

BOOK REVIEWS

Our Son, a Stranger, by Marie Adams. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002 Cloth ISBN 0-7735-2400-2, CDN\$34.95.

Conversion of the doctoral thesis into a publication is one of the more enduring fixtures of academic life. The remarkable accomplishment of Marie Adams, however, will never embarrass its author. Far from it, it has been nominated by the McGill-Queen's Press for the Writer's Trust of Canada's Pearson Writers' Non-Fiction Prize. This outstanding work explores the experience of the author, her husband and five other White, middle-class couples who adopted Native children during the "sixties scoop", a period during which the government of Canada officially encouraged and enabled adoption of Native children by non-Native parents. Native spokespersons view this policy as an instrument of "cultural genocide." For the vast majority of adoptive parents, though, it was a policy that led to tragedy, desperation and guilt.

Adams' intent is to situate these heartbreaking stories within a broad personal but non-political context. She explores the family background, expectations and goals of each parent. An account of the attempt to nurture, encourage and support a stable home life with the adoptee, the shockingly swift destruction of any hope of achieving such, ensuing struggle and inevitable failure, follow. Efforts to untie the bureaucratic knot, to elicit effective support or even serious engagement of government and private social service agencies lead, for the most part, to frustration. No one seems to understand. Few care. The adoptees degenerate into anti-social, often violent behavior while the parents suffer not only as helpless, isolated witnesses to the self-destruction of their adopted children, but as individuals whose belief in their own basic human competencies is crushed.

Bitter experience, both her own and that of the couples interviewed, yields insight, but it is experience joined to a careful synthesis of the research literature that marks a path through and beyond the dismal miasma. Of this body of ideas, one of the most powerful is the "symbolic interaction" paradigm of Blumer (1969), particularly as refined by Hewitt (1997). While not dedicated to the study of families, in the hands of Adams, the theory becomes a powerful beacon leading from the default position of parental culpability to an open analysis of how the interaction of the adoptee's cultural, emotional, familial, medical, psychological and genetic makeup leads to the formation of decision, action and, to put it

in Blumer's terms, "disruption." The therapeutic interface drawn from Blumer makes it possible for the adoptive parents to understand that the failure is not necessarily theirs but the product of a composite of factors extending beyond the complexities of the adoptee and trans-racial adoption to include the blindness of government policy, inadequacy of social services at every level, the rigidity and narrowness of therapeutic regimens, not to speak of the constant presence of racism in society as the most profound determinant of the problem.

With this understanding, Adams is able to do a great deal more than mount a critique of failed government policy. Using the interactionist model, she provides an acute analysis of factors leading to adoption breakdown and provides powerful insight on the effect of this crisis on parents. Particularly valuable are her suggestions for policy change, group therapy and other therapeutic regimens for parents which could lead to understanding, acceptance, and healing.

A significant, practical, and deeply courageous book.

Alfred Fisher
School of Music
Queen's University
Kingston, Ontario
Canada, K7L 3N6

Aboriginal People and Colonizers of Western Canada to 1900, by Sarah Carter. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999. ISBN 0802041477
Cloth CDN\$45.00.

Many Aboriginal persons in Canada attribute all their contemporary social ills to "Colonization." As a social process, it is salient in all culture contact between Native people and imperialist colonizers. This book presents an acute and realistic analysis of these social and historical forces in North America. It succeeds admirably in opening up the subject of colonization to the non-specialist reader. It also may be used effectively in courses in Native Studies and Anthropology. Further, it may give Aboriginal readers a greater understanding of the coerced culture-contact situations which have impinged upon their lives. It is an interesting read, and critically but fairly assesses previous historical analyses which derive from Euro-Canadian ethnocentric viewpoints.

The parameters of colonialism are complex and the focus upon the western prairie landscape and peoples—First Nations and Métis—is

challenging. A well-drawn map featuring Treaty areas contextualizes the nations and gives direction to the various reactions to the colonization process. Increasingly, Treaty agreements between imperialist powers and Native nations are crucial to comprehending the roots of colonization and its contemporary residues. Carter analyzes the concept which she call "Homelands." Notions of land and space, including sacred sites inform the world views of Euro-Canadians as well as Natives.

