

## BOOK REVIEWS

Ahenakew, Freda (ed., trans.): *Kiskinahamwakan - acimowinisa - Student Stories*, Winnipeg: Algonquian and Iroquoian Linguistics, University of Manitoba, 1986, Glossary, 76pp. \$7.95.

This is a collection of eight stories written by the students in Freda Ahenakew's 1982 summer course at Saskatoon. The book is a combination of Wisahkechak legends and a variety of other Cree tales. The stories are short, sometimes humorous, yet they contain powerful cultural teachings of the Cree people from Saskatchewan. The three Wisahkechak legends are condensed versions of the original stories, but because the intention of the book is to provide short stories, these do present some good possibilities for further research and discussion.

*Kiskinahamwaken - acimowinisa* is written in both English and standardized Roman orthography representative of the Athakohp reserve in Saskatchewan. The standardization of the orthography allows both fluent Cree speaking students and high school students who have studied the language for a number of years to read the stories with ease. For those students studying the structure of the language, the English-Cree glossary at the end of the book provides an excellent resource.

In producing this book, Freda Ahenakew and her students have started to fill the need for authentic Native literature written by Native people. *Kiskinahamawakan - acimowinisa* is recommended for schools, and especially for those with programs in either Native languages or Native literature.

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Ahenakew, Freda (Editor): *waskahikaniwiyiniw-acimowina - Stories of the House People*, Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1987, ISBN-88755-133-5, Appendices, xiv & 240 pp., \$24.95, cloth.

This is an attractive publication dedicated to the memory of Ida McLeod, Joe Douquette, and Peter Vandall. The two men contributed the ten stories presented in this book. The task of providing literary translations of an original oral narration is not easy. However the editor accomplishes the task commendably, transcribing the text into syllabics, Roman orthography and English. The stories appear in the order related by the

three Elders, followed by appendices constituting fully half of the book. These contain explicit explanations and examples of the vocabulary used in the text and serve as a valuable research aid. In addition, the editor cross-references the text from Cree to English and vice-versa.

The section, "The Story Tellers and Their Stories", co-written by Freda Ahenakew and H.C. Wolfart, is both interesting and informative. They point out distinction among types of stories, for example, and organize the book according to the various categories. There are stories of the distant past, stories relating what it means to be Cree, stories of a humorous nature, and stories based upon literary contests.

The numerous stories presented both in Roman orthography and in syllabics will delight the reader. Their form and style, typical of the manner in which Elders tell stories, will be deeply appreciated and held in high esteem by speakers of the Cree language. The selections will lend themselves well to study by fluent Cree speakers at the high school level as well as by students in adult classes.

For those interested in the structure of the Cree language, as well as fascinating stories that reveal a rich cultural heritage, the book is well worth the price.

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Asch, Michael: *Kinship and the Drum Dance in a Northern Dene Community*, The Boreal Institute for Northern Studies, 1988, ISBN 0-919058-74-4 (paper) 0-919058-3-6 (cloth).

It takes courage to publish a doctoral dissertation 18 years after the fieldwork, because, for many of us, "old" data has either gone cold, or needs so much re-thinking that we sometimes prefer to leave it. In Michael Asch's book, some sections are indeed out-of-date and do require reworking. Other sections, however, successfully demonstrate that a thoughtful revisiting of the data can only improve upon the earlier product and extend the original intent. This is, I believe, the main quality of this book.

When Michael Asch set out to do the work in 1969, the dissertation context was ethnomusicological and one of his objectives was to test a specific analytical methodology. Today's work still contains his observations on the Drum Dance event but not the methodology. Instead, a much expanded analysis of kinship reveals new facts about the Pe Ts'éh Ki social life which, in his own words, "highlights the internal dynamics of

economic and social stress and its resolution (particularly via the Drum Dance)." The new emphasis resulted in a fresh interpretation of the meaning of the Drum dance.

The book begins with "a Dene account of how the world began", as told to him during his fieldwork in 1969. Despite the obvious significance of this document, one hardly senses how it ties in with the rest of the book. It is never mentioned again.

His first two chapters present Pe Ts'éh Ki, known in English as Wrigley, a small Dene community located on the McKenzie River, in Canada's Northwest Territories. Following brief descriptions of the physical, historical and demographic characteristics of the whole area (Chapter I), he goes on in the second chapter to depict, one item at a time, the economic life of the people of Pe Ts'éh Ki. The chapter is divided into small sections with all the headings appropriate for a succinct description of home economy: housing, clothing, food, transportation, fuel, division of labour, ownership and inheritance, cycle of daily life. The last two headings, "Individual Knowledge and Economic Activities" and "Economic variation among Households," while being a little more extensive, still remain somewhat sketchy, a point which is surprising considering the length of time spent in that community. The reader is led to believe that this chapter on economy is important for the understanding of the following ones but it appears that the author refrains from saying all he knows.

One is reminded in these two chapters of the dutiful but rather bland descriptions of a dissertation's introductory section, and yet, in spite of their introductory nature, these chapters take up 34 pages of a 97-page discussion.

The tone changes with Chapter Three in which I feel that the author has made some sense out of a situation of transition. Former interpretations about Dene group formations and interactions focused mainly on the "local band", that is, the group of people who resided and travelled together at certain points of the year, "on special occasions such as festive events and holidays" (p.35) and which for the people of Pe Ts'éh Ki constituted the pool from which marriage partners could be chosen.

At the time of Michael Asch's visit, the community had recently moved into that location and was in the process of readjusting to changes brought about by the move. People from different "bush" local bands now had to reside together, which significantly augmented the number of people living together. Worse still was the fact that one had to reside with those who were potential marriage partners.

This created a significant problem because it had not been considered appropriate for people who reside together to marry [and] without the use of intermarriage or the ability to transform the kinship, neither of the traditional means to create social solidarity among co-

residents could be used (p.36-37).

The author suggests that the Pe Ts'éh Ki people's strategy to resolve the social tensions thus incurred was to manipulate the kinship network and that they did it in such a way that a new interpretation of the standard group classification becomes necessary.

In the MacKenzie Basin type terminology, the "basic unit of social organization... is the "nodal kindred", i.e., a grouping of households linked by close biological kin ties..." (p.36), a definition formerly accepted for this area. However, the author has found

that the terminology used in Pe Ts'éh Ki really implies a Dravidianate system... [in which] the social world would be conceptualized as consisting of two primary groups: "kinsmen" [co-residence without marriage] and "allies" [co-residence only after marriage] (p.36-37).

