of this theory to the reality of the settlements. The final chapter and the ensuing epilogue represent an attempt to summarize the negotiations between FMSA and the province over land tenure and modernizing the local government legislation with a brief assessment of the "Made in Alberta" agreement of 1989.

Although I can recommend the book highly for its many strengths, the last few chapters demonstrate most clearly some of its weaknesses. In many ways, the book's major problem is that it was not published shortly after all of the interviews were completed in 1985. Although Professor

Pocklington has updated some of his information and brought the early history recounted in Chapter 1 up to 1989 through his last chapter, the core of the book (Chapters 4-8) and its most valuable part is rather dated. While *Métis Settlements* contains a rich vein of material on the views of so many key players as well as of two communities more generally, the most interesting information is regarding their political assessments. Unfortunately, these opinions naturally relate to the conditions that existed when they were voiced from 1983-85.

They will provide an excellent baseline for comparative purposes for a future study, but they can no longer inform us of relatively current views given the immense developments that have occurred subsequently. Even though the book was published in 1991, the text appears to have been finished sometime in late 1989 as it makes no reference to the *Constitution of Alberta Amendment Act, 1990*, the *Métis Settlements Accord Implementation Act*, the *Métis Settlements Land Protection Act*, and the *Métis Settlements Act* all of which were passed on July 5, 1990 and proclaimed into force on November 1st or 2nd of that year. It is this new legislation and the \$310 million financial settlement of the longstanding litigation over subsurface natural resource exploitation by the province which now forms the foundation for the future of the eight settlements. Although this book does spend its last five pages summarizing the main features of the 1989 agreement that was the precursor to the new Métis package and gives the author's assessment, one cannot but wish that Professor Pocklington provided the reader with an exhaustive examination of the new arrangement along with capturing the opinions of those most directly affected.

This reviewer came away with mixed feelings about *Métis Settlements*. On the one hand, it is an excellent book. It is the first study ever to examine in detail the political and governmental relationships of these Métis settlements in which the people and their local leadership express their own views through the vehicle of the interview format. Professor Pocklington is to be applauded as well for his care in obtaining full approval for his work from FMSA, the settlement councils and the two communities interviewed as well as involving FMSA in reviewing his manuscript.

On the other hand, there are many missed opportunities for further analysis that would have greatly improved this study. The uniqueness of these settlements in North America is not readily apparent, as there is little comment on the position of Métis elsewhere. The many similarities with Reserve life (e.g. via comparing demographic data) as well as between the *Indian Act* and the *Métis Betterment Act* (e.g., the Crown holds title to the land, property can not be seized by creditors, provincial and municipal realty taxes do not apply, etc.) and their respective government agencies (DIAND

and MDB) are not explored. Likewise, comparing the position of Métis elsewhere in the province with the settlements would have been highly informative and helped to explain the pivotal psychological role that these settlements play in the aspirations of the Métis generally across Western Canada. This would also have demonstrated more clearly how the settlements are such an exception to even Alberta's policy for most Métis.

This book would also be stronger if it explored the broader political and legal context more fully. This is especially pertinent concerning issues that it records as top priorities of the FMSA and the settlement councils, namely, seeking fee simple title with constitutional protection and the lawsuit over subsurface resources. A map identifying the location of the settlements along with more general information about them would have been most helpful in advancing the understanding of a general audience.

It is also interesting to see that Professor Pocklington rejects the term "self-government" in favour of "self-determination" (p.123) for the exact opposite reasons provided by many other commentators and the federal Department of Justice. He seems to fail to grasp the meaning of the latter phrase under international law as well as how these terms have gained domestic significance through the last 10 years of constitutional negotiations. Similarly, the role of the federal government, or its refusal to exercise its role, goes almost unmentioned in *Métis Settlements*.

Nevertheless, despite my wishes for more than Professor Pocklington has offered, and the presence of occasional errors,<sup>6</sup> he is to be congratulated for giving us a rare achievement—a scholarly book that is well-written, easily understandable by a general audience, sensitive to reflecting the views accurately while involving the "subjects" of the study in the project itself, recounting a fascinating story and providing an informed analysis that should be directly useful to those who are involved in negotiating and implementing Aboriginal governments anywhere in Canada. I only hope that he pursues a sequel in which he repeats his interviews to determine how the new arrangement is working and how views have changed as a result of it as well as constitutional developments.

