

## BOOK REVIEWS

Abbott, Lawrence (Editor): *I Stand in the Center of the Good: Interviews with Contemporary Native American Artists*. University of Nebraska Press, 1994, 310 pp., black and white photos and seventeen colour reproductions. ISBN 0-8032-1037-X, Cloth US \$40.00.

This book is a collection of interviews with seventeen contemporary Native American artists. A lengthy introduction opens up the volume which is followed by a set pattern of interviews, introducing each artist with a black and white photograph and a short (in some cases longer) biographical note. The main part, the actual interview, follows with questions by Lawrence Abbott. Each section concludes with a list of selected exhibitions and a selective bibliography dealing mainly with the publications in respect to the individual artist. After page 120, there is a collection of seventeen colour reproductions showing one work per artist. The book is published in a hard cover and printed on permanent library quality paper. I find the layout of the book somewhat visually disturbing. The placement of the page numbers and the artist's name in the middle of the margin of every page pulls your attention from the text and gives you the feeling that the name of the artist is more important than what he or she has to say. Also, placing the colour reproductions in one section is most unfortunate. It would be much nicer to see the artist's work together with the text. Selection of the works could have been more careful. A number of major works discussed in the interviews are not shown. We all know that colour reproductions are expensive, but in such a work, in which we try to establish some form of quality and credibility, the cost should be the last consideration.

The following artists are represented in this volume:

Rick Glazer-Danay (Mohawk)  
Shan Goshorn (Cherokee)  
Hachivi Edgar Heap of Birds (Cheyenne-Arapaho)  
Rick Hill (Tuscarora)  
G. Peter Jemison (Cattaraugus Seneca)  
Michael Kabotie (Hopi)  
Frank LaPena (Nomtipom Wintu)  
Carm Little Turtle (Apache-Tarahumara)  
Linda Lomahaftewa (Hopi-Choctaw)  
Gerge Longfish (Seneca-Tuscarora)  
Mario Martinez (Yaqui)  
Nora Naranjo-Morse (Santa Clara)  
Jaune Quick-to-See Smith (Flathead-Cree-Shoshone)

Susan Stewart (Crow-Blackfeet)  
 Frank Tuttle (Yuki-Wailaki-Koncow Maidu)  
 Kay WalkingStick (Cherokee)  
 Emmi Whitehorse (Navajo)

The introduction presents a very important step in understanding contemporary Native art. In the past we were looking at Native art as a collection of artifacts decorated with beads, embroidery, or bites on the bark. Eventually this was extended to paintings of symbolic representations of the Native legends. Although visually attractive, the symbols were difficult to read for the average White individual. This often created misunderstanding and unfair criticism, and perhaps misrepresented the quality of the actual work. The Native artist was presented with a great problem of what to do? Should he or she remain true to the tradition or look for new ways of expression so that his or her work will be understood? In the second half of the twentieth century the decision was made. Many Native artists accepted the universal language of art and immediately joined the wide circle of world artists. They realised that they can express themselves using the language understood by the Western (White) culture without sacrificing the Native content in their works.

Contemporary artists are as influenced (in varying degrees) by, say, Kandinsky, abstract expressionism, surrealism, Coney Island, Walt Disney, and the current art scene as they are (in varying degrees) by earlier Indian art, tribal tradition, and their participation in ceremony (Introduction, p. XIX).

Although many contemporary Native artists accepted this repositioning in their formal expression, they somehow felt uncomfortable. This is not because of the lack of technical knowledge or the principles of composition. These are of high quality and many artists demonstrate their inventiveness in this respect. The uneasiness comes from criticism by both the Native and the White population. The Natives feel betrayed if the artist is abandoning the traditional ways of expression, and the Whites are unsure of the status of the emerging Native artist who is no different from the Whites, except perhaps on a few occasions when the content is typically Native.

The universality of art applies not only to the language of expression, but also to the subject matter. Here we find Native artists getting involved not only in Native themes but also in the greater concerns of the human race, its environment and politics.

Some of the interviewed artists are mainly interested with creating the visual expressions dealing with the individual without any involvement in politics. The artist observes and makes statements. The viewer makes an interpretation. Unfortunately those interpretations are frequently wrong and lead to our misconceptions about the artist. Not all Native artists are

politically involved, as the interviewer would like to suggest.

The book, as Lawrence Abbott points out, is not all inclusive. It deals with a group of artists between thirty and fifty-five years of age. The artists are affiliated with many different tribes, styles and visions. Unfortunately Alaska and the Pacific Northwest are not represented. With these minor drawbacks it remains an important work. Perhaps for the first time the reader and perhaps the viewer can read and see the developments in Native arts presented from the viewpoint of the artist who is well educated and competent in his ways of expression, who draws on the new without discarding the old, who sees, and thinks before he speaks, the authentic artist.

“Non-Indian” influences or lack of recognizable “Indian” imagery does not render the art of Native peoples invalid or inauthentic. This test of authenticity (really a “fallacy of authenticity”) avers that Indian art is that which is stored in ethnology collections, is sold in curio shops, is primitive, and represents as much of the unsullied pre-contact culture as possible. Because of this fallacy of authenticity artists have been prevented from growing and audiences have been denied the opportunity to really look at Indian art, past and present. As Gerald McMaster has advised, “Seeing is mandatory; conclusions are optional.” Unfortunately, for too long, seeing was optional, conclusions were mandatory (Introduction, pp. XIX-XX).

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Chrystos. *Not Vanishing*. Vancouver: Press Gang Publishers, 1988, 105 pp. ISBN: 0-88974-015-1, US \$10.95.

Poets reveal themselves. They always have. In the conventional view, poetry is the repository of reflection, rumination, speculation; the creation of moments of vision/union but also blindness/dissociation.

