

western music. Can we say that a short song which changes meter seven times has a meter? It follows that the bar line could be omitted, or at the very least, dotted. But all songs have divisions and I expect that indicating the breathing places would be more faithful to the singer's rendition. For the transposed songs, I would give the original starting pitch. While the concept of key may not exist for the Aboriginal singer, the beginning pitch of a song may be an unvarying part of the song for many years.

This volume is an invaluable record of Haida songs and language. Now it needs an accompanying recording so that we can hear a few songs of each genre. For, unless we already know how a music sounds, western music notation is inadequate to portray the sound of a music. All recommended changes are made with the hope that more *Studies in the Anthropology of North American Indians* will be published and that future works will give us an even better opportunity to recreate and understand the beautiful songs of the Aboriginal world.

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Flanagan, Thomas: *Louis 'David' Riel: 'Prophet of the New World.'* Revised Edition. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996, ISBN 0-8020-0815 Cloth CDN \$50.00; 0-8020-7184-8 Paper CDN \$17.95.

This book is a biography of Louis Riel, and as such it focuses attention on the life and the activities of the Métis leader whose important role in the Native struggles is undeniable.

Thomas Flanagan first traces the early beginnings of Louis Riel from his childhood in the Red River Colony, through his college days in Montreal, a period of uncertainty in the United States, and finally his return to the Red River in 1868 where he got involved in public affairs. As soon as he took an interest in public affairs, his rise to prominence was swift, afforded by the leading role he played in the Métis opposition to the annexation of the Red River Colony by Canada. But if Riel's rise to power was swift, so too was his downfall. His execution of Thomas Scott, an Ontario Orangeman who had been one of his most active opponents, was the turning point. The next few years of his life were uncertain. Though he was elected to Parliament, he had to move constantly to avoid arrest. His close connection with the ultramontanist movement provided some support, but his pleas for am-

nesty for his roles in the Métis uprising and the death of Thomas Scott were ineffective. He was forced into exile for five years. While in exile, Riel toyed with the idea of a military enterprise to re-establish the provisional government in Manitoba. That too came to naught and Riel turned to a life of exemplary piety.

As Riel turned to piety, he experienced several powerful visionary experiences which permanently changed his life. He became a religious fanatic convinced that he had a special mission as "Prophet of the New World." His behaviour became so troubling that relatives and friends had to place him at the St. Jean-de-Dieu asylum for the insane in Longue Pointe, a suburb of Montreal. There, Riel became obsessed with the condition of the chapel and claimed that God had commanded him to seek its improvement. Armed with this divine command, Riel committed several destructive acts which finally led to his transfer to another asylum, the asylum of St. Michel-Archange at Beauport.

The author concludes this section of his book by explaining Riel's madness as a conjunction of character and circumstances. He pleads for understanding, as that phase of Riel's life is the key to grasping his character, and thus the overall pattern of his career.

Next, the author examines the new religion Riel dreamt and talked about in the asylum. In this new religion, Riel was a priest, a prophet, a king, and the Infallible Pontiff. Although Riel anchored his thought in the mosaic law, the book of Daniel and the Old Testament in general, his ideas appear more like mythical stories than anything else. One feels that Riel was so obsessed by personal success, or suffering from delusions which resulted from a certain consciousness of unfulfilled ambitions.

After his discharge from Beauport asylum on 23 January 1878, Riel left for New York. He was to spend the next couple of years moving from place to place in a vain effort to form a great confederacy of Indian tribes which would lead to an Indian uprising to re-establish a provisional government in Manitoba. However, a real opportunity to realize this ambition soon came for him.

On account of the difficulties associated with getting land concessions from Ottawa, the North-West Rebellion was initiated in Saskatchewan by Indians, Métis, and some disgruntled Whites. Louis Riel was invited to lead the uprising. However, the justification for the uprising is rather questionable as the Government was already taking steps to resolve the land grievances. The rebellion was launched on 18 March, 1885. Riel's strategy was something of a puzzle. He declared a provisional government and took hostages with the intention of forcing Ottawa to negotiate, as he had in the first rebellion. Ottawa did not negotiate. The uprising crumbled as the rebels

surrendered. The author concludes that the rebellion failed probably because Riel had a hidden religious agenda which the political uprising was to help foster in an indirect way: "The North-West Rebellion was a politico-religious movement with a political emphasis among the followers but a religious emphasis for the leader."

