

## BOOK REVIEWS

Blum, Rony. *Ghost Brother. Adoption of a French Tribe by Bereaved Native America: A Transdisciplinary Longitudinal Multilevel Integrated Analysis*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005. 448 pp. ISBN 0-7735-2828-8. \$80.00

*Ghost Brothers* is a complex, metaphorical, and instigative examination of historical processes in New France. Its author describes it as a "historically based, integrative, multilevel, and pluridisciplinary inquiry" (5), the stated goal of which is to look at the constructive dialogue between French and First Nation peoples through a process referred to as 'phantom dialogue' with respective ancestors (the Other). These ancestors helped to integrate communities. Blum adopts a framework focused on the multidisciplinary of space, time, environment, history, socio-economics, anthropology, and psychology with relevant asides from literature and philosophy. The author follows anthropologist Marshall Sahlins' concept that survival via adaptation is anchored in the historic context of a culture.

*Ghost Brothers* examines the transdisciplinary nature of twinning in eight chapters. The first chapter explores the issue of twinning, which serves as a metaphor of Native alliance, where unlike twins were 'brothers.' The twinings of Samuel de Champlain and Cherououny (Innu Chief), Estienne Brusle and Wendat Amantacha of the Attigneenongnahac (Cord) tribe, and Father Jean de Brébeuf and Wendat Chief Annaotaha provide examples. The second chapter examines the interethnic dialogue of the rebellions in France and how they translated to the North American continent as situated in a geographical-historical framework. Chapters three, four, and five are sociologically situated and further explore twinning in the context of French North America, through patriarchy, fraternity and motherhood. Chapter six utilizes a social anthropological approach toward socialization models, including the defying of Frenchness, by focusing on mixed-source survival mechanisms for those First Nations and French engaged in the twinning processes. The seventh chapter is a cultural anthropological articulation of popular sacred figures (for example Ti-Jean, a famous French Canadian trickster based on the characters of Hellequin, Carcajou, and Nanabozo), as well as beliefs and rituals conceptually understood through social dialogue. This chapter

attempts to explain the connection between symbolism, social collective boundaries, and trust. The final chapter suggests how the intercultural adoptive dialogue evolves through time and space, and how the 'other' is viewed through an examination of the self. Blum also includes an epilogue which situates current issues, such as polluted and decreasing resources, overpopulation, degradation of the planet, and the lack of peace, in an understanding of French and First Nation interactions of the 1600s.

Primarily an ethnohistorical text, *Ghost Brothers* raises relevant questions about relations between First Nations and French during the era of New France. All sources have been translated into English but also appear in the original language (most often French). Her use of French, English, Hebrew, German and local First Nations language sources demonstrates the breadth of knowledge in which her work is situated.

This volume effectively unites multiple and varied foundational disciplines with local culture and history, to portray the importance of twinning to the integration of the immigrant French with local First Nations groups. The quantity of information, metaphorical discussion, modern and historical sources, multiple languages from across time and space, and Blum's engaging writing style permit both those with little knowledge of the field and those with years of experience, to expand and challenge their knowledge base. Simply, *Ghost Brothers* is an innovative attempt at metaphorical discussion of New France.

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Deer, Sarah, Bonnie Clairmont, and Carrie A. Martell (eds.). *Sharing Our Stories of Survival: Native Women Surviving Violence*. Lunham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007. AltaMira Press, Tribal Legal Studies #3. 382 pp. ISBN 978-0-7591-1125-7. \$29.95.

*Sharing Our Stories of Survival: Native Women Surviving Violence*, edited by Sarah Deer, Bonnie Clairmont, Carrie A. Martell, and Maureen L. White Eagle, should be required reading for all scholars of Native Studies. This book gives voice to the horrific racism and violence, sexual and otherwise, that individual Native women, some of them very well-known,

have had to endure. While the volume definitely has a US focus, the reality it examines, that Native American and First Nations women are at a greater risk of violence than any one else in North American society, knows no borders. With a wide range of contributors that goes beyond survivors of violence to include service providers as well as lawyers and scholars, this volume provides a good explanation of the historical context in which violence against Native women takes place, the legal framework surrounding this issue in the US, and the policies and realities that Native women face when they attempt to free themselves and their children from violent situations. The book gives ample statistics on conditions today and confronts both violence by non-Native perpetrators and by Native people in the home. The authors thus provide a strong account of Multi-Generational Trauma and Residential School Syndrome.

Jurisdiction over these crimes against Native women varies, depending upon where they live in the United States. Six states are impacted by Public Law 83-280, passed in 1953, giving over federal jurisdiction on reservations to the states themselves, also denying funding to the tribes in question for the creation of their own law enforcement to deal with what would otherwise be federal crimes under the Constitution. The lack of local control over law enforcement itself contributes to the misery. Native women and children, in Alaska, for example, may have to wait days because of weather and geography for help to arrive, even though state law mandates an arrest within twelve hours. Along with social stigma and confusion over jurisdiction, this delay prevents many women and children from seeking help. In some Alaskan communities, one hundred percent of Native women have been the victims of domestic or sexual violence at some point in their lives.

The volume also explores the particular problems faced by Native women seeking help in the urban context. With a lack of culturally-appropriate services available to them, Native women too often become “invisible” in the urban setting. They fall in between the cracks both in terms of their lives and in terms of serious study of the violence that impacts them.

*Sharing Our Stories* examines the challenges that face Native communities in changing the social fabric of our colonized societies and dealing with the colonial law enforcement and social agencies that are meant to address our problems. By drawing on traditional teachings, the book offers suggestions toward community and individual healing and it makes specific recommendations for changes to laws and to the relationships between legal and social agencies and tribal governments. Moreover, this collection offers many good tools for teachers and students, making it a strong choice for the classroom.

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Eigenbrod, Renate. *Travelling Knowledges: Positioning the Im/migrant Reader of Aboriginal Literatures in Canada*. Winnipeg: U of Manitoba Press, 2005. 274 pp. ISBN 10-88755-681-7. \$24.95.

