

BOOK REVIEWS

Choquette, Robert: *The Oblate Assault on Canada's Northwest*. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1995, 258 pp., maps, photos, tables, bibliography, index. ISBN: 0-7766-0402-3, Paper.

It may seem odd for an anthropologist to be reviewing what is essentially a history of missions, yet this new book by Robert Choquette is of particular interest for anthropologists who work with Canadian First Nations because it deals with the work of the congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate who proselytised most of the First Nations of Canada. If anthropologists have traditionally felt antipathy to the work of missionaries, a more balanced assessment would be obliged to admit that most Canadian Natives had already been converted long before the arrival of the anthropologists. We must be prepared to take into account the historical process of conversion, even if we are uncomfortable with it.

Choquette's study examines the rise of the Oblates in early 19th century France and their successful transplanting to Canada. The core of the book examines the missionary work of the congregation among the Métis and Native peoples of Canada west of Manitoba. The strongest chapters of the book focus on the McKenzie Valley (where the missions were very successful) and the Yukon (where they were not). The book ends at the turn of the century with the missions well entrenched within the communities.

I cannot claim any competence to assess the historical data presented in the text. There is a vast array of important names, places and dates that need to be carefully reviewed. But there are at least two important areas that are most useful to the anthropologist. The first is the general characterization of the Catholic ecclesiastical structures and thought in the mid to late 19th century, and the second is the important nuances of conflict and difference within the congregation itself.

The theological polity of the 19th century Catholic Church was extremely centralized, controlled financially and theologically from Rome. Today, one may be tempted to accept this as commonplace, but Choquette points out that this was a radically different model from the earlier "Gallican" organization where ecclesiastical appointments were controlled by the state. The Jesuit mission work among the Huron was a function of the first

model, the Oblates of the second. The conservative reaction against Protestantism and modernism reached its apogee in this period, infusing the Church with renewed vigour to conquer the world in the name of Catholicism. A chapter on the Church of England Church Missionary Society (CMS), who were the Oblates' main opponents in the field, nicely contrasts the two theologies and the mission strategies that follow.

Anthropologists have tended to portray the Missionary Oblates through an unproblematic characterization, as if all missionaries were the same. Choquette demonstrates instead the variety of internal disputes and differences within the organization. This not only centres on those missionaries who had personal problems (especially Grollier and Petitot) but also the structural problems that beset the missions. One of the most serious was the hostility between the French (and European) members and the French-Canadians whose political and linguistic interests were quite at odds.

Choquette also shows the variation in relationships between the French Catholic missionaries and their Protestant opponents, as well as the Hudson Bay Company administrators and post managers. While the Oblates and the CMS evangelicals were generally hostile towards one another, there were enough cases of mutual respect, cooperation and even real friendship to suggest that one needs to examine very closely the relationship between missionaries in any particular area. Even more interesting is the evidence that the HBC officers, despite the fact that they were all Protestant, were far more tolerant of and welcoming to the Oblates than they were to the Protestant missionaries. Choquette provides a number of reasons for this, the primary one being that the Oblates made far fewer financial demands on the HBC. This should also caution us in our characterization of internal relations within the small non-Native communities that anthropologists encounter.

The critical difference between the Oblates and the CMS evangelicals shows up in their understanding of conversion itself. The Oblates attributed efficacy to the sacraments themselves so that baptism could take place after little instruction. For the Oblates conversion was a gradual, lifelong process effected through internal movements of grace and aided by instruction. On the other hand the CMS missionaries saw baptism as recognition of a radical conversion that had already taken place and was demonstrated through a change in lifestyle. The result was that membership in the Protestant churches would always lag significantly behind those of the Catholics, much to the distress of the missionary headquarters. On the other hand the implications of this difference from the perspective of a potential Native convert must have been enormous.

The analysis fails to deal with the Native peoples and their responses to the missionaries in any significant fashion. Choquette distinguishes

between the largely French-speaking Métis and other Natives, but shows no understanding of the vast differences between the various Native groups that inhabit the region. Nor is there any indication of the complex and blurred ethnic distinctions that Jennifer Brown (1980) has so nicely delineated. It would be helpful to have at least some sense of how the Native peoples reacted to the missionaries if not a nod towards the complex intercultural dialogue that leads to conversion. Similarly Choquette does not deal with John Webster Grant's (1984:252) hypothesis of cycles of heroic struggle—enthusiasm—stability—decline in the process of missionary conversion work among Native Canadians. The material is certainly available in Choquette's data even though he might suggest he is only trying to deal with the initial "heroic" period.

There are two annoying technical points in the book. First, Choquette vastly overemphasizes the military metaphor. While it is appropriate for the period, since that is certainly how the missionaries saw themselves, the impact of the metaphor needs in itself to be evaluated. Second, the book is highly repetitious. Not only is the description of Provencher's arrival in Red River nearly word for word the same on pages 30 and 127, but there are many other similar restatements of facts.

Despite these problems, this is a useful reference book for anthropologists who are trying to place the particularity of a local community within a wider historical context.

Christopher G. Trott
Department of Sociology
and Anthropology
Concordia University
1455 de Maisonneuve Boulevard West
Montreal, Quebec
Canada, H3C 1M8

References

Brown, Jennifer S.H.

1980 *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Families in Indian Country*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.

Grant, John Webster

1984 *Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter Since 1534*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Clément, Daniel: *La zoologie des Montagnais*. Louvain, Paris: Peeters, 1995, xiv + 569 pp., 27 figures, 16 plates, tables, bibliography, appendices. Collection Ethnoscience 10. ISBN (France): 2-87723-099-6; (Belgium): 90-6831-686-9 Belg. F1260.

La zoologie des Montagnais (Montagnais zoology) is a study of the knowledge the Montagnais have about their environment and, more precisely, about local fauna. The Montagnais Indians, commonly referred to as Innu in Canada, are hunters and gatherers who live in the boreal forest zone of northeastern North America, in Quebec and Labrador. They developed a remarkably precise knowledge of the zoology of the region. This can be explained by the fact that even though they are gatherers and fishers, the cornerstone of their diet comes from hunting. Through observation of animal life they have come to know the habits of a large variety of species. Five major aspects of Innu life are discussed in *La zoologie des Montagnais*: anatomy; behaviour (sounds, senses, and locomotion); ecology (habitat and food; relations between animals and the seasonal phenomena); and reproduction and systematic zoology (identification and nomenclature; taxonomy). One of the major goals of this book is to prove through a systematic comparison of Montagnais and Western knowledge that Montagnais zoology can be considered scientific. He achieves this goal in part through a discussion of definitions, in science generally and zoology specifically. Daniel Clément devotes the entire first chapter of the book to an analysis of this question.