Words are tools for poets, as they are for us all. But most users of words take them for granted. For most users, words are durable tools. In the end, they make nothing. They change nothing. Words like earth and star and greed and stupidity and loneliness and hunger, are stored, used and returned to the same narrow, undifferentiated space. Chrystos doesn't do this. Her words are missiles. They have purpose and they have power.

They charge the readers' personal environment with pain and hope, with hate and consolation. There has always been poetry that has required courage to write. Chrystos writes poetry that requires courage to read. At the end of the millennium, reading poetry forces us to retrieve words from oblivion and to liberate language from the slavery of commoditization. We have destroyed words and willed them to a mass culture that has forgotten how to value them; to a culture that will respond only to code and formulaic expression. Vocabularies and rhetoric have become the victim of their masters—shrunk and sized to fit. They are off-the-shelf commodities shrouding the incomprehension, fear and silence of the talkers, the programmers and the writers too, who cannot separate word from specified function.

Chrystos has words. Simple and penetrating and tragic and loving words. Words violently wrested from the barren plain where we have allowed them to wither. Words fearlessly extracted and cunningly converted from experience. Chrystos has faced pain and need, and responded with enormously powerful medicine.

These are poems of rage and anguish. Many are poems of terrible sadness. There is unmitigated anger here and, where anger is not hurled at the reader, the poems deepen and soften, becoming elegy and lament. But Chrystos is not without range. The few nature and love poems are deeply lyrical, free of affectation and gentle in their unfolding. A publisher's statement at the conclusion of the volume describes Press Gang Publishers as "a feminist collective committed to publishing writing which explores the personal and political lives of women in society." The volume also contains a terse statement about the poet. She is described as "a political activist and speaker, as well as an artist and writer, she is self-educated. Her tireless momentum is directed at better understanding how issues of colonialism, genocide, class and gender affect the lives of women and Native people." It is the gift of Chrystos that her expression is not driven by the babble of dogma but by fire of voice. Hers is a fierce voice that speaks for the abused, the helpless and the forgotten; a voice driven by knowledge and experience; a voice that leaves no exit for all who are complicit; a voice profoundly rooted in Native cosmology.

This is her first published volume. It will jolt readers with its power of expression—expression graven in suffering and sustained in language that is immediate, passionate, and unreservedly, unashamedly strident. It is often brilliant. Even where poetic judgement falters, the idea and the content are never less than electric. For a first published volume, this is poetry that reveals only rarely the trace of incommensurability of content, weight and richness of structure. Chrystos is a poet who is able both to invent structure and to choose intelligently from convention while strength-

ening it through language that is nothing less than molten steel.

Chrystos is a Native American whose story, as revealed in these poems, parallels closely a paradigm that has been documented many times over in much recent work in the social sciences. But these poems are more important than social science. Chrystos is a poet who has reclaimed herself. She has rescued subject/content from the domain of social science and the affiliates of a new social agenda, created a poetic practice stripped of pretention and recalled for many of her readers how precious their tears really are.

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Dickson, Stewart: *Hey Monias! The Story of Raphael Ironstand*. Vancouver, British Columbia: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1993, 149 pp. ISBN: 0-8897-8270-9, \$13.95.

*Hey Monias!* is the tumultuous biography of Raphael Ironstand who was born in 1943 on the Valley River Reserve in Manitoba. Raphael's story is a tragically familiar account of Reservation poverty and the devastating effects of the residential school system on First Nations families. Written in the first-person perspective in clear, straightforward prose, Raphael's story is dominated by physical and emotional abuse, as well as by hunger. While there are periods of respite in Raphael's life, what makes his life story doubly tragic is that he suffers abuse both at residential school and at home on the Reserve.

His parents and their peers, also the victims of the residential school system, clearly lost their traditional methods of child-rearing along the way. Raphael's mother is a Métis and the man he thinks is his father is an Ojibwa hunter, trapper, and logger. Raphael is amazed at his father's strength and endurance while on hunting and trapping excursions and appreciates his mother's skill at cooking with meagre supplies. However, his respect for them soon wanes as the Christmas holidays bring an onslaught of drinking by most of the adults on the Reserve.

Raphael and his four siblings are dragged to drinking parties in all kinds of weather or left to fend for themselves with little, if any, food. The drinking binges continue throughout Raphael's early childhood. He is forced to take on adult responsibilities at the threat of beatings from his mother. Ironically,

things get worse when his father is away hunting: his mother is sent to a sanatorium for tuberculosis and the children are left with an even more abusive relative. Determined to escape the violence, to become educated and end the cycle of poverty and abuse, he jumps at the opportunity to attend residential school.

However, Raphael encounters yet more abuse from the priests and nuns, as well as from the Cree students who dub him "Monias". He soon learns how he earned the name when he sees himself in a mirror for the first time while cleaning a priest's bathroom. Raphael is angry at everyone: his family for not telling him his skin is white, the Cree students for their persistence in belittling him, and the school staff for ignoring the beatings he received from the Crees. In fact, they beat him for being beaten. This startling embarrassment, coupled with the continuous abuse, leave Raphael an angry, rebellious teenager. The abuse persists in high school until finally, Raphael can endure it no longer and drops out of school.

Life on his own is not easier. After drifting from one menial, low paying job to another he joins the Armed Forces thinking he'll get the education he has always yearned for. However, the Army offers only physical labour and he is released when officials realize Raphael's rebellious attitude cannot be stifled. His education is put on hold once again when he meets up with a girl he knew from school. She and her friend are prostitutes who pay Raphael to protect them. He soon becomes bored with this new lifestyle, however, and decides finally to enrol in a university where Indian Affairs is offering adult education. Having made this decision, Raphael meets the girl of his dreams, marries her, and raises a family. Although his past is not forgotten, the love of his family helps him overcome his bad memories.