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### Notes

1. For an excellent biography of Norris and Brady see, Dobbin (1981).
2. It should be noted that the Métis in Saskatchewan have recently acquired a small tract of provincial Crown land while the Métis in the MacKenzie River Delta are obtaining inalienable fee simple title to land as part of the Gwich'in land claim settlement that awaits parliamentary ratification. The Métis elsewhere in Canada are also continuing to pursue land through litigation, land claims processes and as part of self-government negotiations.
3. This breakthrough began with the compelling autobiography of Maria Campbell (1973) and was followed soon thereafter by Howard Adams work (1975).
4. The Manitoba Métis Federation sponsored its own publishing house, Pemmican, to promote the Métis perspective (see, e.g., Sealey and Lussier (1975)) while other non-governmental organizations committed to advancing Métis goals printed their own books (see, e.g., Daniels (1979); Redbird (1980); Sawchuk, *et al.*(1981)).
5. See, e.g., Chartrand (1991); Sprague (1988); Peterson and Brown (1985); and Purich (1988).
6. See, e.g. , the statement that the "half-breed" exclusion "remains intact" under the *Indian Act* at p.7 when it was repealed in 1985; the statement that non-Status Indians were excluded from the definition of "Métis" in the former Alberta legislation when Status Indians were meant; an error in data reported at p.54 as nine councillors did not represent 12 percent; referring to the 1985 First Ministers' Conference as the second one at p.142 when correctly described as the third one at p.63; etc.

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Sams, Jamie and Twylah Nitsch: *Other Council Fires Were Here Before Ours: A Classic Native American Creation Story as Retold by a Seneca Elder and Her Granddaughter*. New York: Harper San Francisco, 1991, 147 pp. ISBN 0-06-250763-X. Canadian \$20.00.

*Other Council Fires* is a crafted creation parable, in the sense that it weaves together different traditions—and not only Native—in its attempt to give the story of creation and rebirth some modern forms that reach beyond a Native idiom; the book seems obviously conceived for a White audience. I can't see the relationship between this story and the Seneca-Iroquoian myths I have read, or any coherent body of myth, for that matter.

The cover of this book immediately left me with a very confused initial impression; the various publicity blurbs on the rear were not reassuring: Tony Hillerman hints, "A fascinating look into a fascinating culture. Required

reading for those who still think of Native American cultures as 'primitive'." So. A propaganda book addressed to troglodytes? Brooke Medicine Eagle badly states, "this book...gives vital information to help all two-leggeds understand...their place in deep history...[and]...in the creation of the rainbow world of tomorrow." I immediately had an image of chickens pecking at a pot of gold. Could the avian connection have come to mind because I was reading the book on the Rome-Montreal flight, or should I take Ms. Medicine Eagle at her word and start looking forward to landing in the Rainbow Land of Oz? Carl Hammerschlag, M.D. informs us that the book is "a poetic creation tale...[that] reminds us that if we are to sustain [ourselves][sic] as a species and a planet, we must reconnect with joy and spirit to everything around us." This sounded suspiciously like *Son of the Joy of Sex*. Ed McGaa guarantees that this book will take me, "...full circle to the natural harmony as it was in the beginning. You of the Rainbow Tribe will find the ancient tribal wisdom guiding you to your high-plain destiny." I was thoroughly confused at this point; would I encounter the end of the rainbow, deep history or Clint Eastwood on the high plains? A book, perhaps, for racists? For orgiasts? Western film buffs?

Nor was I enheartened by the first page of the text. Already in the second paragraph I counted twenty-three capitalized words (excluding those in the initial position in the sentence and two proper names) distributed among the twenty-eight nouns contained therein. Either I had radically improved my ability to read German or I was in for an overdose of Reveringness, Sacredness, Wholeness, Being-ness and a Boring Show All Round.