Renate Eigenbrod's *Travelling Knowledges* has a dual purpose: to provide ethical and culturally-appropriate readings of a wide variety of Canadian First Nations texts, and to examine the position and role of the non-Native academic reader of such texts. Her study invites comparisons to Helen Hoy's *How Should I Read These? Native Women Writers in Canada*, as both are texts by Euro-Canadian scholars of First Nations literature that focus as much on the role of the reader as they do on the texts themselves. Both explore the authors' attempts to develop reading strategies that are appropriate to Native literature, while not exoticizing that literature by concentrating only on its "otherness." Both emphasize the multiplicity of possible interpretations (both appropriate and inappropriate) of the texts they examine. The two studies differ in their central focus—Hoy concentrates on gender, while Eigenbrod concentrates on the metaphors of traveling—and in the subject positions of the authors. Where Hoy was born in Canada, of Irish background, Eigenbrod is a German-born immigrant to Canada, and thus has to examine not only her position as an outsider reading Native Canadian literature, but also her position as a German, a people who are stereotyped as being fascinated with the First Nations. Eigenbrod's careful examination of the migrating and border-crossing of First Nations literature, and of her own position as an immigrant researcher of that literature, provides an important contribution to the field.

The split word im/migrant of the title provides both subject and methodology. "The negotiation of both, the immigrant and the migrant perspective, acknowledging yet also crossing boundaries, constitutes the interpretive method of this study" (xiii), but Eigenbrod also explores the representations of routes (or roots), boundary crossings, movement, migration, traveling, and insider/outsider positions within the literature itself. She provides excellent close readings of numerous texts, many of which have not received much critical attention in the past, such as

Ruby Slipperjack's *Silent Words*, Richard Wagamese's *A Quality of Light*, and Maurice Kenny's "Rain." Her detailed, careful and culturally-situated readings of these under-studied texts, and of several that are central in the Native-Canadian canon, will make this volume useful for all readers of Native literature, both Native and non-Native.

Although Eigenbrod promises to speak to her readers "not just through the persuasiveness of my intellectual arguments but also through my lived experiences" (xii), and her introduction provides a detailed story of her intellectual travels in the study of Native literature, her own voice is sometimes overwhelmed by secondary material and by academic jargon that does not seem as true to the stories as the specific culturally-situated readings elsewhere in the volume. While there is a place for theoretical academic discourse in the study of Native literature, I personally would like to see more of Eigenbrod's own stories and hear more of her own voice as she works her way along the many literal and intellectual roads that she travels. This minor complaint aside, I believe Renate Eigenbrod's assertion that "Although engaging critically with Indigenous texts is challenging and difficult, non-Indigenous scholars should not abdicate their responsibility of attempting to do so" (66), and I appreciate the road map that her book provides for other non-Native readers of Aboriginal literature, showing them some of the more promising paths, and suggesting that some well-traveled routes are actually dead ends.

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Goddard, Ives, (ed.). *The Autobiography of a Meskwaki Woman*, Memoir 18, Algonquian and Iroquoian Linguistics, Winnipeg, 2006. 221 pp. ISBN 0-921064-18-7. \$40.00; *The Owl Sacred Pack*, Memoir 19, Algonquian and Iroquoian Linguistics, Winnipeg, 2007. 239 pp. ISBN 978-0-921064-19-5. \$40.00.

The name of the woman who wrote of her life in her native Meskwaki language in 1918 using the native spelling system remains unknown. Alfred Kiyana wrote *The Owl Sacred Pack* in the same language and orthography about 1914. Both were residents of the Meskwaki Settlement in Tama county, Iowa, at the time.

The manuscripts were prepared for Truman Michelson, an ethnographer and linguist studying Meskwaki language and culture in the early decades of the twentieth century, and he edited them, transcribed them phonetically and translated them with the help of Meskwaki-speaking informants. They were published respectively as *The Autobiography of a Fox Indian Woman* (Michelson 1925) and as *The Owl Sacred Pack of the Fox Indians* (Michelson 1921).

In the volumes under review here, Ives Goddard has returned to the original manuscripts, reedited them and prepared a new transcription and translation, with the assistance of new informants. The transcription is now phonemic, which is much easier to become familiar with and read than the old phonetic one with its frequent variety of symbols for what are essentially the same sounds. The new translation is no doubt more accurate and in more modern idiom. In the case of the *Autobiography*, editing involved including parts of the account that dealt with sexual matters which Michelson had removed from his published version because they were “too naive and frank for European [t]aste” (Michelson 1925:295) – an example of change in North-American European culture for any ethnographer interested in studying it.

Each volume has pages of “Textual Notes” dealing with corrections and additions to the manuscript versions and to Michelson’s publications. Then there is an extensive glossary of inflectional affixes including all sequences of inflectional suffixes found in the text. These are important, since the personal and relative pronouns of the language, as well as a lot of other information, are all expressed by these attachments to the beginnings and ends of words.

There is an elaborate set of abbreviations used to interpret the meanings of the affixes. One might hope for more English words and fewer abbreviations to aid the interpretations, but there is really neither shortcut nor easy road to understanding this part of the language.

What use is such material? Both texts reflect Meskwaki culture relatively little influenced by European ways. *The Owl Sacred Pack* describes religious practices and beliefs belonging to the ancient Indigenous Meskwaki faith. *The Autobiography of a Meskwaki Woman* has examples of traditional education, beliefs, social interaction and moral attitudes. So these books should be of particular interest to anthropologists and sociologists. In addition, *The Autobiography* is just a good read for anyone who likes to peer at what our fellow humans are up to, which virtually all of us like to do.

The books would also provide very useful material for anyone trying to learn the Meskwaki language or learn about its nature. But they are not language lessons; the student would have to use them in conjunc-

tion with other aids and create his or her own learning strategies. The glossary of inflections is essential here, and most of the vocabulary can be found in Goddard's 1994 lexicon. Goddard cites two grammars, one by him and one by Amy Dahlstrom, both forthcoming. In the meantime, one could fall back on Bloomfield (1927).

Needless to say, the person whose interests in Meskwaki are solely anthropological or sociological will gain a deeper understanding by acquiring at least some familiarity with the Meskwaki language in which the concepts and attitudes of the people and their culture are expressed. Likewise, the student of the language needs to understand as much as possible of the culture to make sense of much of what is said in the language.

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Grant, Agnes. *Finding My Talk: How Fourteen Native Women Reclaimed Their Lives After Residential School*. Calgary: Fifth House Ltd., 2004. 224 pp. ISBN 9781894856577. \$19.95.