Fortunately, Raphael's childhood memories are not all bad. In particular, his relationship with his great-grandfather is tenderly described in chapter six. He is a very old man but takes the time to show Raphael some much needed affection, even giving him his prized horse at the annual Potlatch. Other warm memories include the sense of community and respect he learned for his people preparing for and attending the Sun Dance celebration. Apparently these few warm memories were enough to lead Raphael back to his people to begin the healing process.

While Raphael's story does seem to end too abruptly, the epilogue discloses that he joined a Native Healing Centre to help him come to terms with his childhood. Since it is important for people like Raphael Ironstand to tell their stories, it is equally important that they share their healing process. Therefore, the reader expects the healing process to be included as part of the text, rather than as an appendage. But, while the biography seems somewhat incomplete, its value is not diminished.

It illuminates quite graphically the consequences of forced assimilation. After all, Raphael's parents endured the same system whereby they were taken from their families and were both physically and sexually abused by people whose intention was to "educate" them. I think it is important for all Canadians to familiarize themselves with the experiences of First Nations people with the residential school system. And, while the story is almost entirely bleak, it does show the possibility for individual healing. Perhaps it is a necessary read for those who have experienced the same.

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Gaup, Ailo: *In Search of the Drum* (novel). Fort Yates, North Dakota: Muse Publications, 1988, translation from Norwegian, 1993, 251 pp. ISBN: 0-9631750-1-7, Paper \$11.95.

*In Search of the Drum* is a novel that treats Ailo Gaup's (b. 1944) own quest for cultural identity. The main character is an Oslo journalist of Sami (Lapp) descent who is frustrated with his professional life. He and his photographer wife, Lajla, venture to the Finnmark Plateau to find the meaning of a recurrent dream about an ancient shamanic drum. "Kautokeino, August 1987-August 1988" on the final page suggests that the work was composed in that community which is located near the border of Finland and 250 miles north of the Arctic Circle.

The translator, Bente Kjos Sjoldal (now VanCleave), is a Norwegian acquaintance of the author. She is a resident of California. Her introductory comment is significant: "In translating this book, I have tried to be as literal as possible, preserving the author's mode of expression to give the reader a more authentic feel for the language, the culture and the people depicted in this story—an indigenous people reclaiming the right to their old ways." Twenty-six illustrations from regional sources help give a feeling for the content. The work has also been translated into German, Yugoslavian and French, and a sequel has been published.

A novel is a personal psychic expression, a literary work, and a social document which adds to cultural history. The fact that the original is not in the Sami language, but in Norwegian, suggests an inherent limitation. As will be noted later, the retention of the language is an essential part of

retaining cultural authenticity. In 1982, *U.S. News and World Report* quoted a Sami, "If our language dies, we die." As a result, I will resist attempting to evaluate the literary merits of the book. At times it is ponderous and one must be prepared for the experience of "Dreamtime," where "everything happens outside time and place." (p.133) Gaup, an established poet, explains the "challenge" of "integrat(ing) *dream* and *reality*. One does not know where one ends and the other begins. The storytelling techniques used in myth have helped me do this, involving letting outer world actions be manifestations of inner world experiences." (comment on back cover)

One cannot anticipate the possible reaction of individual readers. For many, Gaup's work might serve as a useful introduction to the cultural distinctions of a lesser known element in the Fourth World, with parallels to the experiences of the indigenous peoples of North America. (See, for example, Michael P.J. Kennedy's review of *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares* by Alooook Ipellie: "In this collection he brings together what in fact has occurred in Canada's north, a merging of the spiritual world of Inuit tradition with the banal world of contemporary Western society.") Both volumes were published during the International Year of Indigenous People when a United Nations conference focused on the unrecognized wisdom of Indigenous people.

In Gaup's case the people are the Sami (Saami, Samer, Lapps, or Laplanders), an estimated population of between 30,000 to 60,000, many of whom are scattered throughout Norway, Finland, Sweden, and the former Soviet Union. Some have immigrated to North America. They are generally acknowledged as being Norway's first inhabitants, probably coming from Central Asia up to 10,000 years ago. Traditionally, their economy, identity, and survival have been based on raising reindeer.

Odd S. Lovoll, Norwegian-American studies scholar at St. Olaf College, indicates that there was a definite pattern of discrimination among the dominant Norwegian population, which now numbers more than four million. The Sami "were considered inferior and superstitious." The current director of the Kautokeino Sami Research Institute talks about a new awareness which follows many years of a "forced inferiority complex." Over a decade ago a leader in the reindeer-breeders organization observed, "When we came into the Norwegian system we lose."

But there have been dynamic changes. Less than five per cent of the Sami population is still involved in reindeer herding and the old herding procedures have been modified by the use of snowmobiles, trail bikes, walkie-talkies, and even airplanes. The commercial realities have replaced romanticized concepts. One herder remarked, "In Finnmark, Santa Claus walks." The chaos brought by the political boundaries of four nations, insensitive to the Sami pattern of survival at the time, are now being partly



remedied by a Sami Rights Commission and various forms of compensatory programs. Technological changes are the most important threat to the culture. Language and art are being modified by radio and television. One of the latest expressions is “techno-yoik”—a radical jump from the old spiritually-oriented songs.

As a boy, novelist Gaup was removed from his family and ancestral area and sent to a boarding school. He, like the character in his novel, ended up in Norway's most populous region. This “voyage into himself” is a personal quest that is an effort to respond to a more universal need: “There is so much emptiness in people” (p.236). The search is for the “wisdom that can heal bodies and souls...We are the only people in Europe with such a heritage still alive.” He laments, “We have discarded our ancestors' spiritual heritage. A people without a past is a people without a future” (pp.148-149).