Drawing upon an ethnohistorical method derived from archeological and anthropological data, she also uses historical insight from such Native scholars as Harold Cardinal, Paul Chartrand, Edward Ahenakew and Olive Dickason. New interpretations of Aboriginal history in Canada emerge and are a welcome change from male-dominated histories and cultural interpretations. This treatment of colonization should appeal not only to Native students but also to community members. One illustration will suffice. Quoting from Christine Welsh, the Métis film-maker, Carter writes: "...looking at history from a Native perspective meant much more than seeing events from a different point of view. It meant surrendering our pre-conceived notions of the very nature of history—that it is linear, progressive, date-and-event oriented—and adapting our thinking to a fundamentally different Aboriginal world-view which is cyclical and ultimately timeless" (8). Thus, Carter's approach is oriented to human agency and Aboriginal peoples are seen as active agents: they constantly have devised adaptive strategies which enable Native societies to survive despite all efforts towards their assimilation into the dominant society.

Examining the role of Big Bear in the Frog Lake incident, for instance, Sarah Carter presents him as a Cree ritualist and respected leader. This is distanced from the usual portrait of him as a cruel and intransigent murderer. Carter's treatment, however, is based on oral history and contextualized interpretations of historical events. Consideration of subaltern views therefore can only yield more balanced treatment of Aboriginal and other ethnic populations in Canadian history.

In the growing professionalization of Aboriginal people in the humanities, the social sciences, law and education, we anticipate more vital histories as seen through the eyes of Native peoples. Carter presents a realistic appraisal of the effects of "colonization" on the colonizers and colonized. This makes a valuable book.

Beatrice Medicine
Wakpala, South Dakota
USA, 57658

Trusteeship in Change: Toward Tribal Autonomy in Resource Management, R. Clow and I. Sutton (editors), University Press of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado, 2001. ISBN 0-87081-622-5, Cloth US\$59.95, ISBN 0-87081-650-0, Paper US\$24.95.

This book emerged out of a symposium that explored the background and contemporary circumstances of environmental management of American tribal resources. The editors aimed to put together a book that was critical of both government and tribal decisions but balanced in its view of the successes and failures of Indian resource use and management. The authors contributing to the volume have diverse academic backgrounds, ranging from history to geography to anthropology and revealing different careers such as an employee of the United States Forest Service, an attorney, and a tribal liaison-archaeologist. The result is an excellent piece of scholarship that will prove instructive to all involved in Aboriginal studies, whether in the United States or Canada.

The twelve chapters of this small tome are divided into three major sections: Trusteeship, Tribalism, and Self-Determination. Each chapter reflects a methodology that is reflective of both the author's academic discipline and the problem under discussion. The reader will also find that the case studies cover areas across the United States and a convenient map is presented to locate each of the case studies. Part one focuses on resource management (or the lack thereof) of Indian lands. Using the case study method, the authors of the four chapters reveal the changing responsibilities of trusteeship over the past century. They cover diverse examples, ranging from Colorado game laws, to hydroelectric dams, to forestry. These case studies identify some of the foundations for changes in government policy, Indian response to that policy, and the actions taken by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. For example, in chapter two, the author outlines the role Indian land tenure played in agricultural production on trust lands. The evidence presented suggests that the Bureau of Indian Affairs thwarted agricultural production and discouraged sustainable Reservation economic development. This theme is repeated in several other chapters.

Part two focuses on the period of 1920-1950 when New Deal programs were initiated and impacted upon tribal resource development and management. This also is the period when the Indian Reorganization Act was passed and held the promise of shifting resource management from the Bureau of Indian Affairs to the tribes. The government began to develop a new interest in soil, water, and forestry and as such, urged environmental and institutional reforms to deal with these issues. For example, the authors discuss how irrigation projects were implemented

but again demonstrate the failure of government agencies to adapt their policies and programs to Indian culture, land use and management.

The last section of the book shifts attention to contemporary events in the area of resource management. As the authors note, during the 1960s Indians developed sufficient expertise to begin to actively engage in resource development and management. With the passage of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975, some Indians were engaged in meaningful participation in developing policies and programs that impacted resource development. The authors acknowledge nonetheless, that they present case studies which represent the "best cases" that reflect active Indian involvement in resource development and management.