There follows an extensive discussion of the terminologies of both systems and their implications. This is the most carefully researched section of the book and one senses that this is where the author spent most his energies, both in and away from the field. Thus he discusses "kin ties and descent", the "social relations within the household", "marriage rules and practice", and the patterns of "residence after marriage". He then relates this knowledge to the band and settlement organizations of Pe Ts'éh Ki, both from former and contemporary points of view. From this, he derives his interpretation of the "kinship composition within the two primary Pe Ts'éh Ki groups" and his understanding of "the social relations between households" in Pe Ts'éh Ki.

Much of this demonstration was expanded from the 1972 dissertation and this section on kinship constitutes a valuable and interesting document. Furthermore, it has also allowed the author to expand his own 1969 perception and understanding of the social implications of the drum dance event.

The progression to the discussion of the social organization of the drum dance in Chapter Five is, strangely enough, interrupted by the three and a half pages of Chapter Four which very thinly describe the different kinds of music and instruments found in Pe Ts'éh Ki. The brevity of Chapter Four suggests introductory type material that perhaps should have been featured in the opening chapters when generalities about the community were presented.

Chapter Five, Six and Seven deal respectively with the description of the Drum Dance, its musical content and its meaning. I too have done research in the same general area (although not the same community and not quite so extensively), with my fieldwork focussed primarily on singing and drumming and their spiritual implications. However, much of Michael Asch's data confirms or completes mine, and vice-versa. It is most tempting to comment on each of his explanatory statements about the

drum dance and its songs. Such is not the purpose of a book review however, and I will be content with only a few examples.

For instance, his description of the preparation and performance phases of the drum dance would be virtually the same for Fort Franklin and Fort Norman at the time of my own fieldwork (1988 and 1989). However, Michael Asch remains a little vague about the origins of the drum dance songs. Most of the Pe Ts'éh Ki drum dance songs seem to come from the Fort Norman area, and more specifically from Yatsule, simply described as one of the "old timers" in the book. To me, this "old timer" was identified as a prophet. Moreover, drum dance songs are said to have originated from prophets' visions or dreams, that is, <MI>given<D> to them by angels. Whereas this bit of information completes that of the author who was told about Yatsule, at the same time it points to the wrongful (in my opinion) use of the notion of "composition" (p.74), applicable in the case of many Dene song types, but certainly not in the case of drum dance songs. Yatsule was not a "composer" but a "receiver" of songs. This would confirm what the author says in his first presentation of the drum dance:

Authorship of Drum Dance songs is never claimed by any singer. All songs are attributed to deceased males of high prestige, usually medicine men, and are passed on to the contemporary performers (p.62).

Then, perhaps because times have changed, I find that Asch's delimitation of song types leaves me somewhat puzzled. For instance, a "practice song" is not, to my knowledge, a type of song but a circumstance, a moment in the drum dance event during which singers rehearse some songs privately or warm up their voices; in the same way, an "opening" song is not a category of song, but <MI>the<D> song by which Yatsule was told to begin a drum dance. In my sense, this song belongs to the more general category of "prayer" songs, which fits in with his description of the "opening" song (p.66).

The simplicity of the musical analysis in Chapter Six appropriately reflects the simplicity of the Dene song style. The melodic sketches presented in Appendix B provide a useful, because easily comparable, record of the Pe Ts'éh Ki repertory at the time.

Chapter Seven is a revised version of a paper presented at the 1975 Annual Meeting of the American Folklore Society. Although it is rather brief, in my opinion it successfully brings together the new data on kinship and the social interpretation of the meaning of the drum dance. It shows how the drum dance provides the people of Pe Ts'éh Ki with a means to resolve, or at least suspend for a time, conflicts arising from difficulties in adjusting to the new settlement patterns. This is the section in which we truly learn about the drum dance.

In conclusion, aside from Chapters Three (kinship) and Seven (on the meaning of the drum dance), Michael Asch's book, while it contains no

major errors, leaves the reader wondering why many of the points raised have been so briefly discussed. This, in turn, points to a certain unevenness in the quality and the quantity of data treatment within each chapter. In spite of these weaknesses, this work is an excellent example of how a "musical occasion" is tightly woven and intertwined with the different facets of social organization.

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- L. Beardy: *pisiskiwak kâ-pîkiskwêcik. Talking Animals. Memoir 5. Algonquian and Iroquoian Linguistics*, edited and translated by H.C. Wolfart, 1988, ISBN 0-921064-05-5, Cree-English Glossary, Append., xxiii + 90 pp., paper.

This slim volume contains 7 stories narrated to H.C. Wolfart by L. Beardy: 6 examples of *wawiyatâcimowina*, funny stories, (the fifth story is told twice) and 1 autobiographical story, a 'plain' story, or *âcimowin*. The narrator was born about 1910 and lived most of his life at Norway House, Manitoba and in Winnipeg. The stories are remarkable for their simplicity and dignity, characteristics that the editor and translator, H.C. Wolfart, maintains in the English versions.

The book is organized so that in the first section the stories are printed in Western Anglican style syllabic orthography. The second section presents the stories in Roman orthography with an English translation on the facing page.

The introduction provides a brief introduction to the Roman orthography used in the text, explaining how the diacritical markings capture some of the differences among dialects of Cree. The introductory section also explains some of the decisions made by the editor, such as including false starts and corrections, and paragraphing. It describes the voice-play, the special voices that give the characters individual identities, and which form part of the stories. It explains that the Cree-English Glossary which lists all the Cree words that occur in the stories, is organized as a Stem list, and that the English index is only meant to be a rough guide to the entries of the glossary. It tells about the narrator and briefly about the stories. What is missing is a brief explanation of the role that stories such as these play in Cree culture, in Cree communities.

The stories are humorous. The story "Animal Sounds" appears to be a vehicle for the narrator to voice-play, a source of amusement to himself and his audience. "The Frog as Model" is an example of an *âcimowin* told both to entertain and to teach. It contains a moral as well as a voice-play.