Using the mechanism of “mythological present time” (p.55) the ancient wisdom is unravelled—“searching for knowledge in a place deeper in the womb of history than Christianity” (p.40). (The religious war with Christians began in the 14th century.) As a result there are observations about sharing of wisdom and a recognition that symbolism is “more than a mirror of one's own wishes.” (p.199). Individuals are encouraged to find causes—battles ranging from the fight against indiscriminate mining and hunting to militarism. “Excuses steal power and feed apathy...You must become a warrior and find your weapons” (p.136).

*In Search of the Drum* is the experience of a man searching for his past, and therefore an indirect way for others to be introduced to the uniqueness of a particular Indigenous culture. While the Sami-American population is encouraged by any serious publication about their heritage, the reactions to this novel reveal some disappointment and controversy. Faith Fjeld of Minneapolis, Minnesota, and editor of *Baiki*, indicates that the book is “irritating to some traditional Sami people,” who consider it a “misuse of shamanism.” Many of the American descendants consider the work of artist, poet, and writer Nils Aslak Valkeapaa—who joiked at the opening ceremony of the 1994 Winter Olympics—more authentic (see his *Trekways of the Wind*).

Aside from the author's personal quest, there is also the corresponding need of those who have consistently been able to identify with the culture through linguistic expression, while facing the challenges of a changing world. In the 1980s a college was established in the Finnmark region to focus on the special needs of the Sami people. The unusual obstacles of a group without a unifying physical appearance are discussed in an article by Keskitalo and Mohatt in the summer, 1994 issue of *Tribal College*. Mohatt, now an administrator at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks, was one of the key figures in the founding of Sinte Gleska University on the

Rosebud Sioux Reservation in South Dakota in the early 1970s. Sinte Gleska is similar to Sami College because it is based on the cultural distinctions of the Lakota, while acknowledging a 20th-century technological society. Keskitalo is a faculty member of Sami College. Mohatt visited the school several months ago to make his observations and communicate with the staff. In his view, "The mission of the college is transmission of cultural knowledge of the Sami and the West within a Sami context of language and pedagogy" (p.31). Permanent faculty members are required to be fluent in the Sami language and to research a variety of related issues, like the Sami knowledge base in science, particularly with regard to the environment (there are 200 words which describe the condition of snow); the translation of Western knowledge into the Sami language; the Sami traditional religious beliefs and the role of shamanism in traditional and contemporary life; understanding (with the help of elders) the philosophic world view and concepts of a Sami.

With "a solid base in their own language, and in social and historical issues of the Sami" students will be able to "contextualize the knowledge they receive in the national universities." The ultimate dilemma is one that the character in Gaup's novel finds as well, "that a society and culture is never static, yet it must have continuity with its past." (p. 29) A year ago *The New York Times* quoted another Sami scholar in Kautokeino, "We don't want to return to the past. It's gone. But we like to look at the past, and to learn from it. We want to create new codes of living. We have to make a new definition of what it means to be a Sami today."

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Given, Brian J.: *A Most Pernicious Thing: Gun Trading and Native Warfare in the Early Contact Period*. Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1994, 138 pp., bibliography, 3 illustrations. ISBN 0-88629-220-0, Cloth CDN \$22.95; ISBN 0-88629-223-9, Paper CDN \$14.95.

This monograph makes a short, but nevertheless significant contribution to the literature on the history of early contact between Natives and Europeans in North America. It is particularly relevant to the ongoing academic discussion about the development of Native trade dependence on Europeans and their manufactures.

Given deals with the period centring on the Iroquoian Five-Nations wars beginning with first contact and ending after King Philip's War in 1676. In

addition to a cogent analysis of the incomplete historical evidence and its inherent biases, he presents a critique of Hunt's (1940) hypothesis that the Five-Nations rapidly became dependent on European trade goods—on firearms in particular. It is demonstrated by Given that the assumption concerning the rapidity of development of dependence on European weapon technology is based on a *a priori* argument which fails to take into account the context-specific nature of Native accommodations to Europeans and the related economic possibilities; the limited availability of firearms; the material conditions of the use of this technology; and the warfare tactics employed by Native peoples.

What is particularly new and useful in Given's approach is the application of the methods of "material history" (cf. Schlereth 1982). Beyond the straightforward historical approach, he has applied both archaeological evidence and data derived from empirical experimentation with black powder weapons to illustrate that Native peoples did not automatically accept firearms as superior to their own weapons and were not dependent on European firearms as Hunt and so many of his followers have asserted. Indeed, there is irrefutable physical evidence that they could not have been so.

In short, Given's work is a very valuable contribution to the historiography in this field and his findings must be taken into account by anyone attempting to interpret the history of trade relations between Native peoples and Europeans. He sets an important new standard for the applicability of material evidence in fur trade scholarship.

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Gosse, Richard, James Youngblood Henderson, and Roger Carter: *Continuing Poundmaker and Riel's Quest: Presentations Made at a Conference on Aboriginal Perspectives and Justice*. Saskatoon, Saskatchewan: Purich Publishing, 1994, 464 pp., index. ISBN: 1-895830-03-6, Paper CDN \$39.00.

*Continuing Poundmaker and Riel's Quest* is a compilation of about fifty presentations made at a conference on Aboriginal Peoples and Justice sponsored by the College of Law, University of Saskatchewan, in September, 1993. The purpose of the conference was to explore how federal, provincial, and Aboriginal governments can cooperate in the administration of justice and, in particular, to understand how Aboriginal self-government will work in this field.