The authors note that the inability of Indians to earn a living on the Reservation is not just a function of a paucity of resources but rather partially a result of an inadequate or inappropriate policy by which the existing resources are managed and developed. Today's policies and conservation programs reflect a trustee paternalism that continues to encourage dependency and prevent true tribal development and management of their resources. To be fair, the authors also point out there are issues endemic to the tribal communities themselves and they recognize that these will have to be resolved if further resource development and management is to be achieved. Nevertheless, the Bureau of Indian Affairs continues to impose conservation policies and programs which are not designed with regard for the beliefs and practices of the Indian population occupying the lands nor do they consider consultation with Aboriginal communities a necessary ingredient in developing policies and programs. In the end, with some exceptions, there is little evidence of changing government sensitivities to improved resource management between tribes and the public land agencies. There is a failure to recognize that an important and essential part of sustainability is the engagement of the people living on the Reservation in determining how best to use and conserve their resources.

While the focus of this book is upon resource management and American Indians, the names and dates in this book might have simply been changed to protect the Canadian government. A review of what happened to American Indians with regard to resource development and management certainly mirrors what is happening today in Canada. However, while American Indians have gained some involvement in resource management and development, Canadian First Nations still remain excluded from the process. While the Canadian government continues to claim they are involving First Nations more in resource development and management, the evidence speaks otherwise. For

example, the TI'azt'en First Nation is the only Aboriginal organization to have a Tree Farm License in Canada. Forest management proposals by the Little Red River First Nations of Alberta that support sustainable strategies have gone largely ignored by Indian Affairs and other government officials. Other proposals developed by First Nations' communities across the country for developing and managing their resources have gone largely unheeded. In the end, the ability of tribes to protect or use resources seems to depend upon the "mood swing" of American—or Canadian—national policy.

James S. Frideres
University of Calgary
Calgary, Alberta
Canada, T2N 1N4

In the Shadow of Evil, by Beatrice Culleton Mosionier. Penticton: Theytus Press, 2000. ISBN 0-919441-98-x Paper CDN\$19.95.

Beatrice Culleton Mosionier is the author of the highly successful *In Search of April Raintree* (1983), a novel that remains a widely read Canadian classic. Like *April Raintree*, *In the Shadow of Evil* is the story of a young Native woman struggling to achieve clarity, firm identity, and the resolution of old demons. The novel opens with the protagonist, Christine Pelletier, a Métis author of children's books, living a wholesome, stable life with her writer husband and son in the Peace River country of British Columbia. Mosionier very skillfully establishes a sense of connection and comfort with the wilderness and, especially, with a wolf pack running in the area. The wolves become a powerful metaphor of strength, loyalty and mysterious wisdom. Christine becomes their advocate but, better yet, they become her protectors.

The sweet life is interrupted by the apparent death of a son and husband whose wrecked truck is found in the river. This event sets the path for the entire novel. The crime narrative triggers a second narrative centered on Christine's life of betrayal, exploitation and violence. The two narratives parallel and eventually intersect in a harrowing conclusion. But, while there is deception and treachery, gun battles and weirdness of various description, the work is not as much a "crime novel" as a tragedy, one with a happy ending. In telling her gripping story, Mosionier deals insightfully with issues of disenfranchisement, family breakdown and sexual abuse. While sureness of structure is not always

at the level of the storytelling, it's a powerful novel from one of Canada's most interesting literary talents.

Alfred Fisher
School of Music
Queen's University
Kingston, Ontario
Canada, K7L 3N6

Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump, by Gordon Reid. Calgary: Fifth House Ltd., Revised edition, 2002. 44pp ISBN 1-894004-83-3, Paper CDN\$13.45.

Gordon Reid's *Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump* is a 44 page mini-book which summarizes the history and archaeological research at this UNESCO World Heritage site located on the edge of the Porcupine Hills in southwestern Alberta. It is an ambitious undertaking which divides its presentation into three parts: The Buffalo and the Native Peoples, Unearthing the Past, and Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump Today. Richly illustrated with colored and black and white photographs, black and white sketches and wonderfully rendered paintings, the book brings alive the excitement of the hunt and Blackfoot culture. It also includes a map showing the major highway routes to the site.