You won't soon forget the stories contained within the pages of this book. Fourteen remarkable Aboriginal women tell their stories about the loneliness, despair, and confusion they experienced while incarcerated in residential schools. They also proclaim the hope that sustained them, the resilience which allowed them to become survivors, and the quiet resistance which burned deep within them.

The title is very appropriate for a book about Aboriginal women. During their residential school years, many of these women were not allowed to have an opinion of their own. They learned to be silent and not bring attention to themselves, lest they be punished. So they 'lost' their talk and many did not 'find' their talk again until they were out of reach of those who had oppressed them.

These women's lives took many different paths, but each led to the healing and wellness whereby they could find their voices and speak up so that future generations might learn from their experiences. In later life, Eleanor Brass was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Ottawa; Ida Wasacase became a member of the Order of Canada; Rita Joe became known as the "Poet Laureate of the Mi'Maq;" Alice French, published author; Sister Dorothy Moore, received an honorary doctorate from Mount St. Vincent University; Shirley Sterling, published author; Marjorie Gould, lifetime achievement award by the Atlantic Native Teachers Education Conference; Doris Pratt, official Dakota translator for the Government of Canada; Edith Dalla Costa, knowledge of Aboriginal culture; Bernice Touchie, knowledge of history and language of her people; Mary Cardinal Collins, consultant and facilitator in Aboriginal language projects and development of Aboriginal resources; Elizabeth Bear, found her roots and identity; Sara Sabourin, Elder; Beverly Sabourin, researcher, counselor and head of her own company. All of these women are champions of Aboriginal Peoples and culture.

The fourteen women who opened their lives up to the scrutiny of others are remarkably brave individuals. Many of the women within these pages suffered indignities that affected their spiritual, emotional, physical, mental, and intellectual selves. Yet, they overcame these traumas to lead lives which have inspired their families, their communities, and their Nations. Agnes Grant's *Finding My Talk* is a significant contribution to the existing literature regarding residential schools and Aboriginal Peoples.



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Helin, Calvin. *Dances with Dependency: Indigenous Success Through Self-Reliance*. Vancouver: Orca Spirit Publishing and Communications, Inc., 2006, pp. 313. ISBN 0978210700 Hardcover. \$34.95.

Calvin Helin attempts to contextualize the current situation facing Aboriginal people in Canada in order to address the social problems plaguing our lives and also to fend off a potentially crippling economic crisis for all Canadians, referred to as the *demographic tsunami*. The author provides some excellent interpretations of historical injustices and a critique of the current Aboriginal governance structures. He also instills hope in the reader that there can be an end to the problems faced by all Aboriginal people. Tragically, however, Helin offers nothing innovative, and simply surrenders to the will of the multinational corporations and the Canadian government. It is tragic because this book is so widely promoted throughout mainstream media as the answer to all the problems, and Aboriginal leaders have begun to endorse Helin's misguided solutions.

Helin certainly exhibits pride in his culture and traditions, yet he refuses to incorporate any Indigenous way of life or ideology in his plan. His blueprint in fact depends on straightforward acculturation: a facilitated Aboriginal migration to urban centers, amnesia about the wrongs and injustice of the past, and individual private ownership on reserves. Helin calls not for an implementation or realization of Aboriginal title or real self-determination, but for a shift in focus to capitalism, economic gains and the bottom line. So, in response to the resource extraction taking place on unceded traditional territory of Aboriginal Nations, Helin advocates for accommodation agreements and the creation of business partnerships.

Chapter 1 provides background to the societal elements of pre-contact Aboriginal societies and the achievement of self-reliance. There is vague reference to rich Aboriginal cultures and much emphasis on the fur trade. Unfortunately, most of the section is built on introducing sociological pathology theories of *welfare trap*, *welfare syndrome*, *welfare dependency*, *dependency mindset*, *dependency theory*, *dependency*

*course* and so on. Helin's overreliance on such theories is fundamentally flawed, because of its exclusive focus on individual psychology as understood within the narrow confines of Western sociology. As Chrisjohn has pointed out, Western scientific frameworks, in terms of human and social concerns, lack conceptual clarification and causality, and are excessively mechanistic (2006, 296:9). Within these intellectual restraints, to focus on the individual Aboriginal person will result, in one way or another, in the following conclusion: Aboriginal people are on welfare (unemployed, addicted to alcohol, undereducated, etc.) due to internal or mental factors. Because he diverts the broader cultural, social, political and economic factors onto the individual, Helin fails to articulate the actual complexity of the problems facing Aboriginal people.

Chapter 2 and 3 are focused on Helin's social construct, the demographic tsunami. Simply put, the demographic tsunami argues that aging baby boomers, a rapidly growing Aboriginal population, and the elevated payments from potentially increasing Métis rights "will impact individual taxpayers in their wallets and will have serious long-term repercussions to the well-being of Canada" (53). This economic argument is reminiscent of the reasoning used by the BC Liberal Government and the Canadian Taxpayers Association to justify their approach to the failed 2002 BC Treaty Referendum.

Chapter 4, the First Wave, is a disappointingly traditional anthropological account of Aboriginal societies prior to contact. There is no genuine analysis of Aboriginal ways of life or worldview, and the author's bias in favor of non-Aboriginal academics and "expert" opinion and perspectives is obvious.

In Chapter 5, the Second Wave, the effects of colonization and the evolving relationship with non-Aboriginals is touched on. This is perhaps the best chapter of the book. The author provides a great historical summary of the harmful Indian Act legislation and is accurate in pointing out how the Canadian policy makers "thought...the best way to civilize Aboriginal populations that operated outside the accepted economic structure of the time was through a systematic process of assimilation so that they would fit into the emerging industrial society and market economy" (98).

Chapter 6, the Third Wave, returns to the Western theory of welfare dependency to pinpoint the origin of those Aboriginal social pathologies which he argues are based on a "lack of productive employment [that] has undermined traditional role and status relationships" (110). Chapters 7, 8 and 9 expand welfare dependency to include learned helplessness, culture of expectancy, shaman economics, political pathologies and a psychological theory of pleasure and reward, all Eurocentric

theories that would make Peter Cole, Roland Chrisjohn, Marie Battiste, Gregory Cajete and Vine Deloria Jr. cringe. Lateral violence and crab syndrome<sup>1</sup> theories also are shaped out of the dependency mindset.