Daniel Clément is a research worker at the Canadian Ethnology Service of the Canadian Museum of Civilisations. As an anthropologist, Clément has studied relationships between people and their environment since 1980. He has published several works dealing with this topic, among which can be mentioned *L'ethnobotanique Montagnaise de Mingan* (1990) (*Ethnobotany of the Mingan Montagnais*), and a paper on the classification of otters by the Innu (1985). Of great interest to this reviewer is the fact that Clément amassed and used a great deal of oral knowledge in his study. The preservation of this material is particularly important in an era when the survival of hunters everywhere is threatened by industrial megaprojects. Apart from its value in developing this outline of Montagnais zoology, this material will doubtless be invaluable for future generations. It is significant that one of the sponsors of Clément's work is the Cultural and Educational Institute of the Montagnais, recognition perhaps of the value attached to this material. During the course of his field work between 1982 and 1988, Daniel Clément worked with eight Montagnais from Mingan and Natashquan, two communities on the Northern coast of the gulf of the Saint-Lawrence. These were men in their 60s, hunters possessing a wide knowledge about the whole range of animal species found in the region.

Clément also obtained further data from Montagnais myths and ethnography, as much information concerning the Innu has been collected and studied by westerners since the first encounter between Europeans and the Montagnais many centuries ago.

However, *La zoologie des Montagnais* offers more than a large amount of reported information (that is, knowledge, vocabulary and myths). Clément also thoroughly analyses the semantic meaning of the words along with their relation to the use that the Montagnais made of the product. Although this book is a truly scientific study, it can also be read profitably by people just interested in knowing more about the wildlife of the subarctic zone of northeastern Canada.

Nicolas Verrier
5, rue du Moulin à Papier
22000 Saint-Brieuc
France

References

Clément, Daniel

1990 L'ethnobotanique des Montagnaise de Mingan

1985 La Loutre. *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* V(1):1-10.

Hildebrandt, Walter and Brian Hubner, *The Cypress Hills: The Land and Its People*. Saskatoon: Purich Publishing, 1994, 133 pp., ISBN 1-895830-02-8.

This relatively thin book, co-authored by two historians employed by the Canadian Parks Service, is a revision and expansion of the program prepared for the guides at Fort Walsh Historic Site in the Cypress Hills. The book's subtitle is not quite appropriate, in that only two pages (pp.17-18) deal explicitly with the land, i.e. with the natural history and physical geography of the Cypress Hills. In these two pages the authors provide a succinct characterization of the nature of the Cypress Hills, pointing out particularly that its diverse and relatively well-wooded environments provided winter shelter for both wildlife and Aboriginal people in pre-contact times. This summary treatment of the land is, however, largely made up for by the inclusion of five neatly drawn maps (pp.10-14) of different scales, all with graphic scales shown. The book also includes ten black and white photographs (pp.53-58), but only two of these reveal anything about the natural environment of the Cypress Hills region. The other eight photographs are close-ups of people involved in the history of the Cypress Hills

area, and half of these photographs are of contemporary (late 19th century) Indians posing for photographers.

Nearly all of *The Cypress Hills* is a narrative history of the people, both groups and individuals, who lived or sojourned in the Cypress Hills and surrounding areas during the 19th century. The historical narrative ends abruptly with the beginnings of a number of ranches in the 1800s, except for a very brief (1 1/2 page) concluding description of the reacquisition of Fort Walsh by the RCMP in 1942 and its recent establishment as a national historic site. A brief commentary on each of the book's seven chapters follows.

The first chapter, "The Land and Its People" (pp.17-23), is mostly a summary of the human occupation and use of the Cypress Hills, with about equal space given to pre-contact and post-contact times. In Chapter Two, "The Buffalo and the Fur Trade" (pp.24-34), the authors contrast pre-contact (and pre-horse) with post-contact buffalo hunting practices, with the last three pages of the chapter devoted to the changing status of women in Plains Indian societies during post-contact times. Here the authors accept, too readily in the view of this reviewer, the now fashionable argument that Indian women lost status as a result of "the imposition of Judeo-Christian beliefs" (p.32). Less debatable is the contention that the introduction of the horse and gun to Plains Indian societies led to polygamy because the resultant greater success in hunting buffalo meant that a man "could supply at least two women with enough hides to tan" (p.34).

In the third chapter, entitled "Whoop-Up Country" (pp.35-52), the authors' focus is mainly on American traders in the Cypress Hills during the late 1860s and early 1870s. However, the authors also take up four pages (pp.38-41) discussing the importance of Canadian Métis in the Cypress Hills at that time. After citing a contemporary missionary's report that there were "200 families of French-Canadian Half-breeds" in the Cypress Hills in 1873, the authors state that during the early 1870s "Metis traders, most from Red River, were the most prominent group in the area" (p.41). One reason for the influx of Métis to the Cypress Hills was that at that time, the era of the Blackfoot-Cree Buffalo Wars, the Cypress Hills area formed a buffer zone between the Blackfoot Confederacy and the Cree.

The authors devote a separate chapter (Chapter Four, pp.59-70) to the Cypress Hills massacre of June 1, 1873. This massacre occurred when a posse of mostly American wolfers fell upon an encampment of famished and unsuspecting Assiniboine Indians and savagely killed their Chief and about twenty of his people. Although not the authors wording, the adverb "savagely" appears appropriate for what transpired on that day:

The attackers were not content merely to kill the chief. According to Farwell and Labombarde, Little Soldier's head was cut from his body and raised on a lodge pole.... After raising their grisly trophy, the men set about looting and destroying the camp (p.68).

This Cypress Hills massacre, more than any other violent incident in "Whoop-Up Country", led to the deployment of about 300 Mounties to the Canadian prairies in the summer of 1874. Chapter Five, "Fort Walsh and the Mounties" (pp.71-79) deals with the first years of the North-West Mounted Police in the Cypress Hills, down to the details of the daily schedules, assigned food rations and even the journals available as reading material for the Mounties at Fort Walsh.

Chapter Six is entitled "Treaties and Reservations", but it deals more with the Sioux wars in the United States and the resultant sojourn of Sitting Bull and the Lakotas in Canada's Cypress Hills area from 1876 to 1881 (pp.88-105). The authors criticize the Canadian government for not allowing these Sioux refugees to remain in the Canadian prairies permanently:

The incident remains a regrettable page in the history of Canada. The people that were one-time military allies to the British during their time of need were not granted asylum when this position was reversed (p.104).