Books of this nature are marketed successfully at museums and heritage sites. In the case of this volume, it serves to refresh the memories of visitors who spent time visiting the museum displays and walking the trails that connect the museum to a vision quest structure, drive lanes, campsite, kill and processing areas. Since Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump is visited by many foreign visitors, there is unlimited potential for this book to be transported to many countries worldwide and to be enjoyed by the many more people than those who have actually visited the site. There is without question a market for literature of this genre which describes the historical, ethnographic and archaeological significance of heritage sites.

On the other hand this reviewer is of two minds as to whether Reid's book fulfills the dual requirements of such literature: that of being well-organized and accurate. In some ways *Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump* covers a wealth of information ranging from the behavioral habits of bison, to the Plains Indian hunting strategies, to the demise of the bison. It includes, as well, interesting Indian folklore regarding the origin of

buffalo and the strategies for successfully hunting them. A history of archaeological research at the site and a chronology of its major prehistoric cultures are provided, as is a description of the various components of the site and of the exhibits within the interpretive centre. However, organizationally, the book needs improvement.

First, this book needs an Introduction. An introduction would provide an overview of the topics to be considered and clearly indicate to the reader what the purpose of the publication is.

Second, the author needs to use literature which deals with the Canadian Plains generally and southern Alberta specifically. Instead of mentioning George Catlin's descriptions from the Mississippi and Missouri river valleys, why not use the work of Paul Kane who visited the Canadian Plains (Harper 1971)? Similarly, one can surely find in Captain John Palliser's (Spry 1968) and Henry Youle Hind's (1971) writings descriptions of the demise of the bison instead of mentioning United States General Philip Sheridan's 1875 presentation to the Texas legislature. Statistics on the Santa Fé rail line shipments of bison hides have little relevance in southern Alberta, when Canadian statistics on the trade in buffalo robes are available in the account books of the Hudson's Bay Company (e.g. HBCA B.60/d/2a).

Third, the book needs careful editing to bring related topics together and to improve consistency. Since the book is about an archaeological site, why not deal with topics relating to environment first, then move on to prehistoric times, historic times, and conclude with site development? There is inconsistency in the reported depth of Brian Reeves' excavations at the site. The museum is described as being seven-tiered but only five levels are described in subsequent pages.

Fourth, the book tends to be sloppy, particularly in the section summarizing archaeological research. The description of excavation techniques is hard to follow; similarly, the description of artifactual materials from Reeves' five phases is vague.

Lastly, and perhaps the most disturbing aspect of this book, is the misinformation which is published as fact. The processes by which buffalo wallows are formed and by which pemmican is made, and the length of time pemmican remains useful need reconsideration (Mandelbaum 1979). The implication that the Blackfoot can be traced back a thousand years by archaeologists is unproven. The purpose of the Sun Dance needs revision (Spier 1921). Contrary to claims made in the book, antelope in addition to buffalo, were hunted communally by Plains people (Davis and Fisher 1988).

In this age of concern over global warming it is surprising that the author does not mention the Altithermal Period as having some bearing

on the interruption in use of the kill at Head-Smashed-In (Reeves 1973). I would also have liked to see more space allocated to a discussion of the collaboration between First Nations people and the Provincial Government of Alberta in designing, constructing, and managing this heritage site.

In conclusion, let me say that books of the genre of Reid's *Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump* serve a very important purpose. They provide interested people with factual information about sites they may have visited or hope to visit one day. Achieving a balance of visuals and printed word in a limited number of pages is a challenge. It is also a challenge to ensure that the information is pertinent, accurate, and inoffensive. As chroniclers of other cultures, we owe these groups a diligence in making these description as accurate as we can. Having participated in many tours of heritage sites and read the associated literature, I know the problem of accuracy is widespread and persistent. One way to avoid this is for writers of this genre to forego secondary sources in favor of primary ones.