The analysis of the current situation is excellent. However, the author falls short of proposing any move forward that will truly benefit Aboriginal people. For example, no actual solutions are posed to the problems of internal corruption, nepotism, and lack of community involvement in decision making, although Helin passionately appeals for governance reform as “real democracy, fair election procedures, and transparent and accountable governance [which] are fundamental to creating a sustainable economy” (152). He acknowledges that “government efforts to create positive economic results will never be realized until there is recognition of the existing governance and structural impediments” (128), but he is wrong to suggest that private sector business, which is concerned only with maximization of profit, can any better restructure existing governance systems. Calls for individual property ownership on reserve lands and the abandonment of Aboriginal title for a booming resource economy are not the way forward.

Yet Helin envisions economic partnership with business as the only future. While in Chapter 10 he admits that “Aboriginal problems can never be solved by money alone...real success will be measured by the well-being, health and happiness of community members” (168), in Chapter 11 he urges Bands to welcome oil sands development, diamond mines, pipeline projects, mining, hydro dams and coal bed methane.

In Chapter 12, in unnecessarily provocative language, Helin states that the “whole welfare trap and its impacts have made Indigenous people fat, slow, lazy, and, as many youth now argue, stupid” (192). He also acutely observes the often troubled relationship between educated band members and the band council:

A problem with Indigenous communities is that they pay lip service to utilizing their own educated people, but many go out of their way to avoid this...in the context of dysfunctional attitudes that exist in many communities, educated community members are often viewed as a threat. Sometimes, ethically challenged community leaders are uneasy about having their operations exposed to (and perhaps subsequently exposed by) educated community members.... Many of these leaders are the first to pound the table and trumpet the virtues of self-government, but the very last to utilize the most valuable resource in making self-government a reality—their own people. (194)

Nevertheless Helin’s attitude towards education is difficult to discern.

At the start of Chapter 13, the author chastises education, or book learning, as inadequate and not a “real” education. Then, in the second half of the chapter, the author does a complete reversal and cites how education is fundamental to success.

More clear cut is Helin’s attitude towards economic development. In line with the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, he identifies two approaches to economic development: the jobs-and-income and the nation-building approaches. “Under the more reactive and short-sighted jobs-and-income approach, some tribes simply try to invent a business to create more jobs and income” (199). Conversely, the nation-building approach:

Is more proactive in nature and argues that solving the problem will require a solution both ambitious and more comprehensive than trying to start a business or other projects. The solution is to build a nation in which both business and human beings flourish.... A nation-building approach doesn’t say, ‘Let’s start a business.’ Instead, it says, ‘let’s build an environment that encourages investors to invest, that helps business last, and that allows investment to flourish and take off.’ ...the solution is sovereignty.... Sovereignty, nation-building and economic development go hand in hand.” (199:200)

The economic models that he discusses in Chapter 14 make it clear that Helin favors the latter approach, but in a way that is fully tied to Eurocentric ideas about progress. For example, he points to the Northeastern Alberta Aboriginal Business Association (NAABA) and the ATCO Group, both resource based businesses involved in oil sands, transmission lines, diamond mines, gold mines and oil and gas, respectively.

To participate meaningfully in oil sands development, Syncrude realized that they had to help Aboriginal locals transcend the challenges of living and working in a modern industrialized society. This was done in a way that respected Aboriginal customs and culture while meeting their corporate objectives (230). Hunt, Senior VP for Akita Drilling, says,

“Successful northern partnerships happen when southern companies cooperate fully with Aboriginal people and show respect for their land.” (238)

The environmental damage caused by these industries, however, makes such noble sentiments sound sadly hollow and pathetic. The universal Aboriginal principle of connection to the land seems to have been reduced to an insertion into an economic equation or business model.

In Chapter 15 Helin turns his attention to urban Indians. The paradigm shift necessary for Aboriginals to make the transition to city life is

considerable. In Helin's once again needlessly provocative words, Aboriginals must "learn that, without a reasonable income, surviving in large cities is very difficult. Unlike reserves where housing is usually provided without cost, city landlords demand that rent be paid on time. Also, welfare cheques don't go nearly as far when everything must be paid for" (243). Yet Helin still wants Aboriginal people to move to the city, and even goes so far as to advocate the need for band governments to facilitate such a move. But he offers no real solutions as to how urban Aboriginals might maintain their connections with their home communities, other than to suggest that "there should be some federal transfer payment monies in the line item budgets of rural communities specifically earmarked to provide information and support services to urban-based community members" (247). His best point here can be found in his calls for inner city relationship support systems for Aboriginal youth, in terms of mentorship, career fairs, guest speakers, and career days-at-work.

What bothered me most when reading this book is how unabashedly co-opted the arguments are by Western thought. At one point Helin notes that "while Victorians viewed what came to be known as the Doctrine of Assimilation (as it evolved in Canada) as an enlightened new direction in social policy, it was subsequently criticized as being based on four dehumanizing and incorrect ideas about Aboriginal peoples" (92). Assumption four states:

European ideas about progress and development were self-evidently correct and could be imposed on Aboriginal people without reference to any other values and opinions—let alone rights they might possess. (92)

And yet this discredited idea is the very same perspective that Helin's economic development agenda has adopted! In his calls to accept oil and gas revenues and diamond mine accommodation and employment, aren't we called to disregard Indigenous concepts of sustainability, Aboriginal rights and title, and even the very possibility of incorporating some alternative form of Indigenous economics? Later the author adds "while some of the Aboriginal land base may be 'moose pasture,' it is moose pasture where more and more oil, gas, diamonds, base metals, valuable forests and flowing rivers are located" (184). In other words, forget about the environment, the cultural value of the land, the wildlife, water, and habitat, and demand in exchange for it all a cut of the money.

It is also frustrating to see Helin's underlying solution reiterated again and again because such a solution is far too popular with Indigenous politicians. It can be summed up in eight words: "Get the money, and then solve the problems." Even though he recognizes that "Aboriginal

problems can never be solved by money alone” (168), that is nonetheless still the remedy he proposes for urban Aboriginals—more federal transfer monies.