In "A Responsive Cat" the humor comes from the talking cat and a startled human character. "The Bear as Truck Driver" presents the ludicrous situation of a bear driving a truck as seen by a surprised witness. There are two versions of "Promises, Promises", the second told because the first line of the first version was missing on the tape. The story gently mocks the people who believe literally the words of the preacher, at the same time mocking the preacher who speaks an abstract promise in concrete words. The last story, "Stations of a Life" is a straightforward and unpretentious autobiography.

The syllabic transcription presents an idealized version of the spoken texts in that only those words which are completed by the narrator are transcribed. The Roman transcription differs; it preserves the false starts, incomplete words and self-corrections which are so typical of spoken text, a practice for which the editor doesn't provide a rationale. The English translation attempts to preserve the flavour of the Cree narrative. In doing this it is sometimes cumbersome as in the sentence, "And so I looked after that boarding-house, we had ourselves bought a boarding-house, we ran it" (p. 39).

This volume is meant to be a first reader for speakers of Manitoba Swampy Cree. The stories are certainly suited to that purpose. Whether the same can be said of the Roman transcriptions is another question: what is the purpose of presenting to readers a text which preserves its oral nature as much as possible forcing them to learn to read false starts and the like? Will readers be reminded of the oral base for these stories better than if an idealized version was read? The editor offers no rationale for his decision except to say that the Roman transcriptions attempt to represent what is recorded on tape.

The editor and publisher have made a major contribution by publishing this volume for a small but undoubtedly appreciative audience. It should be welcomed as a fine addition to the material available for both speakers and students of Cree.

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Beckwith, John (Editor): *Sing Out the Glad News: Hymn Tunes in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto, 165 pp.

*Sing Out the Glad News: Hymn Tunes in Canada* is the first volume of proceedings from a meeting of the newly established Institute for Canadian Music at the University of Toronto. The result of this initial meeting "...was a review of current emphases in hymnody research in this country..." (Beckwith, p. 1). For me, a longtime collector of Canadian hymnaries, reading this book was a delight, not only because of the data presented, but also because of the insights gained on how and why certain hymnals were constructed.

Of most relevance are the two articles about Native hymnsinging. Both are invaluable for scholars in Native Studies for they shed light on the nature of Native acculturation. For example, northern Natives in Canada now consider certain hymns to be their traditional music and, when I asked northern Cree to sing an old song, I was as likely to hear a hymn as I was a traditional hunting song.

Elaine Keillor's article "Hymn Singing Among the Dogrib Indians" addresses specific, but not a singular sort of problem for the North: why would a Protestant hymn be sung by the Dogribs during a Roman Catholic ceremony with a text which was translated in Chipewyan? Within her efforts to answer the question we are given a brief overview of the history of hymnody in the community of Rae and of the common elements in Christian hymns and traditional songs.

Several of Keillor's statements require clarification: she says, "Because most of the traditional Dogrib musical material that I taped was the property of male singers, the hymns provide a musical outlet for the women that they would not otherwise have" (p. 38). This implies that Dogrib women's music is an area almost totally neglected, yet in my experience, most northern women do sing lullabies.

Some of the Cree have repertoires of work-related songs, but often they are very shy and reticent about singing for a tape recording. Perhaps further investigation will reveal traditional women's music among the Dogrib.

To explain poor church attendance, Keillor writes: "There are likely a number of factors contributing to this trend including the major changes which the Dogribs have experienced over the past seventeen years but I would suspect that one of the reasons is lack of material in their own language" (p. 39).

I wonder if, for some of the younger people, it may be the very fact that the hymns are in Dogrib, rather than in English, that renders the singing less enthusiastic. Also, I have noticed that the repertoire of traditional hymns translated into a Native language may lack appeal to the younger generation, while remaining a staple for the elder churchgoers. Thus Native language and the "old" hymns go hand in hand and frequently do

not communicate well with youth.

Keillor's final discussion of Prayer songs and of the vocables "ni, ne, ye, ya" leads one to wonder if elements of Peyotism (although the slower tempo is not typical) have reached Morley, Alberta, and the Canadian North. In any case, one hopes Keillor will continue her inquiry and develop further her final statement, "On their own the Dogribs have developed a small hymnody based on the characteristics and performance of their own traditional music" (p. 42).

Cavanagh's article deals with the hymns of three groups, the Iroquois, the Micmac, and the Naskapi-Montagnais of the Eastern Woodlands. Cavanagh looks more closely at the music and the context of the hymns, yet arrives at conclusions similar to Keillor: "For students of hymnody such as ourselves, it would seem that Native hymnody must be regarded not as a linguistic adaptation of Euro-American traditions but as a unique one shaped by its own context" (55). One hopes that this premise, like the Keillor conclusion, will be developed further by placing hymnody in the larger framework of religion and by using the hymnody to provide useful clues as to how syncretism has occurred between Christianity and traditional Native belief.

The other five articles deal with Protestant Canadian hymnody, past and present. In the first paper John Beckwith is clearly a believer in the vitality and meaning of hymns learned aurally in social context, and furthermore, in the importance of preserving Canadian hymnody. He states that his study is a survey and indeed his outline does introduce the reader to broader considerations such as "...the manners of composing and arranging hymn tunes, the formats for printing them, and (by implication) the ways of performing them" (p. 3), which does form a useful framework for the initiate in reading the more specific studies which follow.

Three of the remaining articles each focus on one hymnbook. The two Methodist books were chosen because of their historical significance. Nicholas Temperley skillfully shows how the earliest surviving Canadian book of hymn tunes, Stephen Humbert's *Union Harmony*, 1816, was assembled and for what purpose. J. William Lamb deals with Alexander Davidson's Methodist publication the *Sacred Harmony*, 1838, Canada's most widely used tunebook of the mid-nineteenth century. In his discussion of the 1971 Anglican-United Hymn Book, F.R.C. Clarke provides invaluable firsthand discussion on the making of the book and the contemporary concern for choosing quality tunes as well as texts.

And finally, readers will welcome Stephen Blum's discussion of a particular genre of hymn, the fusing tune; this fascinating social and musical phenomenon has been well-studied in American scholarship, but has been neglected in Canadian music studies until now.

It is time to have such scholarly information available on hymn tunes in Canada. One can only hope for another conference which will further broaden the study of hymnody. Much of my collection, including several

Presbyterian "Books of Praise" remains obscure and as far as I know, virtually unstudied.

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Breen, Marcus (Editor): *Our Place Our Music: Aboriginal Music: Australian Popular Music in Perspective Volume 2*. Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press for the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, GPO Box 553, Canberra, ACT 2601, 1989, 172 pp. ISBN 0 85575 197 5.