The seventh and concluding chapter, "The Modern Age" (pp.106-115) deals mainly with the problems facing Plains Indians in the first decade following Treaty 4 (signed in 1874), with a brief separate section on how Indian women fared on Reserves. As indicated above, the authors' historical narrative ends abruptly in the 1880s.

Hildebrandt and Hubner have written an interesting local history, albeit one based almost entirely on secondary sources. Sometimes their source base appears too narrow. Thus the authors' discussion under the heading "The Downstream People and Treaty 4" (pp.85-88) seems to be based entirely on a few pages (pp.54-58) in Sarah Carter's *Lost Harvests*. Although virtually free of typographical errors, a few errors of fact or wording do appear in the book. One egregious factual error is the authors' statement (on p.24) that in prehistoric times Athapaskan Indians moved in "from eastern Canada"—rather than from the northwest. Perhaps equally egregious is Hildebrandt's statement, in his acknowledgement (p.8), that his co-author interviewed "ancestors"—instead of descendants—"of those who once lived and worked in the Cypress Hills". Of course, these isolated and relatively minor errors do not really detract from the overall value of this

book. I recommend it for anyone interested in the history of the Canadian prairies.

Alvin Kienetz
Box 402
The Pas, Manitoba
Canada, R9A 1K5

Parker, Dorothy R.: *Singing an Indian Song: A Biography of D'Arcy McNickle*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992, x + 316 pp., black and white photographs, bibliography, index. [American Indian Lives Series] ISBN: 0-8032-3687-5, Cloth; 0-8032-8730-5, Paper.

D'Arcy McNickle was of Canadian Cree, French and Irish ancestry, and was raised on the Montana Flathead Reservation. McNickle's maternal grandfather had been forced to flee south to the Flathead region due to his ties with Gabriel Dumont during the 1885 uprising in the Canadian northwest (Parker, 1992:1-6). In 1935 McNickle accepted a position with the Federal Writers Project that resulted in a sixteen-year career with the Bureau of Indian Affairs. McNickle was the founding member of the National Congress of American Indian Development. He was also instrumental in the writing of the constitution for the NCAI. McNickle was a historian, novelist, and anthropologist who believed in adaptation rather than assimilation. This is an interesting point since many anthropologists during the middle of this century were trained in the theories of assimilation. McNickle in his anthropologist career was also a key player in the formation of an anthropology department at the University of Regina (Parker, 1992).

Dorothy R. Parker's biography of D'Arcy McNickle gives an interesting insight to Indian Affairs in the United States during the middle of this century. Parker's book is more an analysis of Indian Affairs policy during this period than it is an analysis of McNickle's life. This is both a weakness and a strength of the book. By using this approach Parker is able to view Indian Policy during Collier's New Deal period from the inside. In this respect the book is an excellent source for trying to understand this important time in United States history. Parker's attention to the policy rather than the man may be tied to the fact that McNickle seemed to be a very private man. The references that Parker uses to McNickle's diary do not really give any insight into what his motives or thoughts were regarding the various events he faced in his life.

One weakness of the book is that one does not really get to know who McNickle was as a person. For example there is no real indication of how McNickle's childhood influenced his later life. McNickle came from a broken

home and was sent to a boarding school at the same time his family life was disintegrating (Parker, 1992:19). One would assume that this must have been an important influence on his life, yet not a lot of attention is paid to this period of his life. This may have been due to the fact that McNickle did not seem to be an individual who was caught up in complaining about the past but was more interested in trying to make things better for the future. There is also very little discussion as to how McNickle's three marriages affected his career. All three of his wives had their own careers.

Despite the above mentioned weaknesses, Parker's book is an important contribution to the biographies available on Native Americans. It is especially important considering the time frame upon which the book concentrates. Those who are interested in McNickle as a novelist may be somewhat disappointed, for the book does not focus on this part of McNickle's life, as one might have hoped. This is a moot point, however, because it was not McNickle's life as a novelist that made him an important figure in the fight for social change among Native Americans. Rather the roles he played as historian, anthropologist and, arguably most importantly, as an administrator within the Bureau of Indian Affairs, made McNickle an important figure in the relations between the United States government and American Indians. Parker is very good at illustrating the fact that McNickle was a public person who worked for social change and whose roles with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and as an anthropologist were much more important in meeting this end than were the novels he wrote.

A key argument of Parker's book is that McNickle was not necessarily the innovator of the policy or institutions he believed in, but was willing to assume leadership and responsibility for the projects of which he was part. As Parker argues (p.258), McNickle became a role model for Indian people in both the United States and Canada, showing that one could maintain an Indian identity and still play an important role in the non-Indian world. Parker argues that McNickle was able to adapt to the dominant society without having to give up his own identity.

I would highly recommend this book to anyone interested in mid-20th century Indian policy in the United States, as it gives an interesting view from the inside. At the same time the book also illustrates how one man attempted to make his society a better place to live without giving up on the principles in which he believed.

Rob Nestor
Library
Saskatchewan Indian Federated College
University of Regina
Regina, Saskatchewan
Canada, S4S 0A2

Peers, Laura: *The Ojibwa of Western Canada, 1780-1870*. Winnipeg: The University of Manitoba Press (Manitoba Studies in Native History VIII), 1994, xviii + 288 pp., maps, photographs, index. ISBN: 0-88755-636-1

In this excellent historical study Laura Peers uses the concept of ethnicity to analyze western Ojibwa definitions of self as they emerged during the migration from the Great Lakes area. The book is divided into six chapters, generally following major changes in the prevailing economic regime (for example, Chapter II, 1805-1821, the period of Northwest Co. and Hudson's Bay Company competition). *The Ojibwa of Western Canada* is an excellent example of a book with precise theoretical pretensions, extremely well-researched, well-argued and well-written. Not only will our picture of the western Ojibwa change as a result, but also basic (and tired) notions of culture contact, acculturation and assimilation will be re-evaluated. In brief, this book confirms the value of standard science by the quality and thoroughness of the research and will have a major impact on very important theoretical issues as a result.