Furthermore, in advocating for business partnerships that try to extract as much money as possible from resource-based corporations, he is merely substituting sources of external revenue with no contingency plan for what will happen after the oil dries up and the land and water are left poisoned and uninhabitable.

Helin opts to reiterate the agenda of the Canadian federal and provincial governments. And, as my graduate supervisor, Bill Cohen, jokingly suggests, “When the Canadian Government is applauding and supporting you or your efforts, you better step back and take a good look at the direction you are headed in.” The government and media fully support Helin’s approach because he is naively reproducing their own vision for how Aboriginal people should fit within the Canadian society and economy. He has duplicated Flanagan’s beliefs in his calls for Aboriginal people to relocate in cities and echoes the Conservative government’s agenda to transform reserve lands from communal ownership to fee simple. Furthermore, he has completely acceded to industry and corporate wishes in his proposal for Aboriginal people to sever all spiritual and cultural ties to the land, effectively trading environmental salvation for money.

Do not read this book hoping to find innovation or any adequate solutions to the actual problems facing Aboriginal communities. Instead, focus on the historical backdrops of his analysis and the assessment of the current situations of Aboriginal governments, as you skim past the psychological paradigms and thoughtlessly provocative language about Aboriginals, Métis and the elderly.

### Note

1. Crab Syndrome is an Indian Country phenomenon. It is believed that if an Indigenous person living on the reserve (metaphorically representing the bucket) tries to climb out (or move up), the rest of the Indigenous People will pull them back down, and not allow them to leave (or move up in) the reserve.

## References

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2006 *The Circle Game: Shadows and Substance in the Indian Residential School Experience in Canada*. Penticton: Theytus Books.

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Hildebrandt, Walter and Brian Hubner. *The Cypress Hills: An Island by Itself*. Saskatoon: Purich Publishing, Ltd., 2007. 184 pp. ISBN 978-1895830-309. \$25.00

The handsome cover of *The Cypress Hills* should make readers want to head out to southeastern Alberta and southwestern Saskatchewan to spend time in the impressive Cypress Hills Inter-Provincial Park. As Hildebrandt and Hubner point out, the region is an “island by itself,” or *wazi-ka*—the Assiniboine (Nakoda) term for “the place where the lands gets rough or broken” (p. 120). But the hills’ beauty is matched by their intriguing human history.

As a landscape history, *The Cypress Hills* is an example of western Canadian environmental history in which the role of place takes center stage. It entails the history of natural resource use, especially that of bison, berries, and lodge pole pine, by such peoples as the Assiniboine, Dakota, Plains Cree, and Métis. Berries and bison made the hills an important pemmican-producing area, a feature well exploited by the First Nations for their own survival and as a vital resource for trade with European newcomers. The book is primarily an Indigenous history, but readers may be annoyed at the authors’ treatment of the origin of peoples in the area. They present almost as fact the Bering Strait Theory (p. 16) without acknowledging the preponderance of archeological evidence that humans in North America predate Beringia, and they offer no origin stories or oral traditions from any of the First Nations themselves.

Certainly, contact and relations with Europeans (fur traders, from the Hudson’s Bay Company and later the American Fur Company south

of the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel) are an important part of the history of this place. Then, the hills became a buffer zone—a region of refuge for hunting, for pole and berry gathering, and from brutal winter conditions on the open prairies. But when bison numbers began to disappear by the 1880s, the Canadian government established the North West Mounted Police to promote peace in the region—peace among contesting Aboriginal groups and for a much larger influx of Anglo newcomers. Here, the authors' analysis of Fort Walsh and of various NWMP superintendents is fascinating, their research and interpretation of the Cypress Hills Massacre is definitive, and their variety of maps and illustrations is commendable.

Wittingly or unwittingly, Hildebrandt and Hubner have written a work that fits into the emerging historiography of the Canadian-U.S. borderlands, although they do not use the term. They do not need to: the borderlands analysis is subtle and operational. Their discussion of border-negotiating by Indigenous tribes, Métis, fur trappers, gold miners, traders on the Whoop-Up Trail, contraband whiskey smugglers, merchants, Mounties, and U.S. soldiers make *The Cypress Hills* essential reading for those interested in the trans-boundary West. Chapter 6 on the arrival of Sitting Bull and his band of Hunkpapa followers, however, has been treated more thoroughly by David McCrady in *Living with Strangers* (2006) and seems a bit out of place here since Sitting Bull's people never really lived in the Cypress Hills. In fact, in too many places the book strays far from the hills, perhaps to provide context and background, although this is never made clear.

Finally, the authors give too short shrift to the ranching era (two pages) and conservation with the establishment of the inter-provincial park (1 page) in the last chapter, which leaves readers wanting more on those and other twentieth-century issues. It may not have been the intent of the authors to cover that era, but if not, their subtitle should have time period parameters. The book is an updated version of the authors' previous work on the Cypress Hills, but perhaps it was not updated enough. Nonetheless, as a historical study of the late nineteenth century in the region, *The Cypress Hills* is a well written and highly recommended work. It made me want to return to the hills.

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- Leepreecha, Prasit, Don McCaskill, and Kwanchewan Buadaeng (eds.). *Challenging The Limits: Indigenous Peoples of the Mekong Region*. Mekong Press, 2008. Distributed by Silkworm Books. 390 pp. ISBN 978-974-8418-20-9. 795.00 Baht
- McCaskill, Don, Prasit Leepreecha, and He Shaoying (eds.). *Living in a Globalized World: Ethnic Minorities in The Greater Mekong Sub-region*. Mekong Press, 2008. Distributed by Silkworm Books. 386 pp. ISBN 978-974-8276-63-2. 895.00 Baht.

These two texts examine the effects of globalization upon Indigenous peoples situated far beyond the North American focus of most books reviewed in this journal.

*Challenging The Limits* is the published proceedings of an international conference titled 'Impact of Globalization, Regionalism, and Nationalism on Minority Peoples in Southeast Asia,' which was held in November, 2004 at Chiang Mai, Thailand. The twelve articles presented in this volume address the effects of government policies and globalization on Indigenous peoples and their traditional highland forest homes. The cases are taken from Myanmar (Burma), Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Thailand, and Yunnan province of China. Despite different colonial histories and political systems, national policies towards Indigenous highland groups across the region are strikingly similar, even though responses to these policies by ethno-tribal groups are varied. Most national policies are directed towards commercialization, modernization, and forced relocation, resulting in social-cultural change and environmental degradation, as well as increasing conflicts across ethnic boundaries as non-Indigenous nationals move into traditional territories. Several of the articles address the adaptive strategies employed by Indigenous peoples in the face of change, and also some of the advantages they experience through education, modernization, and cross-boarder opportunities.