The flaws in the existing justice system are evident for all to see. In the words of Saskatchewan Justice Minister, Bob Mitchell, the system has been a "massive failure" for Aboriginal people. Indian and Métis people are substantially over-represented in jails (the chances of a young Indian boy going to jail are one in five), and it is obvious that incarceration has not contributed to the creation of a healthier society. Many Aboriginal speakers made the point that the justice system does not reflect Aboriginal values. For example, Associate Chief Judge Murray Sinclair of the Provincial Court of Manitoba observed that Aboriginal people prefer non-adversarial methods of resolving their problems. Whereas the emphasis in the majority culture is on determination of guilt and the punishment of the wrongdoer, "the primary meaning of 'justice' in an Aboriginal society would be that of restoring peace and equilibrium through reconciling the accused with his or her own conscience and with the individual or family that is wronged." In Aboriginal cultures the determination of guilt is secondary to the main issue, namely, that something is wrong and has to be fixed. Regardless of whether the accused admits or denies the allegation, the relationship between the parties must still be repaired. Because punishment is not the most important goal of the process, those accused of a crime are more likely to admit their guilt. Sinclair suggests that this is why so many Aboriginal people plead guilty in court.

Another way to look at the difference between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal concepts of justice is to recognize that the majority culture upholds above everything else the principle of individual responsibility. If an individual who has committed a crime seeks and finds reconciliation with God and his fellow man, that is his business. Facilitating that process is not a primary function of the justice system for the majority culture. Sinclair argues that for Aboriginal societies, it is.

He identifies other differences. For the Aboriginal person, "truth is

relative and always incomplete.” The standard courtroom oath—to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth—is devoid of sense. According to Sinclair, “the Aboriginal viewpoint would require the individual to speak the truth ‘as you know it’ and not to dispute the validity of another viewpoint of the same event or issue.” The current justice system frowns on a witness who appears uncertain about his evidence. Such a person is discredited under aggressive cross-examination. Sinclair notes that an Aboriginal witness who appears to be changing his story may simply be acknowledging that another view of the events may be just as valid as his.

Richard Gosse, the conference organizer and co-chair and one of the compilers of the volume under review, describes Judge Sinclair's address as “perhaps the conference turning point.” Gosse states that through the presentations, panels, workshops, and discussion circles something happened—“something of an almost magical quality.” The Saskatchewan Justice Minister testified to the impact of the conference on him. After he heard some of the presentations, he discarded his prepared remarks because he considered they were no longer relevant. Mitchell was much taken with Patricia Monture's definition of law as “the way to live nicely together.” The majority culture understands law in negative terms as social control; Aboriginal culture understands law in positive terms as living in harmony. Mitchell confessed that the majority culture has much to learn: “My culture knows very little about healing...My culture knows very little about involving the community.” Without committing himself to anything specific, the Minister pledged to approach justice reform, for example, the introduction of sentencing circles, in the spirit of one who was willing to learn and in the light of the principle that Aboriginal Peoples have the inherent right to govern themselves.

The road to Aboriginal self-government will undoubtedly be strewn with difficulties and complexities. This book, and the conference of which it is the record, provide an interesting snapshot of the justice system in the midst of profound change. Half the authors are Aboriginal and their dialogue with non-Aboriginal experts and decision-makers is both constructive and illuminating. Readers with an interest in the evolution of Aboriginal self-government as it relates to the administration of justice will find food for thought in *Continuing Poundmaker and Riel's Quest*.

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Lomawaima, K. Tsianina: *They Called It Prairie Light: The Story of Chilocco Indian School*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994, 205 pp. ISBN: 0-8032-2904-6, Cloth US \$25.00.

K. Tsianina Lomawaima's study of the Chilocco Indian school is an important contribution to the literature available to those interested in the residential school experience of Native North Americans. Chilocco opened in 1884 just south of the Oklahoma-Kansas border and remained in operation until the early 1980s. Lomawaima's approach to Chilocco is both unique and refreshing. Rather than boring the reader with countless quotations of federal government policy, she makes use of sixty-one interviews of former students of Chilocco. By making use of these first hand accounts Lomawaima is able to give a revealing view of the residential school experience from the inside.

Lomawaima concentrates on the period between 1920-1940, illustrating why schools like Chilocco in most cases failed to assimilate Indian children into the greater Euro-American society. She argues that it was the children's reaction to their circumstances that allowed them to hold on to their identities. It is here that her book is unique. Lomawaima examines student/student relations that illustrate how these children were able to combat the direct threats to their Indianness. She is able to explain how the students saw their situation and how they then reacted to this situation. By not falling into the trap of simply bashing the U.S. government, a much more complete picture of the experience at Chilocco is drawn.

Those students who arrived at Chilocco came for many different reasons. There is a common misunderstanding that all students were forced to attend the boarding schools, but Chilocco illustrates how this was not always the case. For various reasons a number of Indian children chose to come to Chilocco. Lomawaima identifies five main reasons for such a choice. The first was centered around strictly economic reasons. The Great Depression made it economically impossible for many parents to send their children to public school. Added to this was the fact that having the children in school would have taken some of the economic pressure off of the household. Secondly, if economic times were hard for two-parent families, single parent families were in even more difficulty. Children from single parent families, as well as orphans whose extended families were economically depressed, often were sent to Chilocco. Thirdly, parents also turned to boarding schools in times of illness or injury. Fourthly, children also applied to boarding schools to escape home lives which involved excessive discipline or labour. Fifthly, a number of children wanted to attend boarding school because often times this is where their siblings were, and it became a tradition in one sense to attend the same school as your brothers and

sisters (pp.33-35).

The responses collected in the interviews which Lomawaima uses as evidence for her book help to drive home the point that one cannot generalize about interpretations of the boarding school experience. Some students came to despise their time at Chilocco and eventually ran away from the school, while others had nothing but praise for their time spent at the school. Often times researchers fall into the trap of only presenting evidence that supports their arguments. Lomawaima is very good at describing both the good and bad aspects that her subjects provided about Chilocco.

Lomawaima's discussion of the resistance that the students offered to their attempted assimilation is where the real strength of the book lies. She identifies two main ways in which the students reacted to their situation. The first was a resistance to the school's determination to erase their ethnic identity and turn them into model Euro-Americans. Their second reaction was to separate themselves from the staff of the school.