As the title suggests, *Our Place Our Music: Aboriginal Music: Australian Popular Music in Perspective* introduces the reader to the many varieties of Australian Aboriginal music. It examines the effects of a changing world upon Aboriginal music and musicians and raises issues of cross cultural understanding and appreciation. It is both thought provoking and challenging.

*Our Place Our Music* was originally intended to be one chapter in the first volume of the series, *Missing in Action: Australian Popular Music in Perspective*, but as material was collected it became apparent that a longer work had to be considered and thus the book in its present form came into being as Volume 2 of the series.

The material was collected over three years by a team of six researchers from the Centre for Aboriginal Studies in Music at the University of Adelaide (CASM) brought together by Chester Schultz. In collecting material for the book researchers asked Aboriginal musicians to talk about their music. As a result the book focusses on the musicians' own perceptions and feelings about their music and themselves as musicians. In addition, the researchers themselves add material from their own experiences. The book, therefore, is a discussion of "ourselves and our music", rather than an outside observer's and a non-group member's comments on the music of a particular group. Throughout the book comments made by researchers and their sources are directly attributed in the narrative, creating the impression that the reader is listening in on actual conversations.

The book is divided into three sections. The first section, "Our place our music", describes Aboriginal musical tradition, the destruction of Aboriginal culture, the naturalising effect of the traditions of the immigrants on Aboriginal musical life and examples of musical life in separated Aboriginal communities. The second section, "Regional music today", as the name suggests, describes and differentiates the varying musical styles and practices of different regions of Australia. "Breaking down the wall?",

the final section, examines recent political developments and the coping mechanisms employed by Aboriginal musicians. The future of Aboriginal music is discussed, reflecting on how Aboriginal music might be encouraged, preserved and presented to non-Aboriginal listeners, how children should be introduced to Aboriginal music and how Aboriginal music might be used appropriately in conjunction with other media. The main focus is on today's musical culture rather than traditional Aboriginal music of the precontact era.

*Our Place Our Music* discusses the place music holds in the total experience of Aboriginal life and places music in its political, social and cultural context. It does not claim to be a book of musical analysis for music theorists. The major emphasis is on "music in our life". There is no detailed analysis of compositional techniques, no detailed discussion of rhythm, melody, instrumentation and harmony. There are no transcriptions of musical examples. The book presents the perceptions of both the musicians who talked to the authors and the authors themselves of the cultural, political and social constraints and realities under which they work. The result is a book which can be enjoyed and appreciated by musicologists, anthropologists and the general reader alike. No background in music is necessary in order to understand the points made and follow the narrative.

Diagrams and pictures of musical instruments and sound production techniques would help those readers who have never heard or seen a didjeridu or leaf blowing. Maps showing the locations of places mentioned would assist the non-Australian reader.

The authors recognize that the book is a beginning, a first step in the process of understanding Australian Aboriginal music and encouraging further study. They recognize that more detailed study and analysis needs to be conducted by Aboriginal musicians themselves.

This book is recommended to all readers interested in learning about Australian Aboriginal music. Hopefully there will be more from the same writers, perhaps accompanied by records.

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Brown, Jennifer S.H. and Robert Brightman: "*The Orders of the Dreamed: George Nelson on Cree and Northern Ojibwa Religion and Myth, 1823*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, Manitoba Studies in Native History 3, 1988, xii + 226 pages, illus., maps, ref., index, cloth, ISBN 0-88755-139-4, \$24.95.

I am forced to say, that so far as regards intellect uncultivated as a people, they are far, very far our Superiors (p. 24).<+>

The above quote began this reviewer's reading odyssey through this volume. In recreating the letter journal of fur-trader George Nelson, the authors develop an interesting exercise in understanding the worldview of this enigmatic man. Early in the text, it becomes apparent that Nelson was an avid collector of interesting materials which pertained to the Cree/Ojibwa peoples with whom he came into direct contact. Clearly, Nelson found that he had to rely on the abilities of translators and it is quite likely that they changed or influenced the inherent meaning of the information. With this in mind, Nelson did his best to maintain accuracy, considering the circumstances under which he collected the stories.

Nelson's own Euro-perceptions influenced the manner in which he reported the various incidents and stories. He, like other observer-writers of the day, very rapidly expunges ribaldry which was an essential portion of story-telling in some Cree and Ojibwa social units. Ribaldry is used to relate to the human characteristics and valuable teachings which were, and are, an integral part of any Cree/Ojibwa story. In spite of the fact that Nelson's journal to his father is coloured by his own background, he more than adequately records in detail the events and stories which are contained within this volume.

*Part I* deals with the history of George Nelson, the main character of this volume. It also establishes very early in the reading that this volume deals with Nelson's early life in the fur trade in the Canadian Northwest.

*Part II* focusses on Nelson's letter-journal. In this section, the reader is given a glimpse of the world-view of the Cree and Ojibwa people through Nelson's recording of the stories. The reader is introduced to the Spirit-beings who play a prominent role in the life of Cree and Ojibwa people.

Although the major emphasis of this volume lies in the development of the writings of Nelson, Brown and Brightman interject explanations which are intended to correct inaccurate information. The authors enlist the aid of two Native scholars, Stan Cuthand (Cree) and Emma LaRocque (Métis), to reinforce their claim of the potential misinformation contained in the Nelson letters which form the major portion of the work. In the section labeled "Dramatis Personae" (p. 107-115), the authors begin an explanation of the "cast of characters" (p. 107) which are the Spirit-beings of the stories of the Cree and Ojibwa. In Brown and Brightman's development of this glossary, they attempt to define the beings as they

were used in stories.

The authors' fall into the same quagmire as other scholars who attempt to study Indian languages from a philosophical/ mythical point of view. They believe that the glossary translations are the proper words to describe the Spirit-beings of the Cree and Ojibwa. Much to their credit, the authors have done extensive research to verify the role of Spirit-beings and mostly their research is accurate.

There are some inconsistencies, for example, the Ojibwa word for "thunder - thunderer/thunderbird -*Piness*" (p. 112) is incorrect. In traditional Ojibwa the word for thunder is *Nem-e-ke*, therefore it is also probable that the Cree word is incorrect. As well, the authors use Nelson's description of the Thunderbird Spirit as a beautiful peacock. In the Ojibwa world-view, the Thunderbird Spirit is usually represented by an eagle with wings spread wide and in flight.