Things became more interesting in the middle of the book, but then the capitals began to have their final say at the end, when the authors move from what might be called, with generosity, a "reconstruction" of the first four ages of man (we are in the fourth, due to end in 2013—p.101) to prophecies of the last three (fifth to seventh). Here, no holds are barred: we get hints of Hindu reincarnation ("During the Fifth World many of the Children of Earth will ultimately find the long-sought enlightenment, the search which has brought them to walk the Earth time and again"—p.102),<sup>1</sup> Earth Mother imagery (scattered throughout the book in quantities too copious to quote), Plateau mythology ("...the Divine Trickster was certainly working some Coyote Medicine..."—p.113), Edward Bellamy's pseudo-scientific rationalism married to McLuhanism served on a bed of Edgar Cayce salad ("All Manifestations in the physical world will express the totality of their potentials, which will create constant communication between all parts and the whole"—p.122), Shirley McLain New Age-ism ("Just as soon as Time gives up the linear part of himself, the energy invested in all those old roles everyone acted out will be free for all of us to use, creating

the Uni-World"—p.118), Greek mythology (the Three Fates—p.117), Aboriginal cosmogony meeting a determined Don Juan desperately trying to get through a Carlos Casteneda-like thick skull ("Present [one of the three Fates personified as a Don Juan-esque ally—p.118] chuckled and promptly proceeded to command my destiny for a moment by sneezing hard enough to blow me out of the Dreamtime and back into the now that existed on top of the Sacred Mountain"—p.119, and, "I felt as if I had been spanked for being naughty and for not thinking these concepts through on my own"—p.118), Greenpeace propaganda ("All bad Medicine that has been placed in the Earth or dumped in her oceans will be removed, allowing the Great Mother to breathe again"—p.104), and Madame Blavatsky's Anthroposophism in the figure of Yehwenode (co-author Twylah Nitsch), with her magical-mystical adolescence and spiritual reincarnation of her Grandfather Shongo's wisdom (her spiritual odyssey occupies pp.88-96, which seems a substantial chunk of a story of creation presented in approximately 120 pages). By the time I reached the end of the book I began to feel that I had just been through an allegorical obstacle course much bumpier than the one flight CP 045 had provided me in lieu of an interesting movie.

This creation tale is very complicated, with a large number of characters, historical epochs and processes of creation. The tale seems continually caught in its own contradictions: the Stone Tribe, immutable and the oldest of creatures, is a sort of keeper of the flame,<sup>2</sup> yet the story of creation plotted here seems to be based on continual flux and evolutionary setbacks after near-perfect starts; one has the impression that the authors haphazardly stitched together disparate elements in order to provide some internal principle of opposition that could in some way counter all the perfection that is and has been continually thrown at us in these, the best four of all possible worlds. All this is rather sad, in fact, because the creation legend at least starts in a rather interesting way: there is a Stone person upon whose consciousness intrude the events of creation willed by a primeval Great Mystery (Original Source); there would appear to be two parallel streams of being in this universe, Stone People and the Great Mystery. But then the account of creation seems to get muddled: Great Mystery seems to be creating things out of whole cloth, in the Genesis/Yahweh tradition (suggesting a single path of Being), and yet simultaneously seems to be detaching parts of Itself to form the various independent facets of the universe whose ontological task would seem to be the regaining of the primeval unity-that-is-not-unity (because it includes elements of hierarchy: remember the prior presence of the Stone Tribe; in fact, hierarchy is everywhere present in this soup of sharing-ness). This seems rather too Judeo-Christian in outlook to be congruent with Native American

thought. In any case, if there are two streams of Being at the beginning of time, it is only with a certain elasticity of vision that one can admit the principle of unity at Point Omega.

