

géographique contient 32 références concernant le Canada et 12 au sujet de la Roumanie contre 15 relatives à la France, 8 à la Grande-Bretagne et 13 aux États-Unis. Il ne faut pas s'étonner non plus qu'une seule commission rapporte des thèses de maîtrise ni que soient inscrits des livres dont on soupçonne qu'ils tiennent plus de l'ouvrage de propagande que de l'œuvre scientifique.

Ceci étant dit, la nature même de cet instrument de travail laisse à supposer que chaque pays rapporte au moins les ouvrages importants publiés chez lui. Il s'agit là d'un intérêt majeur de cette bibliographie qui a aussi le mérite d'offrir « une vue d'ensemble sur les principales tendances qui caractérisent les recherches d'histoire militaire » (t. 1, p. 5). De plus, l'histoire comparative reste encore aujourd'hui une parente pauvre de la recherche historique. Il faut souhaiter qu'une publication comme la *Bibliographie internationale d'histoire militaire* contribue à son développement. Voilà de bonnes raisons pour inciter les spécialistes en histoire sociale des militaires à consulter cette bibliographie.

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Jennifer S.H. Brown and Robert Brightman — *“The Order of the Dreamed” : George Nelson on Cree and Northern Ojibwa Religion and Myth, 1823*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1988. Pp. xii, 226.

The traditional religious beliefs and practices of aboriginal Canadians are little understood or appreciated outside their own communities and a small circle of anthropologists and native historians. Missionaries and the state did their best to eradicate native religions, and mainstream Euro-Canadian historians, endorsing the dominant cultural evolutionist paradigm, ignored and demeaned their beliefs. Thanks to the collaborative efforts of historian Jennifer Brown and anthropologist Robert Brightman, we have an important new text on Subarctic Algonquian religion and mythology. *“The Order of the Dreamed”*, an interdisciplinary collection of essays organized around the centrepiece narrative by fur trader George Nelson, reveals the persistence of traditional Cree and Northern Ojibwa cosmology well into the contact period, sometimes in a distinctive syncretic form.

George Nelson was a trader from Montreal whose 21 years in the northwest produced little career advancement, but a broad knowledge of the Indian cultures he encountered. His letter-journal, which he wrote in 1823 while serving as post clerk at Lac la Ronge in northern Saskatchewan, is considered by Brown and Brightman to be the most detailed account of Subarctic Algonquian religion before the 20th century. Nelson's text consists of largely second-hand accounts of Cree and Northern Ojibwa beliefs and practices as related to him by various Indian and Métis informants. He was fortunate enough to witness several Cree shaking tent rituals and he penned some vivid descriptions of what he saw. However, it is this very quality of vividness — Nelson's rhetorical use of hypotyposis — which obliges caution in the use of the text as a research document. Nelson wrote his stories ostensibly for his family in Quebec, but he hoped later to “digest them into form and regularity and have them published” (81). To make the text “readerly” for this intended 19th-century Euro-Canadian

audience, he needed to infuse it with drama and spectacle. These elements of the text may also be the ones most compelling to modern readers, and this poses a dilemma in publishing such accounts.

The ethical issues raised by historical ethnographic documents are partly addressed in the book's concluding essay by Emma LaRocque, a native studies specialist. She notes that despite Nelson's apparent efforts to wrestle with the problem of objectivity, he could not see his underlying acceptance of the long-standing dichotomy between white "civilization" and native "savagery". LaRocque pointedly asks whether in reproducing such primary documents, the publishers risk perpetuating these stereotypes. She nevertheless concludes that it is preferable to make the material available so that scholars can address the "task of extricating 'truth' from sources immersed in murky ambiguity" (202).

The title of *"The Order of the Dreamed"* derives from the dream quest, the central experience of Subarctic Algonquian religion. It was the vehicle through which a person could achieve power and protection from hostile forces. Power was granted to individuals in varying degrees by pawakan, or spirit helpers, that appeared during the quest. These "Dreamed" gave orders or guidance as to where to find food and other vital information, and assured the dreamer of their help in the future. Some dreamers with extraordinary powers became shamans whose prowess was demonstrated and validated through the shaking tent ritual that Nelson describes in detail.