In *Part III* of this volume, Brown and Brightman attempt to explain the sacred ways of Northern Algonquian peoples by discussing and comparing what they call "Religious and Mythic Themes and Personages" (p. 119) and they have done extensive research to document the religious belief systems of the Northern Cree and Ojibwa. Those who are not familiar with the sacred ways of the Northern Cree and Ojibwa will find this section useful. Brown and Brightman then make comparisons using their findings with the writings of Nelson. In relying on scholarly research, the authors again hit a pitfall in their explanation of the "Windigo Complex" (pp. 158-171). They have neglected to check for the reason why Windigo Stories were told. Basil Johnson, an Ojibwa, relates in his story "A Man Named Weendigo" (Colombo, 1982:201-203) that windigo was the Spirit of Excess who encouraged moderation rather than cannibalism or psychosis.

*Part IV* contains the writing and reflections of Stan Cuthand (pp. 189-198) and Emma Laroque (pp. 199-203). Mr. Cuthand reflects on the Nelson story and makes a comparison to his early life and the use of oral tradition among his people. Ms. Laroque approaches the Nelson text in a more pragmatic manner and reminds readers of the ethical challenges we face when we begin to consider publishing material which deals with the world-view of Indian people. To her credit, she reminds readers about the use of words and how Nelson (and the authors of this volume) have missed the innuendo which is inherent in the Cree and Ojibwa languages.

In conclusion, with careful analysis and sensitivity on the part of the reader, this volume can be used in the study of the world-view of the Cree and Ojibwa, especially those who live in Northern Saskatchewan. In spite of some errors, this volume does indeed add to the literature regarding the world-view/sacred ways of Cree and Ojibwa peoples. As Nelson stated, each reader will draw from this volume "his own conclusions" (p. 185).

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### REFERENCE

Columbo, John Robert

1982 *Windigo: An Anthology of Fact and Fantastic Fiction*.  
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Clark, Joan: *The Victory of Geraldine Gull*. Toronto: MacMillan of Canada,  
1988, ISBN 0-7715-9281-7, 288 pp.

If an irrepressible poet had been assigned the task of editing one of those "local histories" of which rural communities are so understandably fond, the result might be something like *The Victory of Geraldine Gull*, for as much as it is the story of a particular character, this novel is the portrait of a fictional community at a critical moment in its history. With its biographical sketches, excerpts from documents, and general commentary on the progress and setbacks of the community, *Geraldine Gull*, like the local histories, makes for leisurely reading, and, re-opened at random, invariably reveals some neglected or forgotten curiosity. The subject is Niska, a village of Swampy Cree on the shores of Hudson Bay. Its prominent citizens - the chief, the school teacher, the HBC store manager, the priest - are all given their due, and, somewhat unusual in modern fiction, are not portrayed as hypocrites or criminals, but rather as ordinary men trying with more or less success to fulfill their roles in a creditable manner. There, however, the similarities to the familiar local history end, for the representation of Niska, far from glossed and optimistic, is at some points - particularly in the first fifty pages - almost unbearably sordid, and the character given the most attention is by no means the shining star of the community; she is, rather, its scourge.

Geraldine Gull is distinguished from the other dregs of Niska most notably by her rage. Although she has had a miserable life, she has not succumbed utterly to despair, nor has she blamed herself for her misfortunes; instead, she has turned her anger outward against the institutions of White society in Niska: the Hudson Bay Company and the Roman Catholic Church. It is not only White institutions and their representatives which feel the brunt of Geraldine's wrath, however; she does not try to conceal her contempt for the "sleepy Crees" (pg. 12). She herself is Ojibwa, and, as Patrick Eagle remarks, "There is hardly anyone here who hasn't been roughed up by Geraldine at one time or another" (pg.

81).

So, Geraldine is by no means a likeable character; enraged people seldom are. Most of the time she is downright obnoxious. Indeed, one of the sustaining features of this novel in its substantial expository phase is the question of how such an unlikeable character will be redeemed; what will be the "victory" that justifies the attention directed to her? In this the reader is not disappointed. Eventually it is revealed that Geraldine does have a loftier goal in life than finding the forty-ouncer that her clever neighbor stashed away; she is determined to see to it that her son's paintings achieve the recognition they deserve. As it happens, her pursuit of this ennobling end becomes entwined with the fate of Niska itself as Geraldine becomes a sort of frenzied goddess in her reckless use of fire and flood to force the villagers to a more suitable location, where their community can prosper along with the reputation of her son.

Another engaging question is that of how Geraldine came to be so enraged. Her past is gradually revealed in tantalizing bits, and it emerges that, naturally enough, her personal tragedy is inseparable from the social and economic decline of the Native people of the north. A degree of sympathy, though still not fondness, is thus engendered, and, as it becomes clear that the spirit of extreme independence that makes her so abrasive in Niska is what enabled her to survive the horrors of her younger life in the southern cities, it is difficult not to feel begrudging respect for Geraldine. This is a woman who, unable to escape victimization, has chosen to embrace the role of victim for the freedom it offers from normal social restraints and thus the opportunities for vengeance it provides. Geraldine, then, has managed to turn entrapment into a type of freedom.

However, there are aspects of Geraldine's character which remain enigmatic. While any complex character is bound to have apparent inconsistencies and contradictions, it is nonetheless difficult to reconcile the passive, mindless teenager who slips unquestioningly into prostitution with, on the one hand, the schoolgirl who was so impressed with the heroes of classical history that she would one day name her son Alexander, and, on the other hand, the sharp-witted and headstrong adult.

A far more accessible character is Willa Coyle, the young white artist who arrives in Niska to give lessons to the children, and who, as Geraldine's only possible link to the art establishment, is distressed to find herself increasingly involved in the fate of Alexander's paintings, of Geraldine, and of Niska itself. Willa is the one character fresh from "outside", and being reasonably intelligent and well-adjusted, she reflects the liberal values of her erstwhile social milieu. She plays the role of chorus as much as that of participant, particularly in her letters to her sister.

While Geraldine Gull is certainly the most complex and perplexing character, and Willa the most accessible, there are many other characters fleshed out in a sympathetic and credible manner, and with considerable imagination. Indeed, if there is any criticism to be made in this regard, it is

that perhaps a little too much detail of the lives of the various characters has been provided, for, however relevant thematically, it does restrain the pace of the novel.