The rest of creation is the account of the poisoning of perfection by bad thought (greed, authoritarianism, colonialism, etc.) held by the five races of mankind: Blacks are truth seekers (but also good dancers! "These black Two-leggeds would use rhythm to dance and connect to the heartbeat of the Earth Mother"—p.35; I know a few Black Two-leggeds who aren't going to be dancing to *that* tune), Browns are workers of the soil, Reds are keepers of the flame of sacred knowledge (of course), Yellows are philosophers (but of a Charlie Chan confucianism: "These yellow Two-leggeds would teach the others about Ancestors, family ties, and social customs"—p.36), and Whites were once gifted with creativity and authority (pp.35-36) but became obsessed with Whiteness and purity because of the success of their inventions; they became Afraid of Dirts ("The fear of dirt, dust, soil, and sand began to erode their sense of belonging to the Earth Mother"—p.70) who built houses of "Marble Stone People and Crystal Mineral People" (p.70)—stone and glass to the rest of us—to isolate themselves from the earth and from non-Whites. Each race seems to fail in its mission, and each world or epoch is destroyed. Luckily, the Subterraneans (a Latin people living in bomb shelters?) preserve seeds for future epochs and pop up again at critical times.

This entire scenario, in short, smacks of buffoonery and mental confusion: pseudo-Darwinism, racism, Druidic forest mythology (Rowan, a "Standing Person" [a tree?] deep in the forest—p.58), sixties "Sex Will Make You Free" ideology ("The stricter the rules of various Clans and Tribes became, the more often sexual crimes were committed... The fear of being labelled as bad or wanton kept the Two-legged females from expressing the natural body rhythms that maintained their connection to the Earth Mother"—p.85, an interesting line that even I never tried in my bachelor days), and so on.

The book ends with a section ("Language of the Stones") listing Stone People iconography and its meaning. Just like the basic dichotomous creation theme (one or two becoming many in the beginning, many-but-not-all [the non-believers routinely get the Sodom and Gomorrah treatment] becoming one at the end after many failed attempts), there appear to be imbalances in the presentation. First, circle elements represent female principles in the section "Basic Symbols," but here males are merely dots within circles, with no independent representational existence until we get to the next section, "Combinations of Basic Symbols (Material)" and see an "X" on p.134 (and an "X" with a small circle above the cross, like a stylized

head, is woman). This at least seems consistent with the hierarchical principles that pepper the creation story but appears to ignore a lot of what has been written about petroglyphs, not to mention the theme of equality which the authors ostensibly preach. Second, the vast majority of the symbols refer to states of being or actions that are inherently positive or at worst neutral; there are no pictorial representations of evil or even confusion. This absence is perhaps as it should be, since these symbols are meant to represent elemental and primeval truths that we are to rediscover—the world was created good at the beginning and later became a place of evil. Yet given the dual streams of creation and of Being which I mentioned above, as well as the continual elements of evil that constantly find their way into the first four worlds, one would expect some inherently negative aspects to the universe to co-exist with the good. There are none, just as there are no explanations given for the meanings of the stone language; they just are, which I suppose is Right and Mete as befits eternal truths, but even the Christian God has occasionally permitted theologians to have their critical say without striking too many of them down. In short, the petroglyphs underline the question of the source of evil in the four worlds that have preceded us. All the great traditions—Christianity, Manichaeism, Zoroastrianism and even classical Iroquois creation myths (the two twins, Teharonhyawágon and Tarongaskaron [Tarohiaouagon], Enigorio and Enigonhahetgea, good<sup>3</sup> and evil)—speak to this problem. Third, there seems to be no logic between the elemental symbols and their meaning in combination. A straight horizontal line, for example, means “Fertility, the Earthwalk; the power of will; an earthy person” (p.132); a “U” means “growth achieved through healing old pain with thanksgiving” (p.132); two linked “U”s, slightly overlapping, means “sensitivity to the opposite sex; the power of courtship used to grow closer” (p.146); the latter symbol over a horizontal “earth” line, however, means “the power of smell used to access awareness” (p.146). The connection between these basic elements and their combinatorial meanings remains unclear. I suppose eternal truths need no coherence, for they just are, but readers hopelessly out of tune with cosmic vibrations may prefer a bit of explanation and coherence.

All in all, this is a very confusing and childish book that cannot be placed within any Indian context known to me. There seems to be no lucidity to the story of Creation, which could be an acceptable or even interesting (non-Western) characteristic were it not for the plethora of programmatic and frankly Boy-Scoutish assertions that accompany it.