The articles in this volume address issues of globalization or internationalization in which Indigenous people are subject to government policies of 'integration' not unlike those in Canada affecting Indigenous people. One can only conclude that such policies remain self-serving to governments and industry, and destructive to the cultures, lands, and well being of Indigenous people wherever they occur.

*Living in a Globalized World* consists of ten papers compiled from an international research project that focused on the impacts of regionalism, nationalism, and globalization on the identities, cultures, social systems, and environments of ethnic minority groups (hill tribes) of the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) of Southeast Asia. The research

project was funded by the Southeast Asia Office of the Rockefeller Foundation and was carried out by a team of scholars from five universities: the Social Research Institute, Chiang Mai University, Thailand; the Yunnan Nationalities University, Kunming, China; the Institute of Anthropology, Hanoi, Vietnam; the National University of Laos, Vientiane; and Trent University, Canada. One aim of the research project was to 'develop an ongoing collaborative network among educational institutions in five countries to lead to greater regional capacity in trans-boundary research' (p. x).

The articles address a wide range of issues related to social, cultural, and economic change for the ethnic/ minority groups of the region who are facing the consequences of nationalism and globalization. Community based research provides case studies on the pressures for change as advanced through religious conversion, systems of foreign (national) education, external political control, and exploitation of regional natural resources. Individual articles focus on imposed and directed social and cultural change for local and regional ethnic minorities, primarily within the highland regions that extend from southwest China, through Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, and Myanmar (Burma). The research within the articles paints a picture of another kind of global phenomenon, the near universal impact of development on Indigenous groups, their relation to their lands, their traditions, their identities, and their realities, and the compromises that they must make in order to survive as identifiable ethno-cultural entities in a rapidly changing world.

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McKegney, Sam. *Magic Weapons: Aboriginal Writers Remaking Community After Residential School*. Foreword by Basil H. Johnston. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2007. 300 pp. ISBN 978-0-88755-702-6. \$28.95.

This book fills a gap in the scholarly writing on Aboriginal literature as it analyzes works by Aboriginal authors with a focus on the residential school theme. Unlike residential school narratives like Basil Johnston's *Indian Schooldays* or Shirley Sterling's *My Name is Seepeetza*, McKegney's main texts selected for analysis include the schools as only one of the important episodes in the respective writer's life: *Song of Rita*

*Joe* (1996) by Rita Joe (Mi'kmaq), *Skid Row Eskimo* (1976) by Anthony Apakark Thrasher (Inuit) and *Kiss of the Fur Queen* (1998) by Tomson Highway (Cree). This choice of life narratives foregrounds the fact that the residential school experience is just "one important cog" (J.R. Miller) in the forces of colonialism and, more specifically, assimilation. The idea for the title, "Magic Weapons," is taken from Highway's novel (initially written as an autobiography) and alludes to the main tenets of McKegney's approach: to interpret Aboriginal literature as a weapon to be used in the defence of Aboriginal communities and to demonstrate that "survival narratives subvert the notion of deterministic or powerless response to residential school experience." Given his objectives, it is understandable that he draws on Native American scholars like Vizenor and Weaver with their respective concepts of *survivance* and *communitism*; however, because his focus is literature linked to Aboriginal (residential school) experiences in Canada, a more prominent inclusion of Canadian Aboriginal scholars would have lent cogency to his study.

For a scholar who is neither of Aboriginal ancestry nor a survivor, in any sense, of residential schools, McKegney took on a challenging task in his "critical posture of an ally." His analytical and argumentative skills served him well in bringing to the fore the richness of the selected texts and "the resilience of agency throughout victimhood" in each one of them. However, it seems noteworthy to me that McKegney's discussion of the life narrative by Inuk author, Thrasher is based on a book which has been out of print since the 1970s (and on a manuscript even less accessible) so that his conclusion to the chapter that it is a narrative of survivance "by an author survived by his own empowering words" is only true to the degree that Thrasher's words are being represented. Although this is not McKegney's fault—and he is to be commended for including a much neglected text in his study—I would have liked to see some acknowledgment (and an analysis) of this irony and a mention of its consequences.

In the discussion of Rita Joe's autobiography, McKegney interprets her attempt at dwelling on the positive as contrasting with the "disclosure-based approach" embraced, for example, by Mi'kmaq author Knockwood; in addition, he exemplifies Joe's "affirmative literary methodology" through an analysis of the structure of the autobiography, in particular the interspersing of her poetry throughout her narrative. However, I miss any acknowledgment of Lynn Henry with whose assistance Joe's book was written.

One of the strengths of McKegney's book is that each text discussed at length is understood in the context of a specific culture and (colonial)

history. In the case of *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, McKegney reveals how Cree oral traditions shape Highway's novel, and in particular the telling of the story of sexual abuse in a residential school. The re-articulation of a culture meant to be destroyed by those very schools in itself undermines their success, as McKegney rightly argues. Still, we are not yet in "post-residential-school Canada", a phrase McKegney uses throughout and which I consider as much a misnomer as the descriptor "post-colonial Canada."

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Moore, Dean, Kathleen, Kurt Peters, Ted Jojola, and Amber Lacy (eds.).  
*How It Is: The Native Philosophy of V. F. Cordova*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2007. 208 pp. ISBN 978-0-8165-2649-9. \$19.95 U.S.

With the publication of *How It Is: The Native American Philosophy of V.F. Cordova*, we have received a gift. It is a gift made that much more extraordinary and difficult in light of the fact that much of this material never saw the light of day prior to Cordova's death in 2003 and we are thus left without a living interlocutor to answer our questions. Thus to receive this gift well, those who encounter the powerful mind of Cordova in these texts for the first time must tarry with her writing as if in a dialogue. Readers must allow her to speak for herself, question her in turn, and be attentive to the responses that one receives from the text. For this is one of the marvels of this collection of Cordova's writing: as a reader engages her autobiographical narratives, her poetry, and her philosophical essays, she will be brought into the conversation that is the life of this text: the manifold voices, tones, questions, answers, pokes, and prods all brought together under the proper name Viola Cordova.