Ethnicity seems to be an all-too often ignored concept when it comes to analyzing Native-Native relations. At best, we sometimes speak of ethnic consciousness developing when Natives are integrated into a White town, meaning they are assigned clientelistic roles on the margins of White paternalistic society as consumers of Euro-Canadian goods and services and as symbolic pets who legitimate White social hierarchies and implicit Western ideological categories by (reluctantly or unwillingly) assuming the only part Whites permit: people incapable of taking on middle-class values—Native school children and employees chronically late or absent, slipshod workers, bad housekeepers incapable of hanging up matching curtains in the windows of their houses, possessors of “front yards” dotted with broken washing machines and rusted cars. In brief, ethnicity seems to “work” in popular discourse as long as White eyes only see Natives on Saturday afternoons in local malls buying beer. Judging by White non-reaction to their presence in stores—by the silent treatment Indian customers often receive, by the squaring of the clerk's shoulders to allow him or her to gaze into a point about three meters somewhere over and behind the Native customer's left shoulder—I would say that all too often in frontier towns near Reserves previously invisible Indians magically appear only when they conform to White ethnic stereotypes. (I am thinking in particular of the conditions described by Lithman [1984] and Shkylnyk [1985], though there are many other descriptions available.) Natives, in other words, become people only when they conform to White stereotypes of subjugation, alienation and marginality—a colourful but disturbing ethnic group whose defining characteristics, in the Euro-Canadian consciousness, are

clearly conditioned by the ideologically sanctioned notion of ethnicity. Clearly, popular and academic ideas of ethnicity are closely tied to the Canadian experience of pluralism. It is an ideologically dangerous concept, as are all intellectual tools that are endorsed by government bureaucrats who have, in the last thirty years, absorbed the anthropological/sociological/ psychological jargon of Ant. 100, Soc. 110 and Psych 101.

Ethnicity in Peers's hands becomes something else: a way of bypassing the implicitly evolutionist and racist connotations of tribe and tribal mentality (in most anthropological formulations) and of economic determinism. This grants the western Ojibwa the dignity of autonomous people who attempted, as they moved westward, to negotiate intelligent strategies of contact with the Other (mostly Lakota but later European, American and Euro-Canadian traders, explorers and government officials) and to retain intact some of the traditions that they deemed important. Ethnicity becomes important because it acknowledges that group consciousness and self-definitions did not enable or give rise to the typical discourses of nationalism. The Ojibwa were interlopers, so to speak, and a heightened sensibility to the Other was clearly an important defining and limiting component of their evolving self-definitions and related political mechanisms.¹ The western Ojibwa are therefore a special case, or perhaps not too special in light of White's (1991) thesis on the *pays d'en haut* (unfortunately not cited in Peers's book). The western Ojibwa may have been on the periphery of post-Iroquoian migrations and extinctions but they were nonetheless responding to much of the same pressures in the rapidly evolving political climate in the middle of the continent in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. As Peers demonstrates, the western Ojibwa participated fully in the new regime in the Northwest not only by seeking alliances with other groups but by living in multi-ethnic villages. As such, their early reaction to White settlers in the Red River settlement was to treat them like any other ethnic group and thus to accommodate them within a traditional idiom of political alliance expressed as kinship and openness to the new ideas and possibilities that contact brought about.

Related to her view of ethnicity is Peers's notion of "layering," by which she intends that traits are added as a kind of veneer to a core of values that are retained even in a different environment. Underlying Peers's theory is Fredrik Barth's claim that people engage in transactions that result in the greatest benefit at the least cost (1969:208). Certainly, one can see the usefulness of adopting this position when the aim (borne out by the evidence) is to convince the reader that Ojibwa "adaptations" were not forced, at least in the sense of being historically inevitable. However, I think Peers's theoretical premises are rather weak (the notion of a "core" of values, for example, which Peers herself argues against in her examination

of the notion of culture areas) and not sufficiently developed (no theoretical literature as such is cited except for Barth).² Luckily, the strength of the book lies in the subtlety and novelty of the theoretical conclusions readers can draw for themselves based on the richly detailed evidence presented.

Peers asks the obvious question: why did the Ojibwa migrate westward? She evaluates the standard anthropological theses—such as Hickerson's (1962), for example, and finds them somewhat wanting. In part, argues Peers, the Ojibwa may well have been encouraged to migrate for want of big game in the Boundary Waters region (Rainy River, Lake of the Woods, etc.—standard hypothesis I) or because they needed more furs to slake their thirst for European goods (dependence—standard hypothesis II). Peers argues convincingly that although both hypotheses may be partially true, the bulk of the evidence suggests that the Ojibwa were not exclusively hunters of big-game or “dependent” on European goods. A more reasonable hypothesis, she feels, is the smallpox epidemic that swept through the region in 1780. People had long been visiting the western fringes of what is now Ojibwa territory, and the epidemic simply transformed the visits into semi-permanent and permanent stays. And epidemics not only pushed the Ojibwa west, they partially depopulated the northern Plains and created a new balance of power—in brief, they may account for the new Native political sensitivity to the Other. Peers's review of the evidence on this point is subtle and thorough.

Why did they stay? Peers's examination of the fur trade suggests an explanation. The western-most Ojibwa started hunting bison, as fur-bearing animals became increasingly scarce towards the 1820s and 1830s. But once again, Peers presents strong evidence to show that the Ojibwa had firstly, no absolute need for European goods, and secondly, used various strategies to obtain the greatest advantage from the trade. Furthermore like White (1991) she argues that exchange must be seen in light of Ojibwa moral values and political (not economic) strategies, especially those to create, maintain and acknowledge social and political ties in the new multi-ethnic climate of the parklands and north-eastern plains. These ties included the fur traders. Exchange was seen (or cast) as a sign of a privileged relationship: the Ojibwa worked hard to maintain their favoured status as long as the Whites gave them presents and favourable trading conditions as a sign that they were not mere clients but allies. To a certain extent, therefore, they stayed because the new political and economic regime of the times gave them more opportunities to acquire prestige goods. Peers's evidence is clear on this point: the western Ojibwa acquired enough wealth at the beginning of the fur trade to encourage them to stay.

In brief, the fur trade included many players—Cree, Assiniboine, Mandan, Lakota, Canadians, several major European companies and a slew

of semi-independent American traders: relations were much more complex than a simple “Whites-versus-Indians” view would suggest. The fur trade also created, in the long run, unseen pressure towards over-hunting and overt attempts to foster dependency as we understand the term (i.e., Indians were to be “attached” to particular posts to facilitate an economically rational inventory control and transportation schedule, not to mention undermine Native attempts to play one trader off against the other to obtain better deals). The Ojibwa took charge of the changing situation as best they could (as did all the other groups mentioned, no doubt), generally with the intention of preserving a way of life that was theirs, not the fur traders'. In sum, they stayed because life in the parklands and on the prairies offered them, at least in the beginning more choices than they may have had in the Boundary Waters region. In other words, they evolved from a tribe to an ethnic group (this is my formulation, not Peers's), and it suited them.

