

BOOK REVIEWS

Brownlie, Robin Jarvis. *A Fatherly Eye: Indian Agents, Government Power, and Aboriginal Resistance in Ontario, 1918-1939*. Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press. 2003.

Starting as a doctorate dissertation and modified by interaction with numerous individuals both White and First Nation, this book is the result of thorough investigation of Band Council meeting minutes, Department of Indian Affairs records, and personal and official documents collected by the Indian Agents of the Parry Sound agency on the eastern shore of Georgian Bay and Manitowaning agency of Manitoulin Island. Reflecting on the stated purpose of Indian Affairs to assimilate and control First Nations people under the auspices of the Indian agents, and taking into account the personal idiosyncrasies and underlying objectives of both the agents and the First Nation Chiefs with whom they negotiated, Brownlie has woven a tale that encourages a level of interest far beyond what one considers to be possible in a stereotypical scholarly dissertation.

The book's introduction is a treasure-trove of information regarding the maze of relationships through which representatives of both Canadian and First Nation systems of government wandered and which should be read by anyone interested in entering into that complicated situation. In those pages, one meets both agents John Daly of Parry Sound and Robert Lewis of Manitowaning, men of differing ambitions and temperaments who interpreted the mandate of their position in different ways. The chiefs of both communities with whom they interacted for two decades are portrayed in similar fashion, imbued with their traditional culture and the loyalty to their community that formed the central core of their responsibilities, yet attempting to cooperate with the agents despite the formidable difficulties resulting from the clash of two world-views.

The remainder of the book uses numerous charts, maps and photographs chosen and assembled from the vast collection available in the Ontario Archives to elaborate on the themes introduced. Having outlined the cultural, social and economic history of the communities

involved, as well as of the evolution of the Indian Act and the department which formed its executive branch, the author brings to life Daly and Lewis, two "paternalistic agents (attempting) to play a positive role in (First Nations) lives" (p.55). In a parallel account, the issues faced by the two First Nation communities are outlined, concluding with the stories of Chief Francis Pegahmagabow of Parry Sound and Chief John Manitowaba of Manitowaning. The conflict involves Canadian and First Nation interpretation of treaty rights, harvesting rights, conservation regulations and medical care, with the Canadian government's determination to end its 'responsibility (to help) the Indians progress into civilization and finally disappear as a separate and distinct people, not by race extinction but by gradual assimilation with their fellow-citizens' (p.124) by means of enhanced education and enfranchisement policies.

The conclusion of the book coincides with the outbreak of World War Two in 1939 and resonates with the situation in Canada today. Canadian Indian policy did not work then and is not working now. Governmental agencies attempting to revamp yet again the Indian Act, in its present incarnation as the First Nations Governance Act, would do well to consider the message of Brownlie's timely book which "highlights the flawed assumptions inherent in its present incarnation as the First Nations Governance Act, would do well to consider the message of Brownlie's timely book which "highlights the flawed assumptions inherent in paternalism" (p.157) that still haunt its pervading colonial attitude in 2004.

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Morrison, Kenneth M. *The Solidarity of Kin: Ethnohistory, Religious Studies, and the Algonian - French Religious Encounter*. Albany: State University Press, 2002.

In this latest of his books dealing with the Abenaki,¹ Morrison's purpose is "to bridge the disciplines (of) Religious Studies...(which) concerns itself with the study of meaning" and ethnohistory which sees religion as some "abstract, institutionalized and functional part of culture" (p.1). Five of the seven chapters which constitute the book include a series of articles previously published in four journals: *The American*

Indian Culture and Research Journal; Religion: Journal of the American Academy of Religion; and Ethnohistory. The first two and the concluding chapters were written expressly to provide book-ends for his work which, he admits, was written "over an extended period of time² and that documents a long-range process of learning" (p.16).

