## BOOK REVIEWS

Akiwenzie-Damm, Kateri. *My Heart Is a Stray Bullet*. Wiarton, Ontario: Kegedonce Press, 2003. ISBN 0-9697120-9-x, 54 pp.

This is an engaging selection of work by Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm, a writer of mixed-heritage from Cape Crocker Reserve. Bringing together work produced between 1987 and 1992, the volume was first published in 1993. Its republication is richly warranted. Her work serves as an inoculation against a reading environment which now reserves only its remote corners for poetry. The restructuring of a commodified reading culture, however, requires that such work as Akiwenzie-Damm's be read. The immediacy of her access to memory and feeling, intimacy and lyricism, the ingenuity with which sensual and metrical properties are designed and related, sum up poetry that is powerful and confident. While her work clusters about the historically precedented, permanent, and inexhaustible issues of identity and purpose, Akiwenzie-Damm brings wonderful clarity and courage, not to speak of the unique perspective of a Canadian Indigenous person, to a very old discourse.

Writing poetry that holds the value of immediacy as fundamental runs the risk of obscuring the line between experience and art. While Akiwenzie-Damm hovers close to this virtually unseeable line on occasion, her work always succeeds in speaking powerfully and coherently. A fine accomplishment by one of Canada's most gifted young poets.

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Cummins, Bryan D. *First Nations First Dogs*. Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 2002. 351 pp., illustrations, photographs, maps, appendices, bibliography, index. ISBN 1-55059-227-0 Paperback CDN$29.95.

*First Nations First Dogs* situates the importance of dogs within the culture and history of Native peoples now living in Canada. After providing an overview of canine domestication and a discussion on the lack of serious studies on Native dogs, Cummins uses the concept of anthropological culture areas to explore First Nation and dog interactions. Since this approach makes it difficult to delineate the differences between cultures within each zone, Cummins carefully highlights specific Nations' cultures and explains how each incorporated the dog not only into their daily lives but into their spiritual and mythological world views. He shows that dogs were not simply tools, but an integral part of the culture.

In the conclusion, Cummins notes that more sedentary societies, such as the Iroquois, treated dogs differently than those more mobile. Readers may be shocked by some of the accounts relating to the treatment of dogs, but Cummins gently reminds us that the written evidence is largely created by Westerners who generally held different views of dogs and their role in the world. He also contests the commonly held assumption that all Native dogs were simply half-wolf. To this end, he effectively undermines the myth that Native dogs, much like Natives themselves, reflected the more savage tendencies of their respective species. Additionally, he argues that Native dogs were not bred to defend private property but to work within relatively egalitarian societies. Hence domesticated dogs in Canada were bred and trained to become "hunting partners, draughts animals, source of food, provider of wool and companionship" (318). Overall this book is an excellent study of the role of first dogs amongst First Nations that should be of interest to breeders, academics, and non-academics alike.

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King, Thomas F. *Thinking About Cultural Resource Management: Essays From the Edge*. Walnut Creek: Alta Mira Press, 2002.

Sometimes you have to create controversy in order for your voice to be heard.

In *Thinking About Cultural Resource Management: Essays from the Edge*, Thomas King candidly expresses his thoughts about his experi-

ences and interactions with the United States' system of cultural resource management (CRM). King touches on everything from the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, to the National Register of Historic Places, to CRM archaeology, as well as related legislation. Although many of King's discussions can be interpreted as brash and offensive, he reminds us of many obvious priorities in the CRM field (such as respecting other cultures) that have been ignored, forgotten and undermined. While at the same time, he offers suggestions for improvements (such as redefining various guidelines within the field) that are worth taking into consideration and acting upon. As such these points should be noted by professionals working in the United States as well as by everyone, regardless of nationality, working in the CRM field.

King reminds us what CRM should be about which is a lesson that is worth learning. I heartily recommend this book to those interested in the CRM field.

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Nebelkopf, Ethan and Mary Phillips, eds. *Healing and Mental Health for Native Americans: Speaking in Red*. Walnut Creek CA: Alta Mira Press, 227 pp. 2004. ISBN 0-7591-0607-X.

This book is a comprehensive survey of current research and practice in mental health services for the American Indian and Alaskan Native communities. Its twenty short articles cover a broad gamut of topics in the mental and community health field, from substance abuse, the development of community facilities on and off reserves, community organization, recent initiatives in the healing disciplines specific to Native populations, incorporation of traditional modalities of healing, strategies for dealing with HIV/AIDS in the Native community, to summaries of research and statistical data. Nine of the articles are updates, abridgements of reprints of work first published in the *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs* vol. 35, #1.

The collection will serve not only as a guide to contemporary developments in healing practices, but as an introduction to modalities of practice that draw on the wisdom and knowledge of Native communities. Of particular value is the recognition of linkages between sickness

of mind and body. This is made all the more startling, however, by an understanding of the provenance of each in historical trauma. This powerful idea is not at all the product of imaginative theorization, but of experience. One can argue the history; one can argue the theory. Both are trumped by experience.