One of Peers's many important contributions in this book is to demonstrate unequivocally in Chapter V that fur-traders' accounts of “lazy,” “insolent” Natives refusing to trap fur-bearers or to engage in trade are negative evidence. The “lazier” the Natives, the more they were opting out of the fur trade (perhaps obtaining some trade goods from third parties) because they wanted or were forced to dedicate themselves to subsistence activities (such as rice harvesting and fishing). In this sense, Ojibwa groups managed to pursue their political strategies and remain independent (and very mobile, which seems to have been one of the key traditions they valued) well beyond the limits that standard views of contact suggest; as the title of Peers's book suggests, the real date that marks economic dependence and cultural submission is 1870, when the HBC ceded its interests in the Northwest to the Canadian government.³ At this point a new form of pressure sets in: no longer economic and colonialising as such but a globalizing nationalism expressed in cultural, not political or economic terms. From that point on, contact between Natives and elements of White society involved conformity, to a lesser or greater degree, to a set of idealised values defined in terms of language, ideas, and beliefs. Missionaries, businessmen, settlers—anyone who had a vested (or class) interest in controlling Natives—possessed a new, highly abstract and very flexible means (i.e., conforming to an ideologically-sanctioned set of representations) of legitimating their presence, their activities and their beliefs. Missionaries at the Red River settlement, for example, had no qualms about rendering unto Caesar what was God's: “if we cannot make them industrious, they will never be pious” (from a letter by an early missionary, p.131). Peers documents the ease with which redemption was blatantly but unconsciously manipulated to conform to current English middle-class values as more settlers came into the area. Peers's examination of the Red River

evidence (mostly centred around the well-known leader Peguis and his people) shows that no amount of purely cultural or ideological exhortations influenced the Ojibwa. They planted seeds when they wanted or when they had no choice, not because they were somehow influenced by missionary discourses. This is an important point, since anthropological models sometimes gloss over the mechanisms of resistance and accommodation to colonial contact situations and seek points of convergence on the level of ideology (for example, Sahlins on Captain Cook and the Hawaiians, 1983). This is not to say that there was no syncretism at the level of beliefs—the literature is replete with examples of the influence of new Christian ideals on older Native beliefs, and conditions were such in the mid-19th century that traditional ideals were being eroded by the new economic and political conditions of life on the Plains (“...[the Ojibwa sought to use new conditions and beliefs to their own advantage]”—p.167). There were, in fact relatively short-lived Nativistic movements of revitalisation that also included Christian elements. Peers, however, continually distinguishes and presents the evidence, particularly in Chapter V, between religious ideas and secular values, between missionary descriptions of spirituality (“the Book [Bible],” as one Ojibwa Elder put it—p.168) and their attempts to do away with polygyny (though not all men had more than one wife), fur clothing (p.169—a symbol of paganism to the missionaries but also clearly a sign of defiance and economic independence), and the hunting life in general. It is interesting that first contact was generally benign and both groups were receptive to the other—the Ojibwa wanted prestige goods and the Red River settlers needed economic aid to survive. As the colony grew, however, Euro-Canadian institutional forms prevailed in the settlement and effectively created a barrier to communication, not to mention legitimising missionary attempts to make the Ojibwa conform to a Euro-Canadian lifestyle.

Another consistent theme in the book is Peers's concern with the voice of Ojibwa women. She wonders (p.84) if women did in fact move in little more than a century from a positive position of status and power to the negative self-image portrayed in Landes's *The Ojibwa Woman* (1938). Since the documents Peers examines are generally written by men (the fur traders) about men (the trappers), it is difficult to do anything but read between the lines. However, Peers describes too many cogent reasons throughout the book for supposing that women played an important part in the pre-migration society, and certainly that the new conditions later encountered in the plains and parklands would have only enhanced women's importance in the beginning. For example, continual diminishment of game stocks after 1804 led some Ojibwa to start tending crops, especially potatoes. This was a role women assumed, as was the treatment of bison hides for clothing as trade goods became relatively more expensive in

terms of time needed to trap furs to exchange for cloth, one of the early staples of the trade. As Peers argues, it is hard to imagine women's status declining under these conditions.⁴ On the other hand, the western-most Ojibwa of the Plains who became specialists in bison hunting, usually in multi-ethnic camps and with no universally-shared subsistence strategy in the camp, certainly accorded lower status to women, probably as a result of contact with hierarchically-sensitised Plains groups, but mostly because women were increasingly excluded from the means of producing prestige goods. Returns from women's labour were maintained at the same relative level while men's returns rose as they adopted the horse in the hunt (p.123).

One of Peers's most important contributions is to give us the material with which to re-think the idea that cultures resist, as if assimilation were inexorable, and as if there were some pure core of traditional values that define any culture, and that once tainted by contact, people are no longer "Ojibwa" or "Cree", or "Canadians" if they watch too much American television. Peers wades into these murky theoretical waters in a very cautious manner,⁵ but is superb when presenting the material that leads to this inescapable conclusion: a century of adaptation to an increasingly complex political situation and harsh environmental conditions is not evidence of mere resistance or passivity but of success.

Peers's work also calls into question traditional classifications such as "Plains" and "Woodlands" Native societies. It is clear that the adoption of material traits does not a culture define, and Peers is clear that bison hunting was something the Ojibwa did when other, more traditional, means of subsistence became limited. Part of the anthropological problem is our tendency to willingly accept certain traits as centrally defining. The various Plains tribes certainly possessed elements of political organisation that were more hierarchical than their north-eastern neighbours, and it is often this tendency we acknowledge in our accounts: every man is a warrior and every woman his helpful mate minding the home fires and treating skins. We should therefore carefully interpret the disdain which surfaces in some historical accounts and which some Plains peoples may have shown the Ojibwa. It may not be a sign that they were totally assimilated into Plains Cree society as the inexperienced greenhorns of the Plains but might be an ideologically-conditioned sub-text of early Euro-Canadian observers. The multi-ethnic groups of the Middle Ground (again borrowing from White, 1991) would not have existed if there were not some form of political accommodation by both parties, the newly-arrived and less numerous Ojibwa and the better-acclimatised and more numerous Plains Cree, themselves but recent arrivals to the Prairies. Some tension was undoubtedly inevitable in these multi-ethnic groups in the transformation from tribal to ethnic identity, and contemporary European observers and, later, an-