References

- Davis, Leslie B. and John W. Fisher, Jr.
1988 *Avonlea Predation on Wintering Plains Pronghorns. In Avonlea Yesterday and Today: Archaeology and Prehistory.* Edited by Leslie B. Davis. Saskatoon: Saskatchewan Archaeological Society. Pp. 101-118.
- Harper, J. Russell
1971 *Paul Kane's Frontier.* Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Hind, Henry Youle
1971 *Narrative of the Assiniboine and Saskatchewan Exploring Expedition of 1858.* Reprint of Charles E. Tuttle Company Edition. Edmonton: M. G. Hurtig Ltd.
- Hudson's Bay Company Archives (HBCA)
1810/11 B.60/d/2a Fort Edmonton Account Book, General.
- Mandelbaum, David G.
1979 *The Plains Cree: An Ethnographic, Historical, and Comparative Study.* Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre.
- Reeves, Brian O. K.
1973 "The Concept of an Altithermal Cultural Hiatus in Northern Plains Prehistory." *American Anthropologist* Vol. 75 Pp. 1221-1253.

Spier, Leslie

1921

"The Sun Dance of the Plains Indians: Its Development and Diffusion". *Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History* Vol. XVI Pt. VII.

Spry, Irene M. (ed).

1968

The Papers of the Palliser Expedition 1857-1860. Toronto: The Champlain Society.

Laurie Milne

Division of Arts

Medicine Hat College

Medicine Hat, Alberta

Canada, T1A 3Y6

Blessing For a Long Time: The Sacred Pole of the Omaha Tribe, Robin Ridington and Dennis Hastings (In'aska). Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997 With illustrations and documentation. Bibliography and Index, 259 pages. ISBN 0-8032-3925-4, Cloth US\$32.50.

This is an important book on several levels. First, it addresses a salient concern for increased collaboration between Native people and anthropologists and may serve as an impetus for participatory research and the "giving something back to our communities." This book would be especially useful to every person involved in the emerging Cultural Preservation Office or the Tribal Historic Preservation Office in tribal organizations in the U.S., or anyone interested in cultural appropriation.

Dr. Robin Ridington, Canadian anthropologist, and Dennis Hastings, enrolled member and tribal historian of the Omaha tribe in Nebraska, combine their talents in exemplary archival, ethnographic and oral history research. Their competencies are reflected in a lively and comprehensive use of earlier ethnographic accounts. Most of the analysis is the writings of an Omaha (Francis LaFlesche) and an ethnographer (Alice Fletcher). Theirs was a collaboration common in the history of American Anthropology. Besides collecting valuable ethnographic data, they also removed a cultural icon, the Sacred Pole, the Venerable Man, *Umon'hon'ti*, the axis of Omaha origin, world view and rituals.

Fletcher and LaFlesche removed the Sacred Pole to the Peabody Museum at Harvard University. There, it held a curious fascination for the

graduate student Ridington. The book outlines the removal and return of this sacred item to the contemporary Omaha, tribal historian Hastings providing oral history accounts. It recounts the political atmosphere of museum and tribal worlds. The effects of educators, agents, missionaries, "do-good" reformers and the pressures exerted upon Native societies are realistically presented. More telling is the poignant return of the Sacred Pole after generations of forced culture change. Readers gain a greater understanding of "informants" and cultural retention of their sacred items, their motivations and desires for cultural continuity. In the onslaught of "civilization," some keepers of tradition felt that ethnographic reports and museums were safer places for cultural knowledge.

The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPR), passed in 1990 by the U.S. Congress, is significant, because it has added strength to repatriation requests to museums and has mobilized Native communities to action. It is important for the return of material culture and the protection of grave sites, and it has the potential to revitalize Native cultures. In the latter case however, rituals and world view must be properly understood and practised realistically in Native communities.

The Sacred Pole's return to the Omaha community poses challenges to the people. If contemporary groups can restore the ethos and commitment to the item with respect and responsibility, the possibility exists of great cultural enrichment of group and individual identity. Cohesive, planned and positive reaction to such a noble event may give hope for the alleviation of social problems which plague Native communities. If the Sacred Pole is indeed viewed as sacred in today's Omaha society, then a *Blessing for a Long Time* may ensue.

Ridington and Hastings have achieved the essentials of participatory research which is the aim of some anthropologists and most indigenous peoples. This book provides a vivid interplay. It remains to be seen to what degree cultural revitalization results from the return of sacred objects and how they are cared for by present day keepers of Native culture.

Beatrice Medicine
Wakpala, South Dakota
USA, 57658