The students were able to combat the attack on their cultural identity through regular resistance. This resistance often came along lines of tribal affiliation. Groups would partake in certain practices that could be done away from the central school yard. As Lomawaima points out,

The Creeks, Cherokees, and other Southeastern tribes took part in the stomp dances around the fires strung along Chilocco Creek in the evenings. Stomp dances held the boys together in a shared cultural context, and the very sociable pastime of parching corn united all tribes. Parching corn symbolized group belonging and solidarity (p.137).

Like the boys, the girls often divided along tribal and age group lines and participated in a number of practices ranging from the use of their own languages to the use of peyote in ceremonies.

Vivian 1929/14 Choctaw:

Some of the Poncas, I remember they would get in their rooms and I happened to be in the dormitory one time. I set down with 'em and they passed that peyote button around. And I don't know what they were doing, they were, you know, in their own tongue, but they were all Poncas, Ponca Indians. It sounded like they were praying, and then they'd sing and then some more, like praying, and then they'd sing, somebody was beating on a little gourdlike thing (pp.139-140).

The second phase of resistance was more concerned with challenges to authority than it was with maintaining ethnic identity. This resistance was carried out by the boys in the making of their own liquor. "In the conflict

between acquiescence and overt or covert resistance to authority, alcohol use emerged as a potent symbol of student collaboration and radical resistance” (p.140). Girls tested authority through what Lomawaima calls “bloomer stories.” These stories reflect how the girls would try to avoid having to wear their bloomers to dances and the various tricks they were able to invent in order to accomplish their goal.

What the two examples mentioned above illustrate is the “complex network of bonds” (p.97) that resulted from the challenge to authority that the students initiated. This challenge to authority developed an us-against-them situation which helped to build better relationships between students and can help to explain the retention of the student’s ethnic identity. As Lomawaima points out, “Loyalty to the group reigned supreme in the student code of ethical behaviour” (p.97).

For the most part the former students whom Lomawaima interviewed were positive in their recollections of the time they spent at Chilocco. Many of these former students were in fact thankful for the education that they received at the school. Rather than looking at their school experience as an attempt by the U.S. government to strip them of their ethnic identity, they see their experience at Chilocco as necessary considering the circumstances of the time. They take great pride in the fact that they were able to survive this experience and are able to look back to this period of their lives with fondness.

This reviewer was unable to find any real flaws with this book. Lomawaima gets past simple policy analysis and evaluation and concentrates on the relations of Indian students to each other and to the individuals who were attempting to take away their ethnic and cultural identities. In other words she discusses how students came to understand their situation and how they reacted to this situation. I would highly recommend this book to anyone interested in Indian education. It is a very powerful and revealing book.

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Mallea, Paula: *Aboriginal Law: Apartheid in Canada?* Brandon, Manitoba: Bearpaw Publishing, 1995, xiii + 239 pp., bibliography, index. ISBN: 0-9695498-6-5, Cloth CDN \$30.00; 0-9695498-7-3, Paper CDN \$24.00.

This book should be required reading for anyone who teaches in the area of Native Studies. Moreover, it would be extremely helpful for anyone who wants to know more about the legal issues surrounding Native peoples. It touches upon major, controversial Native issues under debate at the same time as important case law is extracted from the bowels of our legal system and linked to these contemporary Aboriginal concerns. Six broad areas of concern are identified by the author: Band government, taxation, Aboriginal rights, hunting and fishing, treaties, and land claims. An entire chapter is devoted to each issue. A general chapter focusing on the "effect of other Canadian laws" on Aboriginal people is also included. This chapter focuses on property, family law, wills, estates, children, criminal law, constitutional, federal and provincial law. The author begins each chapter with a short identification of the key issues and then quickly takes the reader into court decisions as well as the rationale provided by the court. Generous excerpts from the decisions rendered by the learned judges are provided to give the reader a clear understanding of how the decision was arrived at. While most of the material is based upon court decisions less than a decade old, the author includes most relevant legal matters, no matter how old the material.

Two chapters are set aside to deal with the *Sparrow* case, a case which, like *Calder* two decades earlier, provided a substantial revision as to how Aboriginal rights are to be treated. The importance of the case is underscored by presenting material that is pre- and post-*Sparrow*. Aboriginal rights are discussed prior to the *Sparrow* case and then how they have been reinterpreted since the decision of the Supreme Court. The final section of the last chapter focuses on the *Mabo vs. Queensland* (1993) decisions on Australian Aboriginal rights. This comparative piece allows the reader to assess Canadian high court decisions alongside those of Australia. The author offers little commentary on most of the decisions but it is clear that she is frustrated by some of the court decisions. For the most part, the material is presented so that the reader might more fully understand the decisions of the courts. Overall, the decisions of higher courts seem to be converging and developing a consensus that Aboriginal rights will be more clearly defined and need to be recognized in Canadian law. At the same time, the lower courts seem to be making decisions which lessen the impact of higher court decisions. How this will play out is yet to be seen.

It is unfortunate that this book has not been published by one of the

“transnational” book companies as its importance is clearly substantial and international. At the same time, Bearpaw should be congratulated on publishing a fine piece of work. The contents are instructive and will shed considerable light on the many Aboriginal issues now facing Canadians. Two factors need to be addressed in the next edition. First is the insistence upon legal jargon—which means the reader has to read and reread the many quotations presented. Had the author paraphrased the decisions in ordinary English, the material would be easier to understand. The second issue concerns the “case study” method. Little context is provided for the decisions. For example, today, the Royal Commission for Aboriginal Peoples seems to be waiting to report until after the impending Quebec referendum on separation. While those well versed in Native issues will understand the social and political context, unfortunately those not steeped in Native issues will miss considerable context in which to interpret the decisions.