A reader seeking out a univocal philosophical statement from this text (something the title may lead one to expect) will surely be disappointed. Cordova never develops any kind of overt doctrine of "how it is" in this text; rather she exhibits a univocal comportment of questioning. She never seeks to rest in the stasis of an answer that could respond to the question of "how is it?," a desire Cordova frequently aligns with Euro-American philosophical and scientific tendencies. She explains,

“The Euro-American conducts his attempts to understand his world on the assumption that there are definitive explanations to be discovered ...there will be one universal—all encompassing—and absolute—beyond question—Truth” (69). Such a conception of truth can only be borne out of a world that is conceived of as static, unchanging.

Nevertheless, Cordova does exhibit constancy in her philosophical comportment. Confronted with any concept, Cordova argues that philosophy happens when one asks, “In what sort of world would this concept make sense” (56)? The answer points towards a matrix, which she defines as a “view, or description [that] consists of three very basic items: a description of the world, a description of what it is to be human in that world, and a description of the role of humans in that world...the matrix forms a foundation upon which all else is explained” (61).

Cordova explains that the most of the time we live unaware of the matrix that enables us to engage the world as we do. For Cordova, a matrix is most often exposed when two conflicting conceptual frameworks come into contact with one another; a fact she exhibits most clearly in her own autobiographical writings, explaining how she always found herself in the midst of multiple matrices at once. This encounter with the limits of our knowledge, the ungrounded foundations of our explanatory frameworks, is where we encounter the fact of the matrix. Cordova argues that this is something that happens more often for Indigenous folks in colonial circumstances—rather than for the colonizers—as Indigenous populations are not only constantly confronted with another matrix, but a matrix that dominates how all conversation and discourse must take place.

As there is hegemony of Euro-American belief systems in North America, it is rare that people who encounter the world via the matrix of the West need ever account for their beliefs. It is this fact, more than anything, which motivates Cordova’s writing. Taking stock of the rise of multiculturalism, she writes, “While the Native American, as an *artifact*, is undergoing a resurgence of popularity, the Native American as he actually exists is ignored” (163). Cordova’s exposure of the matrix that underpins Euro-American knowledge systems, in effect, exposes the particularity, peculiarity, and relativity to Western claims of universality. In turn, this creates space for Indigenous voices to speak for themselves.

Contrary to Western accounts that seek out stasis, Cordova argues that stability in the Native world is about knowing how to ensure that consistency can be found amidst complexity. This task will always be circumstantial, environmental, and ongoing. “Each perspective, in its own environment, or circumstances, will be ‘true’ or ‘valid’—in *that* environment, in *those* circumstances.... He does not assume the ‘incor-

rectness' of the other's perspective when it does not coincide with his own" (71). For Cordova, the nature of Indigenous matrices is rooted in the ontology that undergirds them: the combined emphasis on monism and the diversity and specificity of creations implies that not only are practices particular to places but all practices are instantiations of and simultaneously responses to the univocity of being named variously "'nilch'i' by the Navajo, 'najoji' by the Blackfoot, 'usen' by the Apache, 'manitou' by the Ojibway" (104). Cordova thus argues that there is no universal Truth, while maintaining that certain referential frameworks are appropriate to situated manifestations of "the unidentifiable *is*" (107). The Western model fails from the beginning by assuming that infinite complexity can be subsumed under one template.

While Cordova's writings run the gamut of philosophical themes, there are a few issues that remain un(der) explored. She explains that, "The time has come for American Native peoples to give their own explanations. And that is the relevance of the study of philosophy for Native Americans: not to see ourselves as others see us, but to look at ourselves through our own eyes" (53). This is no easy task. It requires that we articulate ourselves contra externally imposed interpretations of Indigeneity. It also requires that we worry about the capacity of Indo-European languages to capture and explain the Native world. While Cordova spends a great deal of time worrying about how different linguistic frameworks disclose the world, she spends no time discussing what happens to Indigenous matrices when they are *translated*. Rejecting that there is a metalanguage, Cordova should be more concerned about the capacity for cross-cultural communication than she is. What is the tertiary reference to which the words of two entirely different languages refer such that we could ensure that they correspond?

This is but one of the litanies of questions that Cordova's text raises. Regardless, the nature of the questions—i.e., concerns about the present life of Indigenous peoples—accord with the spirit and the letter of Cordova's writings. The guiding impetus of her text is a desire to point out the continued plight of Aboriginal people in North America. To the extent that Cordova's book forces academics to reconsider their relation to the continued existence of the Native voice, I believe that her text is a success.

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Stewart, W. Brian. *The Ermatingers: A 19th-Century Ojibwa-Canadian Family*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008. 224 pages, ISBN 978-0-7748-1234-4. Paper \$29.95.

*The Ermatingers: A 19th-Century Ojibwa-Canadian Family* presents a carefully detailed history of the family of fur trader Charles Ermatinger and Mananowe Katawabidai (Charlotte), the daughter of Ojibwe Chief Katawabidai. The family history research is extensive and comprehensive and, among the wealth of source material that Stewart has compiled, are materials that have not previously been brought to light. The new family information it provides takes us well beyond our previous understanding of the Ermatingers, not only in the cases of Charles Oakes Ermatinger and his Ojibwa wife, but the cases of other family members and siblings.

Charles and Charlotte were married around 1800 and the family lived in the Sault Ste. Marie area, later moving to Montreal. Stewart traces the descendents of this mixed-race family, locating their kin in western Canada, Quebec, and Germany. At times, the content goes into so much detail regarding individual family members that larger thematic questions about the extent to which European and Ojibwa cultural ideas co-existed in family members' lives are somewhat lost. Certainly, Stewart does argue that these descendents participated in European society, living full lives in urban environments, while, at the same time, identifying closely with their Ojibwe cultural history.