Chapters One and Two provide Morrison's assessment of numerous authors who have written about the interaction between First Nation and European religious and cultural perspectives, and as such he critiques these writers' points of view. Before making statements on the work of Alfred Bailey, Calvin Martin, Bruce Trigger, A. Irving Hallowell, Ake Hultkrantz, and James Axtell, he alerts the reader that they generally "Have not engaged the Algonkian-speaking peoples" (p.17). Much print is then devoted to expanding on his them that these writers would have benefitted themselves and their protégés had they appreciated and correctly analyzed the First Nations distinctive world-view.

To correct this short-coming, Morrison then uses excerpts and situations preserved within the *Jesuit Relations*, carefully choosing items in which conversation has been recorded between Jesuit missionary and Abenaki prospective convert. To this reviewer, these sections constitute the most engaging part of the book. One reads of the credence with which the Abenaki entertain stories of a mythical cannibal, in contrast to the Jesuit's dismissal of such legends as evidence of First Nation naiveté; the challenge brought by white disease and alcohol to the effectiveness of Gluska's power; the response of Abenaki leaders to the taunts and ridicule of a Jesuit priest when their so-called converts continue to adhere to traditional custom and belief; Abenaki acceptance of baptism but within the "complex processes of religious change" which Morrison argues have been overlooked or misunderstood by other authors.

His conclusion regarding First Nation reaction to Christianity is not new: "Eastern Algonkians scrutinized Catholicism from a position of confidence, and embraced only so much of Catholicism as made sense to themselves,...to bolster traditional truth, ensure the survival of tradition, and affirm tribal solidarity as the overarching religious ideal" (p.172). But his book is of particular interest as being valuable to those interested in the Abenaki of the north-eastern American sea-coast, to those who enjoy a historiographical approach to the study of ethno-historical-religious concepts in a North American First Nation milieu, and to those who have failed to realize the wealth of material available in the *Jesuit Relations* that is of relevance today.

Notes

1. See also *People of the Dawn: The Abenaki and Their Relations With New England and New France, 1600-1727* (1980) and *The Embattled Northeast: Abenaki-Euramerican Relations* (1984).
2. These articles were published between 1979 and 1990.

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Nadasdy, Paul. *Hunters and Bureaucrats: Power, Knowledge, and Aboriginal-State Relations in the Southwest Yukon*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2003.

Hunters and Bureaucrats is an important ethnographic contribution to our understanding of co-management and land claim regimes. Rather than empowering Aboriginal peoples, anthropologist Paul Nadasdy finds that these processes "are undermining the social relations, practices, beliefs, and values" they are intended to preserve (113). The author's three years in Burwash Landing, Yukon, with members of the Kluane First Nation, afford him significant insights into the bureaucratization process. He begins by setting the social context: describing Aboriginal-state relations in the Yukon; the "mixed economy" of wage labour and hunting; and First Nation survival strategies. Nadasdy's focus then narrows to the complex relationship between power and knowledge, and how Euro-Canadian "compartmentalized" systems of understanding preclude the meaningful integration of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK). Using the Ruby Range Sheep Steering Committee as a case study he asserts that co-management is not as empowering to Aboriginal peoples as "success stories" might lead us to believe. Instead, he confirms that Eurocentric legal notions about "knowledge" and "property" are incompatible with First Nations peoples' "complex reciprocal relationship with the land" (223). Co-management and land claims negotiations lead to bureaucratized communities, perpetuate unequal power relationships, and intensify social stratification.

By questioning underlying assumptions, Nadasdy illuminates various unintended consequences and his generally careful judge-

ments succeed in undermining our "overly simplistic view of Aboriginal-state relations" (263). The book's style may make it inaccessible to most undergraduate students and co-management/land claim participants, but his sobering, critical analysis of government-to-government relationships will be of use and interest to serious scholars in anthropology, public policy, and Native studies. *Hunters and Bureaucrats* serves as a useful model for additional case studies that are needed to test his general conclusions, and raises fundamental questions about Aboriginal-state relations in the territorial north.

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