In the end, the book is outstanding and I would require it for all students enrolled in courses which have a substantial Aboriginal content. It can also be used as an excellent reference book. It is an impressive undertaking which is to be recommended for both the breadth and depth of its focus. It provides us with the most complete picture available in the current legal arena on how Aboriginal rights are viewed by the courts. The strength of the book lies in its reliance on carefully selected sources from a variety of court decisions.

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Mills, Antonia and Richard Slobodin (Editors): *Amerindian Rebirth: Reincarnation Belief Among North American Indians and Inuit*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 411 pp. ISBN: 0-8020-7703-X, Paper CDN \$18.95.

This highly specialized collection of readings encompasses several theoretical orientations on the issue of human reincarnation beliefs although they are well aware of the existence of such beliefs elsewhere in the world. All of the authors are anthropologists, and their work represents many different philosophical and methodological orientations to the subject

matter. While many of the papers are original contributions, about one third of the fourteen articles are condensed or expanded papers previously published.

The editors quite correctly note that anthropologists have neglected to study Amerindian reincarnation beliefs. Obeyesekere, in the foreword to the book, argues that the reason is simple: Western fieldworkers simply were not attuned to it because the theoretical orientations provided by the discipline prevented them from seeing the phenomenon, and if they did see it, were able to explain it away as something other than a reincarnation ideology. Unfortunately we are not told how the discipline has changed so that anthropologists could discover these reincarnation beliefs.

Mills begins this edited collection with an important comparison of Amerindian reincarnation beliefs with those associated with Hindu and Buddhist beliefs. Von Gernet uses this as a stepping stone to analyzing early 17th century Huron beliefs about reincarnation. Radin approaches the issue by using an autobiographical approach. Using Thunder Cloud's memoirs as a data base, he reveals the linkages between death and reincarnation. The next four chapters (5-8) move to specific arctic groups, e.g., West Greenland, Belcher Island, and subarctic groups, e.g., Dene Tha, Peel River Kutchin, and their beliefs and actions focusing on reincarnation. Each author, intimately involved with the group being studied, reveals specific actions and rituals carried out by these people which provide evidence that reincarnation is an important cultural element. Whether it is on name sharing or whale hunting rituals, the author provides meticulous data to illustrate the existence of the belief.

The next two chapters by Slobodin and Goulet analyze the role reincarnation beliefs play in the lives of two subarctic Native groups. They are deeply knowledgeable of their subjects and the social environment in which they interact. As a result, they produce a fruitful, creative analysis that requires us to change the ways in which we look at the world. Their luminous analysis of the social functions of reincarnation stand as enormously insightful. Indeed their robust arguments have forced others to revise their claims. Chapters 11 through 14 examine the Northwest Coast. All four authors use a variety of data bases to address the issue of reincarnation. Mills' (chapter 13) work on Gitksan pierced-ear birthmarks is an interesting case study of whether reincarnation really exists. Using three cases, the author entertains the hypothesis that reincarnation in this society is an actuality. The last two chapters focus on theoretical issues regarding reincarnation. For example, Matlock argues that reincarnation concepts are embedded in kinship structures which spread to North America as part of the general diaspora from Africa.

The remaining one hundred pages of the book are devoted to an

appendix which includes the Trait Index to North American Indian and Inuit Reincarnation, as well as maps which identify the location of the over one hundred societies included in the Trait Index.

Perhaps the most valuable and original part of the book is the extended discussion of the concept of reincarnation among Amerindian groups. As such, this book is a valuable addition to scattered, ongoing discussions of reincarnation in Native culture. However, useful as it is in gathering together several disparate studies, where this volume does not go far enough or deep enough is in its interpretation of the material. Only two of the authors address this issue. If we are to understand better how and why Amerindians use reincarnation, and within what constraints, we need to give serious attention to historical conditions, structures of the system, linkages with other ethos and relationships of power. The authors neglect these larger structural issues and do not explore their impact on the cosmology and belief structure of Amerindian society. As such the book's lack of attention to larger issues of social structure and dynamics undermines its analysis of the ideology of human reincarnation. Some of the articles are well written and methodologically sound while other chapters are less felicitous, less able to combine subtle and close analysis with methodological clarity. The articles are not well connected and although this reader finds many discrepancies in the concepts and perspectives, few are noted by the editors or the various authors. The reader is on his or her own. The next step for the editors is to distil and synthesize the growing information on Amerindian human reincarnation into a coherent body of thought.

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Ross, A.C. *Ehanamani "Walks Among"*. Denver, Colorado: Bear (available from: Fort Yates, North Dakota: Muse Publications), 1993, 226 pp. ISBN: 0-9621977-2-6, Paper US \$12.00.

It has been said that only a very brave person can embark on the writing of an autobiography. To do so requires extreme courage and the conviction that one's life can be examined as a book of experiences, each chapter containing a poignant lesson derived from the author himself. Set in the historical reality of the Santee Sioux, *Ehanamani - "Walks Among"* depicts

the experiences of Allen Ross from birth to his present success as a lecturer on cultural understanding. For readers interested in a personal description of “growing up Indian” in the 1940s and 50s, this forthright and gentle description of personal experiences provides a nostalgic escape to a simpler yet complex time in American society.

Section one in this book of experiences focuses on the early childhood of a young Indian boy tasting both the joy and anguish of a homelife frequently disrupted by a father in search of work. It is in these early years that the spirituality of the author is first identified through a near fatal accident. For according to Dakota belief, if a person dies and comes back to life, an enlightened spirit enters and takes over that person's body, making him special in his lifetime. This spiritual presence guides the young Indian boy through these formative years—helping him to tolerate problems encountered while attending public schools.

During these early years two powerful forces impact on the author—the Church and the wisdom of his grandparents. Each serves to shape the destiny of this growing boy, developing the spiritual nature of one intent on overcoming the hardships of boarding schools to achieve his intended goal—high school graduation.