thropologists, might have been too eager to see such tension as signs of a weaker and less flexible acculturation by the Ojibwa. The example of leader Big Bear (pp.119-121) is a case in point: he may have learned Cree as a first language and possessed a Cree name in historical accounts, but his Ojibwa heritage not only would have survived as an atavistic tradition but would have been actively maintained by the Cree themselves. Ethnicity and its political forms needs the Other as a base for its expression, and the Cree undoubtedly needed the Ojibwa as much as the Ojibwa needed the Cree: it would have been stupid to treat the Ojibwa as unwelcome and inferior parasites.⁶ It would therefore be equally stupid to assume that an inferior (or weaker, in more common jargon) culture readily adopts the traits of the dominant (superior, better-adapted, fitter, etc.) culture. The Ojibwa adopted Plains dress, for example, only when they had no other choice. Ethnic identity is not measurable by material traits or biology, and it probably suited everyone, Cree and Ojibwa, in multi-ethnic communities to switch identities.

Another important theme that emerges from the book is the importance of the relationship between people and land. The Ojibwa and their neighbours did not appear to be governed by the notions of ownership that Euro-Canadians and anthropologists often ascribe to tribal peoples—Plains Cree and Ojibwa were willing to share and negotiate boundaries, at least within reasonable limits (excluding starvation, for example). However, it seems clear from all the evidence in the book (though this is not explicitly formulated by Peers) that the Native relationship to land ownership is always mediated through movement; in the book this comes through on too many occasions to cite but is especially clear in Peers's treatment of relations between the Red River settlement and the Ojibwa. Native people were always moving, as individuals and as groups, and it is time for anthropology to emerge from the smug protection of the footnote that tells the reader that boundaries on culture area maps are approximate. Movement of entire Bands and hunting groups (or the possibility of displacement) is one of the main elements that define Native conceptions of self and ideas of ownership; Bands and Tribes, in fact, are nothing more than political expressions of this principle. They have nothing to do with so-called modes or means of production. The quality of the research in *The Ojibwa of Western Canada* is such that the book will undoubtedly have an impact on anthropological and perhaps legal discourses about the political stance Euro-Canadians adopt *vis-à-vis* First Nations.

All in all, this is a book that is not only important for the impressive amount of information presented, for the clarity of its style, for the lucidity and scientific caution of its argumentation but a book that is fundamental to all scholars of North American peoples. Peers shows that it is possible to reconcile a reconstructed Ojibwa voice from non-Ojibwa historical ma-

terials. The notes and bibliography are exhaustive, and the only reproach I can make is the quality of the two maps following the introduction, which might include more contemporary topographic information to help situate the reader. One wishes that all books had so few weak points and so many strong. In sum, Laura Peers deserves all possible accolades for this wonderful book, and the editors of the Manitoba Studies in Native History series also deserve the thanks of the scientific community for all the interesting books in this collection.

Guy Lanoue
Département d'anthropologie
Université de Montréal
C.P. 6128, succursale central
Montréal, Québec
Canada, H3C 3J7

Notes

1. Nationalisms can and do lead to racist discourses on the Other but following Anderson (1991) I would argue that these are secondary and logically coherent effects rather than primary motivations in the construction of self definitions. The Other under nationalist regimes is generally exotic and negative, but less so within an ethnic perspective.
2. The Barth quote is not even taken directly from Barth (cf. p.264, n.2) but from what sounds like an old undergraduate textbook (subtitle: *An Introduction to Anthropological Strategies for the Study of Sociocultural Change*) from 1974.
3. Except, of course, for the Red River settlement, where the more rational and economic post-1821 regime accorded with missionary teachings. It was there that the kinship component that had largely defined the terms of European-Native alliances was first weakened and then rejected by Europeans. The situation at Red River is covered in detail in the latter part of Chapter IV.
4. Though it is well to remember that most of Landes's information was not about Plains Ojibwa women but about their sisters in the Boundary Waters zone.
5. Peers writes (p.120): "The complexity of such interaction [between ethnic groups], and the mixed signals for children that it generated, have implications for existing theories about cultural change among the plains Ojibwa." She is too modest. I would suggest that it has implications for all theories of cultural change.
6. Though Peers does not state as such, it seems clear from the evidence she presents concerning the Métis (whose well-organised hunts were

resented by the Ojibwa because they led to over-hunting) and Lakota (traditional enemies but also people in competition for access to horses and bison) that Plains Cree and Ojibwa needed each other as military allies, if nothing else.

References

- Anderson, Benedict
 1991 *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.
- Barth, Frederick
 1969 *Ethnic Groups and Social Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference*. Boston: Little, Brown & Co.
- Hickerson, Harold
 1962 *The Southwestern Ojibwa: An Ethnohistorical Study*. American Anthropological Association Memoir 92.
- Landes, Ruth
 1938 *The Ojibwa Woman*. New York: Columbia University Contributions to Anthropology 31.
- Lithman, Y.G.
 1984 *The Community Apart: A Case Study of a Canadian Indian Reserve*. Winnipeg: The University of Manitoba Press.
- Sahlins, Marshall
 1983 *Islands in History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Shkilnyk, Anastasia
 1985 *A Poison Stronger Than Love: The Destruction of an Ojibwa Community*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- White, Richard
 1991 *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pettipas, Katherine: *Severing the Ties That Bind: Government Repression of Indigenous Religious Ceremonies on the Prairies*. Winnipeg: The University of Manitoba Press (Manitoba Studies in Native History VII), 1994, xiv + 304 pp., photos, maps, bibliography, index. ISBN: 0-88755-638-8

Katherine Pettipas has written an interesting and important book on the Canadian government's repression of Indigenous religious ceremonies on the prairies. Her study contributes greatly to an understanding of the severe damage done to Plains Cree society by government officials and missionaries. Pettipas argues that, for the Plains Cree, religious experience was the source of individual and community well-being. The Sun Dance, the "give-away dances," and other rituals were the ties that bound Cree people together, enabling them to survive and flourish. She further argues that the Canadian government and their church allies understood this point very well, and for that reason implemented a massive and unrelenting attack on Indigenous religious practices. Despite the assault, the old ways were not extinguished. The Plains Cree protested against government repression and persisted in holding their ceremonies. They continued to find strength from communicating with the Creator in their own way.