The only real disappointment in the matter of characterization is that while Clark convincingly reveals both the leaders and the dregs of Niska, she does not attempt to penetrate the minds of the "ordinary" people; they remain a silent inscrutable mass; unpredictable and indifferent, not only to the white stranger, but to their own leaders as well. Many non-Natives who have spent time in Native communities may be able to relate to Willa's initial feelings of unease at the apparent indifference shown her, but they will search in vain for the equally familiar feelings of warmth and fellowship that result from being the beneficiary of acts of gratuitous generosity and kindness. Seeming indifference can mask uncertainty about how to behave in the presence of another. However, in *Geraldine Gull*, indifference is the real thing. That such indifference could exist is certainly not impossible, but at one point its expression - or lack of expression - goes beyond the bounds of credibility. When Willa arrives at Niska, she is physically assaulted before an assembly of much of the community, an incident which, although startling at the point at which it occurs, is believable in the context of the novel as a whole. Incredibly, though, not only is there no reaction at the time, but at no point after the incident does any Native member of the community express even polite sympathy for Willa or half-hearted disapproval of the assault. Whatever the symbolic value of the expression of rejection of the white newcomer, this complete lack of sympathy for her as a human being is indifference to the point of callousness, and is unbelievable of some of the otherwise admirable characters.

It is clearly not Clark's intent to malign the characters of her own creation, much less the Native people of the north generally. In *Geraldine Gull*, the indifference of the Native villagers is shown to be a manifestation of the independence of character that has enabled them to survive for centuries in a pitiless environment, just as Geraldine's abrasiveness evidences her strength. *Geraldine Gull* can be understood as a sort of alternative to Margaret Craven's novel, *I Heard the Owl Call My Name* (1967), the story of a White Anglican priest who is gradually taken into the bosom of a Native community on the Pacific coast. Although Willa becomes attached to the north and its people, she knows she will never be accepted by the people of Niska as one of their own. Clark's Native characters are not sweet or gentle - and by no means "childlike". They are tough; not loveable, but admirable. Their indifference towards Willa can be interpreted as their understanding that they can ultimately survive without White people and institutions. This seems to be the idea Clark is trying to get across, so perhaps she can be forgiven if she exaggerates somewhat in doing so.

A real strength of this novel is the quality of the writing. Clark uses to

good effect a wide range of prose stylings, from dry and technical to richly poetic. The narrative voice, so unlike that of the sensible but gentle editor of the local history, frequently interweaves the most violent imagery of Christian and Native mythology with images of mutilation, filth and despair, to convey in disturbing fashion the sense of victimization against which Geraldine Gull and the Native leaders struggle in their own very different ways. Opening the novel at random, one finds the following description of an aerial view of the village:

You look down and see that a wide incision has been made on the lip of the river bank, then clumsily stitched up again. Stuck at either end of the scar like white-tipped pins are the store and the church (pg. 16).

The image of careful laceration succeeded by botched stitching is gruesome, but it is a powerful metaphor for the effect on northern Native bands of contact with the institutions of White society.

Biblical imagery, particularly of divine retribution, crucifixion, and redemption, is likewise entwined with the events and forces at work in the novel to elevate the very contemporary story beyond a specific time and place and into a mythical context. The images from Native mythology serve a similar function, although they will presumably have less resonance for most readers. They are, nonetheless, most effective.

As a gritty portrait of a northern Native community, *Geraldine Gull* is thoughtful and worthwhile; like the local histories, it may not tell the whole story, and may be misleading in some respects, but its source is the heart. However, its real power is as a nightmarish northern vision of personal and communal suffering, destruction, sacrifice, and, finally, salvation.

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1967 *I Heard the Owl Call My Name*. Toronto: Clarke, Irwin.

Grant, Agnes: *Native Literature in the Curriculum*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba, 1986, ISSN 0709-6313, Bibliog., ii + 86 pp. \$7.00.

Agnes Grant, who teaches in Brandon University's Department of Native Studies, set out to convince educators that Native literature should be included in school curricula. In this she has been only partially successful, although the patient reader will find some useful information in this slim volume.

An introductory chapter seeks to explain why Native literature has been excluded from the curricula of most Canadian schools. Grant summarizes some of the inherent problems in using literature derived from oral cultures and translating from Aboriginal languages. No reference is made to Brian Swann's recent (1983) work *Smoothing the Ground: Essays on Native American Oral Literature*.

Those of us who are already convinced of the importance of Native literature in the curriculum will find little to argue about; but we won't learn much either. What about the uninitiated? Teachers will need to be convinced on pedagogical grounds, such as the importance of having familiar or relevant reading materials (pp. 8, 29, 30) or Native role models (p. 21). Such arguments should have been made early and forcibly, supported by research. More examples are needed.

The section dealing with myth and legend is fairly well written, and Grant reminds the reader that "myth" is not a pejorative term (p. 18). A general overview is provided for the reader, where once again numerous examples would have been useful.

The examples finally appear in a chapter on traditional Native poetry and song (p.33). The cultural context is missing, however, as in this statement about an Ojibway love song: "The young man walked slowly through the camp, singing each verse several times so that his girl would have plenty of time to make up her mind to welcome him" (p. 41). Algonquians are well known for their techniques of non-interference (e.g. Spielmann & Chief, 1986).

A concluding section on the importance of Native literature in contemporary society states that "The best North American Native literature not only inspires; it also alters the mind" (pp. 75-76). This monograph does not inspire, and it boggles the mind.

A great chief decides to abandon his youngest son. The boy befriends a dog, and survives as a successful hunter who never again trusts his father. The "boy" is Tecumseh, and the "dog" is his brother Tenskwatawa, the Shawnee Prophet, whose tribe was cast aside by the British allies (Cornell, n.d.).

A pregnant young woman and her husband are left to fend for themselves. The young man provides food and shelter, and is transformed into an adult. A successful caribou hunter, he visits those who had abandoned him, finds them weak with hunger and offers them food. The

story illustrates an Eastern Cree ethic of socially responsible behavior (Preston, 1986).

The animals that run in the forest could speak. They lived together in a tent, under the leadership of Wolverine. All except Giant Skunk, whose powerful scent glands could kill. This narrative can teach us about much more than animals; we can learn about the "Mythic past" of Eastern Cree communities (Preston, 1984).