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### Notes

1. Just to anticipate possible criticism, many Indians (like the Tsimshian, for example) believe in reincarnation, but reincarnation in the search for enlightenment is uniquely Hindu, as far as I know. The detailed description of the fear of the returning souls of the dead extensively described in Shimony (1961:228-260) argues, of course, against a belief in reincarnation.
2. In this incarnation, they are obviously good, yet many instances of older Seneca stories (cf. Smith, Beauchamp, Curtin) portray Stone Coats (a.k.a. Ice and Great Cold personified) in negative terms.
3. There are various names for these twins; cf. Tooker (1970); Beauchamp (1922). Battles between two opposing forces, one good and the other evil, also figure prominently in the stories collected by Curtin (1923) (c.f. in particular pp.192-197) in which a sky woman gives birth to night and day and to a pair of good and evil twins. The sky woman who gives birth to two boys, good (creator of all useful creatures) and evil (warty or pimply, creator of dangerous creatures and human ills), is also reported in Hewitt (1903) and in Smith (1883).

### References

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Shorten, Lynda: *Without Reserve; Stories from Urban Natives*. Edmonton, NeWest Press, 1991, x + 294 pages. ISBN: 0-920897-01-1. Paper, \$16.95.

This book is very attractive in its simplicity. The author has been true to her word, offering a book of autobiographical stories spoken into the tape-recorder of a reporter and reduced to print. If people she met responded positively to her query as to whether they would like to take part in the writing of a book, she turned on the microphone.

Shorten presents a procession of Native spokespersons telling their stories. All but two wished to have their identities protected, for their own sake or for that of their children. Jimmy Mix, in his twenties, grew up in foster homes and on the streets, encountering drugs and alcohol and attempting suicide before finding strength to recover by means of traditional Native ways. A grandmother aged 86, Grace survived the hatred generated by attending residential school and by marriage to an abusive husband and became a self-taught and gifted craftsperson. The 16-year-old granddaughter of Grace, Lisa, yearns to be a dancer but at present is greatly influenced by drugs, alcohol, boys and life on the street. Jane is a young mother who has always loved art and now makes a living at it, having survived a White foster mother who made her ashamed of being Indian, though only temporarily. 14-year-old Casey has had so many foster homes that he cannot remember the number and who now buries his shame of being Métis with numerous romantic exploits with young girls. Maggie is a fiercely proud Métis grandmother who was so damaged by the residential school system and by marriage to an abusive husband that she feels she was totally inadequate to the task of raising her children as they have all been in trouble with the law. Kicker's 22 years of life have been almost totally spent in foster homes, fights and jail; he promises to be present at the birth of his child but is imprisoned at the same time the birth occurs. Helen was raped so many times that she attempts to forget her fear of sexual intimacy by becoming immersed in traditional Native ceremonies. And Sky is a middle-aged artist whose constant physical abuse as a youth has resulted in an anger and hatred that leads to violent confrontations and frequent incarceration.

The book is easy to read and quickly finished; the danger is that the reader can become so numb to the swearing, violence and degradation that the individual lives begin to blur into a heavy homogeneity. All the

storytellers are from the Edmonton area. All are Native or Métis. All have suffered rejection and abuse. All are urban. Most lack a voice in the larger scale of Native life as they have no Chief, no Band Council, no vote in matters which to them are the stuff of life and death. The reader could well ask, "Are there no happy endings, no success stories to be told?" Even one chapter at the centre of the book entitled Jokes leaves the reader cold when the genre of jokes being told is discovered:

Question: What do you get when you cross an octopus with an Indian woman?

Answer: I don't know but it sure as hell can play bingo.

However, there are common threads in the stories being told that point to an optimistic future. Some of the individuals have found strength through family bonds, through personal gifts discovered through adversity, through a spirituality rooted deep within an ancient history and culture. Others know the answers to their problems are there but as yet are not within their grasp. And a few have not yet begun asking the questions. The tragedy is that the original inhabitants of this land have been reduced to such depths of depression; the cause for rejoicing lies within the indomitable spirit of a people who never have and never will allow that spirit to be broken.

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