Pettipas understands the difficulty of the subject and approaches it with appropriate humility. She admits that "the religious experience of the Plains Cree cannot be adequately communicated on the written page" (p.51), and acknowledges that "despite the proliferation of scholarly analyses of the Sun Dance, the ideological components of the ceremony are not fully understood" (p.57). The vow to sponsor a Sun Dance, the major communal ceremony for the Plains Cree, was a serious and demanding spiritual commitment. A vision to hold a dance was often received in a crisis situation, for example, when a child was seriously ill. Denial of the right to perform the ceremony could cause severe spiritual and psychological trauma, as in the case of the wife of the Cree leader, Fineday, who was reportedly "stunned" by the news that her husband's Sun Dance had been prohibited and "went into a state of complete shock, 'as though she had been shot'" (p.184).

An amendment in 1895 to Section 114 of the *Indian Act* banned participation in "any Indian festival, dance or other ceremony of which the giving away or paying back of money, goods, or articles of any sort forms a part, or is a feature" or in "any celebration or dance of which the wounding or mutilation of the dead or living body of any human being or animal forms a part or is a feature" (p.95). The former prohibition was directed against "give-away" ceremonies, in which individuals gained prestige by sharing their goods among those who were less fortunate, while the latter targeted

the piercing ritual in the Sun Dance. However, the suppression of Indian religion went far beyond the specific provisions of the *Indian Act*. Moral suasion and coercion were used to discourage all Indigenous religious ceremonies, on the theory that they were an obstacle to the transformation of Indians into Euro-Canadians. The presence of Indian agents and North West Mounted Police officers at the site of a religious ceremony was often sufficient to break up the ritual, even if technically it was within the law. Interestingly, the NWMP sometimes balked at being a party to repression of this kind. NWMP Commissioner James Macleod commented that arresting Sun Dance celebrants was “akin to making an arrest in church” (p.111). The pass system was also used to limit participation in ceremonies held away from the home Reserve, and traditional gatherings were further restricted by an amendment to the *Indian Act* in 1914 banning the attendance of Indians at dances held on other Reserves. Indians sometimes attempted to circumvent the regulation by holding ceremonies on the border between two Reserves, for example, the Sun Dance held on the border between the Ochapowace and Kahkewistahaw Reserves in 1934.

Pettipas states that due to the absence of local records in Department of Indian Affairs files, the total number of arrests and convictions for practising Indian religion cannot be definitely established. Citing numerous cases, she leaves no doubt the repression was widespread. Some of the cases are poignant, for example, the case of the World War I veteran from Piapot Reserve who wanted to hold a Sun Dance to honour those from the Reserve who died and to celebrate the safe return of the survivors. Indian Commissioner William Graham denied permission, saying, “It’s all part of the Indian religion and it’s no damn good” (p.173). The veteran went to Graham and said, “I fought for you and I fought for all those who sat in this office during the war. I have the right to ask you to give us back our Sun Dance” (p.173). Despite Graham’s opposition, the dance was held. The police were sent in, and only an abbreviated version of the ceremony was allowed.

Pettipas calls attention to Indian resistance to repression. Letters were sent to agency offices requesting permission to hold dances. Indians repeatedly argued that religious repression violated treaty rights; the persecution of Indian religion was never part of the treaty negotiations. Delegations were sent to Ottawa, and lawyers were hired to use the judicial system to fight for religious freedom. Rituals were modified in order to stay within the law and satisfy the Indian agents. For example, the Sun Dance was shortened to two or two and a half days, piercing was retained in a symbolic manner only, and the ritual became more localized, rather than an inter-band or inter-tribal ceremony. The Plains Cree also sought refuge in more secluded areas of their Reserves for their ceremonies, where they

had a better chance of escaping the notice of the authorities. Since healing ceremonies were not public events, they could more easily be conducted without fear of interruption. In any case, the practice of traditional medicine, though discouraged by the government, was not specifically illegal.

Pettipas admits that the degree to which Indigenous religious practices persisted despite government repression is not fully known. She relies for sources primarily on government reports, reports of anthropological field-workers, and Indian correspondence with the Department of Indian Affairs. She makes slight use of oral testimony. Since the legal basis for repression did not end until the 1951 revision of the *Indian Act*, many individuals still living could offer valuable insights as to how religion was practised during the long era of repression. Such oral evidence might also throw light on such an issue as why some Indians could easily combine belief in Christianity with traditional Indian spirituality, while others apparently could not.

Pettipas argues that traditional religion was a source of strength for Indians at a time when life on the Reserve was very stressful because of poverty, high mortality rates, racial discrimination, and political marginalization. She writes that "it was within this context that the healing and regenerative powers of the collective rites of the Sun Dance continued to have cultural relevance" (p.192). This comment could be interpreted to mean that religion was a crutch in bad times. The central point of the book, however, is that religious ceremonies were the ties that bound the Plains Cree community to the Creator and to each other; they were just as relevant in good times as they were in bad times. The tragedy, so competently described in Katherine Pettipas's fine book, was the severing of those ties by Euro-Canadians who thought they had all the answers and who labelled worship of the Creator, "pagan superstition."

James M. Pitsula
Department of History
University of Regina
Regina, Saskatchewan
Canada, S4S 0A2

Swift, Karen J.: *Manufacturing "Bad Mothers": A Critical Perspective on Child Neglect*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995, 218 pp.

This book is a welcome addition to the Social Work Studies library. The book is organized in three parts and nine chapters. The first two parts concentrate on problems faced by social workers of child neglect, while the third part suggests ways of solving those problems.

The first chapter, which serves somehow as a “general introduction” to the book, presents and analyzes themes which are developed in various ways in most of the following chapters. The chapter delineates boundaries between common lapses of attention one could notice easily in all parents and “actual” child neglect. A case in point of real neglect is the “home alone” story where two young children are abandoned as their affluent parents vacation in Mexico. But the author cautions and points out the ideological way this particular story has been treated in the media and seen by society at large. Whereas the popular image of neglect tends to be virtually synonymous with the image of poverty, and generally associated with the non-White race, the poor and the marginalized in society, the “home alone” story is different by virtue of class and race as well.

Chapter Two reviews knowledge debates of scholars in social work. Chapter Three stresses the fact that child neglect is fundamentally a legal concept, and traces the origins of legislation for the protection of children.

Chapter Four focuses on problems faced by welfare workers as they strive to clarify the boundaries of simple parenting slips and actual neglect categories. The problems are sometimes compounded by the fact that scholars trying to delineate boundaries of neglect categories have often advanced contradictory arguments. The chapter then examines specific cases and the activities of the welfare workers on those cases and concludes that the term “neglect” “cannot be captured, as the academic discourse attempts to do, in sets of abstract and unambiguous definitions.” Neglect depends almost entirely on organizational and legal circumstances of the case. And almost invariably the concept of neglect has reflected the nature of class relations in the society. Whereas cases of neglect are considered as something that rarely concerns the middle class, the system seems to be organized in such a way that the “target group” of the category is the most poor and desperate of families, a group perceived as members of the unworthy poor.