The narrative is populated by a fascinating parade of spirit beings as conjured by shamans in ceremonies commissioned by Nelson. He introduces us, in succession, to such characters as the Turtle, the Thunder, the Flying Squirrel and the Loon. (To assist the reader in understanding their respective roles and significance, Brown and Brightman include a list of *Dramatis Personae* and capsule descriptions.) Nelson details a series of Algonquian myths and legends relating to the creation of the land and human beings, visits from Pah-kack or skeletal spirits, and stories of battles with ancient enemies such as the Water Lynxes and the Hairy Breasts. Recurring throughout the narrative is the "Trickster" Wee-suck-a-jock, a spirit being of cunning and tricks, whose tales reveal the folly of trusting too much in surface appearances. Perhaps most dramatic and open to misinterpretation or misuse are the stories of the Windigo complex, or cannibal possession.

The academic essays in the collection by Brown and Brightman are offered as aids to reading Nelson's journal. They enhance our understanding of the text, but by no means exhaust its interpretive potential. Brown provides an historical introduction which surveys Nelson's life and career, as well as the intellectual contexts and presuppositions that informed his writings on Indians. She concludes that Nelson's observations were coloured by an uneasy combination of intellectual influences — pragmatic ethnography, Enlightenment notions of the "natural man" (or noble savage) and a Christian value structure.

Brightman's essay is the longer of the two and the more technical in its approach. Its thrust is the explication of various phenomena mentioned in Nelson's text and not a critical discussion of the text itself. He places Nelson's particular accounts of Cree and Northern Ojibwa religion within the comparative contexts of the existing, largely anthropological, literature. Among the topics discussed are the vision fast, communication with dream guardians, the personalization of the universe within Algonquian cosmology, human-animal relationships, and Algonquian creation and other myths. Brightman devotes considerable attention to the Wee-suck-a-jock cycle

and provides a complicated graphic comparing the presence or absence of various episodes in 22 different versions of the myth. He seems to assume a base of knowledge beyond the general reader's level. To assist non-specialists, he might usefully have included an overview of Northern Algonquian cosmology such as the one Brown authored in the 1986 book *Native Peoples: The Canadian Experience*. As it stands, the essay will be primarily of interest to ethnographers and anthropologists.

An excellent companion piece to the academic papers is the essay by Reverend Stan Cuthand, a Cree author, teacher and Anglican minister. Cuthand gives a compelling account of how, when growing up in the 1930s on the Little Pine Reserve near North Battleford, Saskatchewan, he lived in two distinct worlds — an imposed Anglo-Canadian world at school, and “the free and allegorical world of the Cree” at home (189). Cuthand describes how traditional Algonquian myths and legends continued to flourish in his native world on the reserve, sometimes in syncretic combination with the more recently introduced Christianity. He tells a story that shows how Anglican missionaries may have inadvertently reinforced some Indian myths. He once was visiting chief Nehemiah Charles during a thunderstorm. Despite the humidity, the chief refused to leave the door open because he was worried about thunderbirds. To Cuthand's protestations that they were only mythical beings, the chief pointed to the Biblical scripture which in English stated “and the thunder shall come”, but in syllabic Cree translation, the passage read “and the thunderbird shall come” (193).

A key aspect of the stories related by Nelson, and well brought out in Cuthand's essay, is the function of narrative in Northern Algonquian culture. Narrative is common to all societies, but among the Cree and Ojibwa, it has assumed a central significance. Stories of native myths and legends were primary vehicles for entertainment and social interaction, as well as cultural transmission, and were customarily told during the winter. Beyond teaching values, the stories provided the essential contexts for interpreting the information conveyed and metaphorically expressed the symbolic relationships between the Northern Algonquian and their environments. Cuthand's account shows the remarkable survival of Northern Algonquian narrative tradition well into the 20th century, long after missionaries and historians had assumed its demise.

Despite Nelson's cultural filters — and perhaps because of them — the book deserves a wide readership. The publication of the letter-journal makes an important ethnographic document available to research by a broad variety of disciplines: religion, philosophy and history, as well as native studies and anthropology. In light of today's disruptions of traditional Algonquian narrative by television and native migrations to the city, “*The Orders of the Dreamed*” and related materials might be used to help re-awaken native students to the rich narrative traditions of their ancestors — at the very least not to reject them. Perhaps some students will be encouraged to carry out oral histories with their elders to capture native perspectives of the phenomena Nelson described. The book's dialogical structure, bringing together the diverse perspectives of historians, anthropologists and native teachers, is also suggestive of how scholarly inquiry might be kept open-ended.

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