In each of these cases, the narrative is best understood in a specific historical and cultural context.

When she reviewed Petrone's *First People, First Voices* (1982), Grant acknowledged its positive features but concluded that the author had "not produced a book that will significantly help in the development of Native literature courses" (1984: 382). This reviewer judged Petrone's work to be "an interesting source book for beginning students" but lacking in historical or cultural context, and "poorly organized . . . like a stack of baseball cards, which makes little sense unless you know something about the players, the teams, and the history and rules of the game" (Long, 1985: 121,122,124).

We now have the stack of baseball cards, and a feeble attempt at analysis of the game, one which makes little reference to the cards, the teams or the players. Both volumes will contribute to the development of Native literature courses, particularly in the hands of sensitive teachers. But a comprehensive multi-disciplinary introductory reference book is still desperately needed.

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1986 *Requesting and Rejecting in Algonquin: Notes on a Conversation*, pp. 313-326, in William Cowan (Editor): *Actes du Dix-Septième Congrès des Algonquistes* Ottawa: Carleton University Press.

Swann, Brian (Editor)

1983 *Smoothing the Ground: Essays on Native American Oral Literature*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

MacKenzie, Margaret E., Annie Whiskeychan, Luci Salt, Louise Blacksmith, and Eva Louttit, (Editors): *Cree Lexicon: Eastern James Bay Dialects*. Cree School Board, 1987, pp. xvi + 475.

With around 15,000 entries, this bilingual Cree-English dictionary for the Eastern Cree language of Quebec is one of the largest contemporary dictionaries for an Algonquian language. Most previous dictionaries for the indigenous languages of North America have been prepared by non-Native speakers for use by language learners or scholars. This dictionary, however, is by and for the Quebec Cree community, prepared over a period of fifteen years by a team of Native-speaking linguistic specialists with an academic linguist. The stated aim is to "advance Cree as a working language in the schools, offices, and businesses of the James Bay region." Although the English title appears at the head of the title page, it is but one of five titles, the others being orthographic variants of the title in the two Cree dialects of the east coast of James Bay. In the rest of the book Cree comes first. While those who are not current speakers of Cree will find this book invaluable for studying the language, they will have to learn their way around it on Cree terms. But then, even the Cree have to learn their way around it, for the form of an ordered list of the word resources of the language is a new one to them and so are the skills necessary to use it.

The head word of each entry is in the southern dialect of Eastern Cree as spoken in Rupert House, Eastmain, Mistassini, Waswanipi, and Nemaska. The standard orthography used in Quebec employs the Eastern Cree syllabic characters and they appear first, followed by a Roman character transcription. The parallel form for the Northern dialect of Eastern Cree as spoken at Great Whale, Chisasibi, and Weminji follows. The English glosses are quite full with English masculine pronouns used to indicate human subjects and objects, animate in gender in Cree. Subjects and objects inanimate in Cree are indicated by "it", which also indicates non-humans of the Cree animate gender when tagged "(anim.)"

Flora and fauna are glossed with both common English names and scientific names. Labels for classificatory morphemes ('stick-like', 'string-like', etc.) appear in the glosses. These are important, for Cree verbs can be restricted by them to refer to things of certain shapes and materials. Standard Algonquian word-class codes complete the entries.

The citation forms are full words, not the uninflected abstract stems sometimes used in the technical dictionaries of linguists. Verbs are represented by independent-order third person subject forms; the transitive verbs also have third person objects. Nouns are represented with a singular form; no plural suffixes or other indications of paradigm classes are given. The obligatorily-possessed dependent nouns, which include most kin terms and body parts, appear with a third person possessive prefix beginning with *o* or *w*. The word-class codes labelling them, *nda* for animates and *ndi* for inanimates, however, were omitted

from the key to the codes given in the introduction. All the Cree words are written with vowel length and pre-aspiration of consonants fully marked; that is, they are written phonemically. While this is usual in the Roman transcription systems introduced by non-Native linguists, it is unusual in syllabics. Few Cree writers choose to use the historic symbols for length and pre-aspiration consistently in everyday writing. They are part of the full syllabary, however, and appropriate for use in such a reference dictionary. They function as diacritics indicating pronunciation, with the main configuration of the normal orthographic word remaining essentially unaltered. Perhaps their use here is the result of a planning decision to encourage their introduction into school orthography.

The entries are ordered according to the sequence of characters in the standard Eastern Cree syllabary printed in the introduction. A syllable with a long vowel follows the equivalent short vowel syllable. Syllables with <MI>*w* <D> follow the plain syllables. The aspiration sigh is treated as coming at the end of the syllabary, although it is omitted from the chart in the introduction. For example, the order for syllables with *p* is: *pe pi pii pu puu pa paa p; pwe* through *pwaa; hpe* through *hpa* (and *hp*); *hpwe* through *hpwaa*. This sequence brings together many of the words sharing the same root, but requires users unsure about length and aspiration to flip around quite a bit to locate their target word. Perhaps syllabic dictionaries should be arranged only according to the main syllabics and consonantal finals and ignore vowel length and aspiration, while still writing them. Only testing by users will determine which sequence (or some other) will be most useful. The grouping of entries by root used in some of the traditional French dictionaries for Algonquin should also be kept in mind as a possible arrangement for practical Algonquian dictionaries.

The coverage is wide. The traditional economy and lifeways are outlined by this lexicon, with such words as *atipis* "the line used for the front and back webbing on snowshoes" and *naanituukaskaschehtakweu* "he goes looking for rotten wood for smoking hides". Another side of contemporary life is represented with, for example, *kaashtushtupaich* "jello" and *uhpahuuye* "he takes him on the plane with him, he flies him". The vocabulary of the northern terrain is richly documented with words such as *maschekwaaskweyaau* "it is a swampy area of stunted trees". Every page yields to the interested reader such fascinating entries as *ahchaahkw* which means not only "soul or spirit" but also "pompom on hat, tuque". But so productive is the word-making machinery of Algonquian languages that the vocabulary is impossible to fully capture. No doubt copies of this dictionary in Cree homes now have unlisted words written in, ready to add to the next edition.