Chapter Five points out that virtually all scholars agree that poverty is a factor almost invariably associated with child neglect. However, when the mechanics through which personal and psychological issues come to be seen as the explanations of child neglect are explored, it is clear that explanations related to poverty do not play such an important part. The chapter concludes therefore, that the psychological theories used to explain child neglect are ideological in nature, to such an extent that the social context of the child neglect is forgotten or passed in silence.

Chapter Six notes that virtually all people actually accused of neglecting their children, both historically and at present, are mothers. It then goes on to state that the study of child neglect is in effect the study of mothers who “fail”. And the concept, as it stands, has its origins in the capitalist

system, and the by-product of this system: the “nuclear family.” The chapter then deplores the fact that the idea of the nuclear family serves the ideological function of concealing important features of everyday reality, since the nuclear family ideal does not take into account factors such as class, race, ethnicity, or gender, nor does it address the issues faced by single mothers, or those faced by mothers in abusive relations with their partners.

Chapter Seven focuses on child neglect with special emphasis on Native Canadians. Under the pretext of preventing child neglect the dominant White culture forces its values on Natives, particularly Native children who are removed from Reserves and later end up totally alienated, ignoring their Native culture while being at the same time unassimilated into the dominant White culture. The chapter concludes that given the way the welfare system is set up in both Canada and the United States, workers are faced with a contradictory mandate. They are to recognize some special issues with respect to the Natives, and yet they are to assess and intervene in families in terms of concepts—neglect, abuse, the cycle theory—invented, defined, and enforced by the dominant culture.

Chapter Eight explores the contradiction inherent in the State action in the child welfare system. The State intervention, through welfare workers, to protect the rights of the children may be seen as an “intrusion” in private family life. But family-State relations constitute an implicit social contract which justifies State intervention when a child's right to a good healthy life is threatened within the family setting. When the State intervenes, several concrete resources are provided to help both the child and the parents. Where the resources fail to correct the problem, the State may resort to permanent wardship of the children in a neglect situation.

Chapter Nine, the last chapter, recommends ways in which the society should look at child neglect in order to avoid the numerous shortfalls highlighted in the preceding chapters. Neglect must be seen not as a personal problem but rather as the visible appearance of underlying social relations. To effect real change in the system, we must learn to perceive hidden realities and develop a critical consciousness. Poor caregiving must be viewed as one feature of life, connected to other contextual features. This is a more adequate way of looking at child neglect for it ties caregiving not only to personality features of the mother but to her material and social circumstances.

In spite of the overbearing nature of the knowledge debates of scholars which are presented in Chapter Two, and in spite of the fact that the arguments explored in that chapter appear to be too loosely tied to the main subject of the book, almost to a point of irrelevance, this book is a very valuable contribution. It can be profitably used not only by social workers,

not only by scholars of Native Studies, but also by psychologists as well. One of the greatest merits of the book is that it not only highlights the problems facing the social welfare system, it also indicates ways of solving those problems.

Ben K. Jukpor
 Department of Languages
 Brandon University
 Brandon, Manitoba
 Canada, R7A 6A9

Taylor, Drew Hayden: *Someday*. Saskatoon: Fifth House Press, 1993, 96 pp. ISBN: 1-895618-10-X, Paper CDN \$10.95.

Someday is a short, two-act play by a young and talented Native writer. Drew Hayden Taylor has produced articles for *Maclean's*, *Cinema Canada*, and the *Globe and Mail* on topics dealing with Native arts and culture. He has also distinguished himself as a writer of drama and fiction. He is the recipient of both the Chalmers Award and Canadian Authors Association Award for Drama. Mr. Taylor is an Ojibway from the Curve Lake Reserve in Ontario.

A short, tight work of finely calculated tension and economy, *Someday* is an effective play that develops the inherent power of a desolating, all too well-known scenario in Canadian Native communities: the removal of Native infants for the adoption trade in the 50s and 60s.

The inherency of emotional power in a given situation does not map neatly into the inherency of dramatic potential in that same situation. This is a perception which, in the subjective thrashings of the post-modern, sometimes appears to have vacated both the awareness and conscience of artists in all media. Taylor seems unsusceptible to this stylish sickness. The sources of his strength are two-fold. Firstly, and most importantly, as a Native person he is himself a witness to this suffering and its consequences. He is uniquely positioned to produce a kind of semi-documentary drama rooted in reflection rather than research. Secondly, he has mastered his craft and is able to construct drama in which word and expression, as well as the medium of time itself are selected and modelled; in which expression is not a function of description, but the product of a dynamic, internal and exclusive cycle of language, gesture, and response. The gift of this discipline is a good deal more than control of material; it is as well the ability to sustain the critical space that separates the artist from the work. Given the relation of the author to the painful experience forming the central preoc-

cupation of the work, it can also be credited as the gift that lends reflection of the dramatic potency of irony, wit, and taut containment, rather than the waste of bombast and encoded rage. In short, Taylor's craft and feeling for theatre are of a depth and subtlety sufficient to contain as well as project a message of explosive power.

The crux of the drama surrounds the sudden reappearance of a daughter "stolen" from the reserve 35 years earlier. The mother, committed to this central fact of her life and the circumstance leading to it as an inextinguishable "tragic vision," is matched by a returning daughter whose curiosity about origins seems more emotive than driven, and whose comprehension of her mother's pain is cruelly shallow. A second, younger daughter, living on the Reserve with the mother, and the younger daughter's droll boyfriend, complete a cast of quite narrowly defined function but satisfying completeness. Tension generated by the grinding of nested contexts of Native and White perception as represented within the family is handled intelligently and sensitively as is the strip of comedy injected by the mother's lottery win. The critical event of reunification and trauma set within the context of snowy Reserve and the sardonically coloured presence of the Christmas season all contribute to a level of incongruity that lead to the definition of character in ways that are as subtle as they are telling.

Someday will be an especially powerful read for those who care about Canadian drama. Readers who have followed the remarkable development of a Native theatre in Canada over the past two decades, will find in *Someday* a significant addition to a repertory of growing distinction.

Alfred Fisher
Queen's University
Kingston, Ontario
Canada, K7L 3N6