After the failure of the rebellion, Riel surrendered on May 15, 1885 and was taken prisoner. He was placed in solitary confinement, tried for treason, convicted and sentenced to death. Riel might have viewed his trial as a political forum, a chance to vindicate his fifteen years of struggle against the Canadian government. It did not serve any such purpose. At the end Riel had to recant his ideas and return to the "Old Roman Church." Riel had made a public recantation of his ideas, but he still believed tenaciously in his mission as a prophet, even though he no longer made a public display of it. When he was executed on November 16, 1885, it was with an exemplary courage that he embraced death, completely convinced that he was treading the path which had been marked out for him by God.

The last chapter of the book, Chapter 8, is fairly short and serves as the overall conclusion of the biography. Here, the author situates Louis Riel in the course of millenarian history and concludes that Riel belongs in millenarian movement through his Catholic heresy and nativistic resistance.

The book is well-written, a pleasure to read, and contributes significantly to the understanding of Louis Riel's role in the struggle for the political recognition of North American Indians in general, and the Métis in particular. As the book is a biography, the author assesses, at the end of each chapter, the importance of the events discussed in the chapter, and their impact on Riel's life. While this is good and enables the reader to grasp the author's perspective, sometimes the conclusions of the author fail to take into consideration, objectively, all the aspects of the situation discussed. Thus, for example, the chapter, "The Prophet in Chains," questions the diagnosis of madness and explains Riel's condition instead as a conjunction of character and circumstances.

Plausible as this reasoning may appear, it is highly improbable that the entire mental state of Riel which led to his hospitalization could be explained away as a result of his numerous reverses. Disappointments are all part of life; people do not usually lapse into mental aberration on account of the reverses they may have encountered. The author fails to see that it is quite possible that Louis Riel might have been really mentally ill. This fact may also explain the ambivalent nature of Riel's behaviour during the events discussed in the chapter, "The Prophet in Arms," where the author seems content to mention in passing the puzzling nature of Riel's ambivalent attitude.

Nevertheless, as has been stated earlier, this is a good book, a valuable contribution, and a welcome addition to the Native Studies library.

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Fletcher, Alice C.: *The Hako: Song, Pipe and Unity in a Pawnee Calumet Ceremony*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996. (Reprint of 1904 edition.) ISBN 0-8032-6889-0 Paper USA \$16.95.

In his journal of 1672, the explorer Marquette noted that the feathered stem which he called a "calumet" is "the most mysterious thing in the world. The sceptres of our kings are not so much respected, for the Indians have such a reverence for it that one may call it the god of peace and war, the arbiter of life and death... one with this calumet may venture among his enemies, and in the hottest battles they lay down their arms before this sacred pipe" (p.279).

Alice Fletcher had observed a calumet ceremony, the *wawan*, among the Omaha but was unable to document it before the priest who knew the songs and texts had died. *The Hako* describes instead the Pawnee version of this powerful intertribal ceremony. Fletcher was fortunate in working with Tahirussawichi, a Pawnee priest "who is the authority for the text and explanation of the ceremony," (p.14) and James R. Murie an "educated" Pawnee whose own ethnographic writings were brought together in 1989 by Douglas Parks as *Ceremonies of the Pawnee*.

Alice Fletcher understood that the calumet could be read as a text whose symbolic language transcended the particularities of individual tribal languages. Like manuscripts, calumets were often copied. Their power lay in the symbolic relationships they stood for, not in their physical existence as particular objects. Indeed, "Every article belonging to the ceremony and the position and movements of those who conducted the rites had a special significance" (p.23). Together, these ceremonial objects are referred to as "hakkow" or Hako, which Tahirussawichi and Murie translated as "a breathing mouth of wood," a reference both to the drum used in ceremonial songs and to all the other ceremonial objects including the feathered stems