The background material (essential for context in a book of this nature) on the Ojibwe is, however, very thin. While Stewart spends some time on Ojibwe warriors, the discussion lacks depth partly because of its generalized nature and partly because of the paucity of ideas around culture and world view. He devotes a tiny section in Chapter Two to what he calls "Ojibwe Religion" but it is insufficient for placing the family history in adequate context, especially considering that one of the larger themes in this book ostensibly addresses questions around the extent to which the Ermatinger offspring retained their Ojibwe culture while participating actively in a European milieu. There is no shortage of good sources on which Stewart might have drawn.

This book uses interesting and varied scholarly sources and presents useful notes, a thorough bibliography, and interesting appendices, if a less than adequate Index. It makes a genuine contribution to the history of dual-cultural families.

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*Actes du trente-septième congrès des algonquinistes.* Sous la direction de H.C. Wolfart. Université du Manitoba: Winnipeg, 2006. 496 pp. ISSN: 0831-5671; 37. \$48.00.

*Papers of the Thirty-eighth Algonquian Conference.* Edited by H.C. Wolfart. University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, 2007. 416 pp. ISSN: 0831-5671; 38. \$48.00.

The thirty-eight papers (two in French, the others in English) found in these two volumes<sup>1</sup> of proceedings may well mark the end of an era: as the Editor notes in a postscript to the preface to the second volume, the institutional support of the University of Manitoba in the production of the proceedings has been withdrawn, making the future of said published proceedings somewhat doubtful.

A majority of the papers are on Algonquian linguistics, the major exception being a bloc of six articles, in the first volume, in honor of Regina Flannery's ethnographic work on the James Bay Cree (with an introduction to, and a bibliography of, the honoree). In turn the linguistic papers may be subdivided into three broad categories: the theoretical, the descriptive, and the historical. The latter will be the focus of this review, not least because such work is likeliest to be found relevant by researchers in other fields (history, archeology, anthropology). Matthew S. Dryer's article "*Kutenai, Algonquian and the Pacific Northwest from an Areal Perspective*" (second volume, 155-206) will be of especial interest to ethnographers and historians: the author examines the Kutenai language (a language isolate spoken in southeastern British Columbia) and the various features it shares with Algonquian, on the one hand, and the languages of the Pacific Northwest on the other. His remarkable conclusion is that Kutenai and Algonquian share a number of features that are otherwise almost wholly unknown in the world's languages, making it unlikely in the extreme that these similarities are due to chance.<sup>2</sup>

It would seem that Kutenai and some Algonquian language(s) (if not proto-Algonquian itself) must either have deeply influenced one another, or themselves been influenced by some other language.

Reconstruction of different aspects of the proto-language in question is Ives Goddard's goal in two ambitious articles, "*The Proto-Algonquian Negative and its Descendants*" (first volume, 161-208) and "*Reconstruction and History of the Independent Indicative*" (second



volume, 207-271). The former article, however, is slightly marred by what would appear to be a desire to explain away a potential Proto-Algonquian negation, \**mata*: Goddard, comparing several reflexes of this element in modern Algonquian languages, points out that this element may originally not have had a negative meaning and may instead have meant “alternatively, instead, rather but,” as it does in Meskwaki (Fox) (165). However, Blackfoot has a negating prefix so similar in form (*máát*:- Frantz 1997 [1991] 84, an example of which Goddard himself gives on page 163) that it is difficult to see why he does not discuss it, especially since, in his other article, he says of Blackfoot that it may well be a “sister language to all the rest collectively” (207): the presence of what definitely appears to be a reflex of \**mata* in Blackfoot, as well as in several Central and Eastern Algonquian languages, with a negative meaning everywhere, does seem to point to a Proto-Algonquian negation \**mata*.

This criticism does not detract from the value of the rest of the article. His conclusion (203) that Proto-Algonquian had a negative verbal suffix \*-*w* seems well-supported by the evidence presented. Much more disturbing to this reviewer is the fact that among such evidence Goddard quotes Penobscot data supplied him by the late Frank T. Siebert, Jr. in 1965 (171, footnote 10). Are we to understand that hitherto these forms have never appeared in print? If so, forty-one years does seem an excessively long time for scholars to wait. The large-scale extinction of so many Indigenous (Algonquian and non-Algonquian) languages is bad enough, from a scientific point of view. For the linguistic data not to be available to the community of scholars is quite simply unacceptable. One is reminded of Greenberg (1996), in which he quite properly complains (156, 157) that several of his critics corrected a number of errors in Greenberg (1987) through recourse to unpublished material.

For Algonquian scholars to make their material available to interested outside scholars is all the more important if one considers that many conclusions derived therefrom, which may well be erroneous, are at risk of acquiring the status of a *doxa* within the field. Such is the case for David J. Costa’s “The Dialectology of Southern New England Algonquian” (volume two, 81-127), whose basic assertion, that there must have once existed a “Proto-Southern New England Algonquian (SNEA)” language, strikes this reviewer as wholly unproven. The three similarities between SNEA languages taken to prove the existence of proto-SNEA could just as readily be explained through assuming spread from one SNEA language to the others. In like fashion, Jan P. Van Eijk’s “Salish and Algonquian: A possible Relationship Revisited” (volume two, 403-416) comes to a negative conclusion in answer to the question as to whether Salish and Algonquian might be related. Yet a good many of the

reasons adduced strike this reviewer as wholly spurious. The differences between Algonquian and Salish with regard to pronominal person marking (409) do not appear to be any greater than the difference between English *Don't repeat it to us* and French *Ne nous le répétez pas* (literally "negative us-it-repeat-2plur.-negative"), whose pronominal morpheme order in either language is a perfect mirror image of that of the other. Yet both languages are related, being Indo-European, and indeed have been in intense contact with one another for an extended period of time.<sup>3</sup>

Despite the critical remarks above, these two collections of papers are quite stimulating, and will doubtless be of interest not only to algonquianists, but also to linguists who (like this reviewer) wish to find out more about this language family, as well as to non-linguists interested in various aspects of Algonquian-speaking peoples' history and culture. All will find something of interest in these pages.

### Notes

1. Within this review the proceedings of the thirty-seventh meeting will be referred to as the first volume, and of the thirty-eighth meeting as the second volume.
2. This stands in marked contrast to the similarities between Kutenai and languages of the Pacific Northwest, few of which are cross-linguistically rare.
3. It should be pointed out that French *nous* and English *us*, despite not having a single phoneme in common, are cognate.

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