Section two focuses on the author as a young adult. An early college experience along with a military stint in Germany worsens an already serious drinking problem. Even in the military, the ugly presence of bigotry emerges when this young Indian soldier is taunted by a non-Native society. To overcome this problem he returns to the Reservation upon discharge to inhale Native spirit!

His drinking problem worsening, the author attends university to become a teacher. While there, he marries but is rarely sober enough to comprehend the significance of his first child. Developing an interest in ancient American culture, the author feels personally affected by the turbulence in White American-Native relations. This turbulence is reflected in his own life, with a troubled marriage ending in divorce stemming from the alcohol demon. With health nearly ruined by alcohol consumption, the author struggles to regain control of his life, believing that salvation lies in remarriage and pursuit of a new job as head of a BIA boarding school. Frustrated by party tribal politics in this and subsequent educational settings, the author abandons public education and opts for a teaching position at the Community College of Denver.

The final section in this book of experiences depicts a maturing “Chuck” Ross, busily teaching post-secondary students, receiving messages from Vision Quest activities, and suddenly comprehending the seriousness of his drinking problem. This happens when the author teaches a group of prison inmates and realizes that these young Indian boys are in prison

because of the effects of alcoholism. This reality serves as a turning point in the author's life. He resolves to make something of himself by completing a doctorate, undertaking a superintendency and putting into practice a holistic philosophy he longed to espouse for many years.

The author gains notoriety on the public speaking circuit both nationally and internationally. Deeply affected by the world's problems, he focuses on the plight of minorities, having grown up a minority himself. Strengthened by his Dakota/Lakota philosophy, he applies the five principles of traditional Native American philosophy and thought to an interpretation of the world around him: brotherly love, peace, patience, ability to endure difficult situations, and balance and harmony. These principles have served him well as a writer whose works are inevitably read by children and adults alike.

For all individuals, educators in particular, who are interested in exploring an Indian perspective on life's experiences, *Ehanamani - "Walks Among"* is a reading requirement. Rich in content, descriptive in experience and forthright in message, this autobiography presents the story of a truly remarkable Native educator who overcame obstacles to achieve his life's goals.

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Taylor, Colin F.: *Saam. The Symbolic Content of Early Northern Plains Ceremonial Regalia*. Wyk auf Foehr, Germany: Verlag fur Americanistik, 1944, 86 pp., 6 Colour plates and 27 illustrations, Bibliography. DM 30. ISBN 3-924696-85-3. Can be ordered directly from publisher Postfach 1332, C-25931 Wyk auf Foehr.

The text of this slim volume, initially presented as a lecture at the 1991 *Plains Indian Art Symposium* in Cody, Wyoming, is a significant addition to iconological and ethnographic studies of Plains cosmology. Published here simultaneously in German and English on facing pages, we are indeed fortunate to have this well-illustrated treatise in such an accessible format.

Beginning with the Blackfeet term *Saam*, used to denote medicine, Taylor develops its connotative meanings throughout this analysis of the imagery and decorative elements of Blackfeet religious regalia. Building on his earlier method of drawing upon tribal mythology and ritual for the analysis and interpretation of tangible forms of Lakota symbolism (Taylor

1988), the strengths of this methodology are demonstrated here to an even greater depth.

Each brief chapter is effectively illustrated to visually reinforce Taylor's arguments. For example, the opening discussion of Plains Indian cosmology is augmented with photographs of ethnographic materials, archival paintings and Native pictographic-style imagery depicting the Blackfeet cosmos on ritual paraphernalia. However, as Taylor cautions, "The interpretation of the meanings of motifs and embellishments can only be satisfactorily achieved by *linking them to one another to give a coherent whole*". To illustrate this, he takes the reader through a step-by-step examination of each element of a magnificent war shirt most probably worn by a prominent Blackfeet medicine pipe owner in the mid-eighteenth century. Each element— materials, colour, motifs, and so on—is placed in a context of mythological and sacred tribal meanings. It follows then that the synergistic power of the linked elements attests to the elevated religious and social position held by its owner.

Of particular importance to scholars of Native art is Taylor's meticulously detailed examination of the symbols of the Thunderbird which affords some insights into the techniques of conventionalization. The presence of more than one abstract form of the Thunderbird motif is correlated to the nature of the object being embellished and, I would add, to the materials used. In one instance, in the two-dimensional painted pictographic styles of tipi covers, shields, robes and medicine bags the "realistic representation of the Thunderbird itself, becomes conventionalized to just the claw." Similarly, on the porcupine quillwork discs attached to regalia garments, the naturalistic Thunderbird motif through time becomes progressively simpler until all that remains is a central hourglass shape with symmetrical arcs projecting at top and bottom as stylized wings and legs/claws, or alternatively the upper and lower halves form a mirrored image. A later beaded disc employs two semicircles enclosing a simple hourglass form.

A further chapter describes a recent discovery of a Blackfeet shirt which suggests that "certain regalia could, by virtue of the symbolic statements which is apparently makes, not only document an important episode in Blackfeet mythology, but might have been used as a form of memory aid in a complex and lengthy ceremonial". Reading the symbolic meaning of the individual embellishments on this shirt within the context of mythology and ethnographic knowledge intimates that it was part of the sacred Beaver Bundle system which encompassed not just the medicine bundle but all the associated ceremonial regalia of men, women and horses. The inherent potency of these garments is professed by one Blackfeet ceremonialist who states succinctly, "My clothes are medicine".

The significance of this substantive study must not be underestimated.

Although marred slightly by a few typographical errors and incorrect figure references, Taylor's ability to enfold his speculations about certain meanings within a logical, well-defined, and deftly exemplified argument is to be given due recognition and admiration. The main contribution of this work is the potential for applying the methodology to the analysis of material from other cultural groups. It is a valuable source for those interested in symbolism, ritual regalia, iconography, and Plains culture.

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