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Oatis, Steven J. *A Colonial Complex: South Carolina's Frontiers in the Era of the Yamasee War, 1680-1730.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004. ix, 399 pp., map, bibliography, index. ISBN 0-8032-3575-5 Hardcover CDN $74.43.

*A Colonial Complex* is an examination of the events leading up to and following the Yamasee War in the southeast. Throughout the work Oatis contextualizes the complex relationships along the South Carolinian frontier between the settlers, slaves, and Indian nations. 'Frontier' is a metaphor that evokes the discordance of events, people, relationships, and encounters wherever two or more cultures meet. In the southeast this 'frontier' included the British, Spanish, and French empires as well as a variety of Indian nations that spoke dialects of Siouan, Muskhogean, and Iroquoian languages.

This conflict was not simply 'white verses red' and its outcomes were more complex than the relocation and annihilation of Yamasee communities. In essence the Yamasee attack in 1715 shattered South Carolina's complacent attitude that its Indians were under control and duly subjugated. The outcome of the conflict affected settlers and Indians in a variety of ways. The emergent Creek and Catawba nations as well as the more distant Cherokees were drawn further into the colonial system. The aspirations of the English, French, and Spanish were redrawn as well.

Oatis convincingly argues that the Yamasee War was not a conspiracy of Indians, nor was it a spontaneous conflagration. Instead, he shows that the Yamasee War was part of a colonial complex that bound colonists and Indians alike into a variety of relationships that played out along the frontiers of intercultural contact.

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Sheffield, R. Scott. *The Red Man's on the Warpath: The Image of the "Indian" and the Second World War*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2004. 232 pp., illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. ISBN 0-7748-1095-5 Paperback CDN $24.95.

*The Red Man's on the Warpath* is an excellent study of how various English Canadian images of the 'Indian' interacted to inform popular and governmental discourse. Sheffield begins his account in 1930 and ends with the immediate post-war Special Joint Senate and House of Commons Committee to reconsider the Indian Act. By framing the wartime images of the 'Indian' between these years, Sheffield shows how wartime needs, experiences, and political developments led to a limited reformulation of the stereotypes of the Indian. For clarity, the author also discusses the evolution of the public and administrative Indian. The public Indian image, in the pre-War period was divided, albeit not exclusively, among the vanished, drunken, criminal, and noble savage tropes. This public image changed as English Canadians became aware of 'Indian' participation in the war effort through the mass media's use of Native stories designed to shame non-Indians into pulling their weight, and to encourage Canadians during the seemingly endless German victories between 1939 and 1940. The 'Indian-at-war' image gradually generated a modicum of respect for First Nations people, and the war's end had led to public calls for Indian reform.

The administrative Indian, developed by Indian Affairs, in contrast shifted little during this period. For the Department, Indians, bereft of an ability to govern themselves, remained in need of supervision and a guiding hand. By war's end, Sheffield notes that the administrative Indian image was increasingly out of step with the public image. Nonetheless, despite the changes, the concept of the 'Indian' remained consistent in that it served the dominant society's needs and aspirations for the Indian.

Sheffield is careful not to claim that his book is a work of Aboriginal history, but this politically correct sidestep deflates the importance of the work to Aboriginal studies and history. Sheffield ably shows that the

image of the Indian was flexible, malleable, and most importantly, as seen during the Joint Commission's investigations, open to manipulation by First Nations communities. Lastly, Sheffield notes that the modicum of respect created by the images, which evolved during the war years was not enough to counter the assimilationist agenda, formally enacted in the 1951 Indian Act.

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Valaskakis, Gail Guthrie. *Indian Country: Essays on Contemporary Native Culture*. Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2005. ix, 304 pp., references, index. ISBN 0-88920-479-9 Paper CDN $28.95.

*Indian Country* is a collection of eight essays which reflect on land and treaty rights, media warriors, Indian princesses and squaws, pow wow, museums and art, research into Indian culture, and Native nationhood and membership (p.6). Though each essay can stand on its own, together they highlight a diversity of voices present in collective memory, tribal and national events, and real and imagined representations (p.7). Valaskakis argues that part of understanding the complex experience of being Native in North America today is the discovery of interrelated realities, be they individual and collective, past and present, Indian and Other (ibid.).

Throughout these essays, Valaskakis consistently and convincingly illustrates that there are entangled, multiple linkages between past, present, and future; earthly and spiritual realities; representation and lived experience. These connections are not always easy. Indeed, the contingent, contradictory, and transformative nature of culture as lived experience is an integral part of being Native.

Valaskakis uses the image of a braid to illustrate the tripartite link between Native identity, community, and heritage. She adds that these cultural strands are also interconnected with others in dialogic relationships built upon contested and shifting identities, alliances, and ideologies: Natives and newcomers are linked together in dominant and appropriated, imagined and experienced narratives (257). Moreover, past practice, drawn from history and ethnography, is inscribed in current

narratives of struggle that simultaneously join and divide. Overall, Indian Country is a sophisticated work which greatly adds to discussions on contemporary Native experiences. Those interested in cultural contingencies and creativity, and issues of representation will not be disappointed by Valaskakis' contribution.

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