This is not a document intended to preserve on paper a dying language; this is a tool for the development of a vital one. Only the first published product of a massive computerized data base, it can be updated and reworked into other formats. The preface foresees an English-Cree

version and smaller student versions. While the English-Cree version is of less use to the Cree community, it is hoped that the editors will produce this soon for the many non-Natives who are interested in this language. Given the growing importance of French in the linguistic economy of the region, French-Cree and Cree-French versions will be needed as well. Eventually the Eastern Cree may initiate the entry into the next stage of North American Native lexicography and create a *monolingual* dictionary of their language.

Meanwhile the Eastern Cree have a dictionary any language community could be proud of. It is practical and it is scholarly, both in its Cree scholarship and its academic linguistic scholarship. This book needs to be made available to other Native communities, along with the full story of its creation and publication, as a guide for the dictionary-making enterprises they will undertake as part of language maintenance efforts.

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*Le pouvoir des sons*. Montréal: Recherches Amérindiennes au Québec. Vol. XV, No. 4, hiver 1985 - 1986.

*Fetes et musiques*. Montréal: Recherches Amérindiennes au Québec. Vol. XVIII, No. 4, hiver 1988 - 1989.

These two journals, consisting of a collection of articles, and written for the most part by ethnomusicologists, are essential reading for those wishing to keep abreast of the most recent research on Native music, and particularly Native music in the sub-arctic and arctic regions of North America. The volumes do much to rectify the view of the North as a cultural monolith, refining and supplementing existing studies and demonstrating the complexity and dynamism of northern cultural life.

Not all the contributions are on Native music of the North. The first volume, entitled *Le Pouvoir des sons*, contains a note on the Native flute, a discussion of the modern powwow, and another of poems sung by the Nahuatl Indians of Mexico during weddings. *Le pouvoir des sons* is a most appropriate title, for the Native use of sound, both speech and music, to obtain power is well demonstrated in the volume through a variety of scholarly approaches, such as anthropological and semiotic studies, and content analysis.

The second volume is similar in format, yet differs in emphasis. *Fetes et musiques* focuses on the events (mainly festivals) which form the context for song and dance, such as the powwow, the Igloodik Inuit and Yupik drum dances, and the potlatch.

Two articles, David McAllester's "On Teaching Native American Musics: Ethics and Pedagogy" and Jean-Jacques Nattiez's "Nouveaux disques et cassettes de musique Inuit", while breaking with the stated themes of the two volumes, are extremely useful for those actively involved in the study and teaching of Native music.

I question the two other articles on South American music on practical grounds: while fine articles, they may generally be overlooked because of their inclusion in volumes of North American Native music.

Both journals are engagingly designed and amply illustrated with photographs, sketches and musical notation. While those who are musically literate will be the most comfortable with these volumes, the glossaries defining musical terms make all of the articles accessible to interested scholars.

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*Earth Elder Stories*, told by Alexander Wolfe. Saskatoon: Fifth House, 1988, cover and illustrations by Henry Standing Alone. ISBN 0-920079-35-0 xii + 79 pages.

A crucial element of the Native Renaissance is the rediscovery and transmission of sacred myths, historical legends, and family tales. Alexander Wolfe's *Earth Elder Stories* are retellings of narratives heard from his great grandfather Akeywakeywazee (Earth Elder) before the latter's death in 1937 at age 107. In his preface and in the eleven stories themselves, the author, a Saskatchewan Saulteaux, presents significant events of his people's heritage, emphasizes their contemporary, indeed universal meaning, and discusses the difficulties and responsibilities of presenting oral traditions in written form.

"What the Anishnaybay does and how he lives is a story," Grandfather Earth Elder had said. That is because the record of events from mythic and historical times provides examples of ways to live, and the retelling of these events provides guide posts for the listeners. The lessons are of responsibility, reverence, and sharing, to, for, and between all beings. However, the transmission of the stories is not without responsibilities. Sacred stories should be told (and presumably read) only in winter time; family stories are private property and cannot be retold by others without permission; and changing oral narrative to print must be done without deviation from the intent or spirit of the original. These aspects Wolfe emphasizes in his introduction.

The first three tales are sacred narratives from myth time, the period when people lived in harmony with the rhythms of nature and when spirit powers communicated with people in vision and dream. In "The Sound of Dancing", a grandfather and grandson are attacked by hostile people, and the old man takes the boy to the spirit world, protecting him until the latter is able to make his own way back to the village. "The Orphan Children" are aided by the supernatural Grandfather Buffalo until they return to their people, aiding them in a time of poverty. The title hero of "Grandfather Bear" aids his destitute grandson when, as a supernatural bear, he assists the youth in his first horse raid and so helps him win the chief's daughter. Superbly retold, these three tales put the listener in touch with a numinous world where there is harmony among people, animals, and spirit beings.

The remaining eight stories are the author's ancestral history, tracing the events of Earth Elder and his brothers from the time of the arrival of the Europeans to the old age of Earth Elder, a period remembered by the author. In the descriptions of rapid and destructive change the dominant note is elegiac. The titles of four of the pieces contain the adjective "last." Small-pox, the railroad, missionary schools, and government prohibitions of sacred festivals bring the end of a way of life lived in touch with the natural and supernatural. The final narrative, "The Last Days of the Hunter", describes the author's childhood recollections of his widowed

grandfather living on government rations in a tiny shack. It is a kind of coda, referring to many of the earlier stories and recapitulating the themes. One thinks of the final chapter of *Black Elk Speaks*, in which the aged seer also reflects on the passing of the old ways and of the value of remembering and presenting accounts of them.

Of the entire collection, the first three stories stand out. Mythic history is more interesting to the general reader than family history, and the first three tales are tightly organized and moving myths. The later works, although they contain important thematic messages, tend to be somewhat episodic and rambling. However, they do fit into the total fabric of the collection. In fact, one could say that the interrelationship of the stories, the linking of events, characters, and messages parallels the overall theme: the interrelationship of past and present and of all beings, and the need to recognize this.

In his introduction, Wolfe notes, "Now I've become a grandfather too and my responsibility to carry on the tradition of my people has only begun." After an hiatus of nearly fifty years, half a century after European attempts to destroy them, the traditions of the Saulteaux have been revived by Alexander Wolfe. His presentation of his family and cultural past is an important contribution to the Native Renaissance, a renaissance which will help his people create a proud present through recalling a proud past. This collection may help sensitive non-Native readers as well, as they discover a way of life which we must all espouse if we are to maintain and strengthen the fragile natural and spiritual life of our planet.

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