

the second. Many voices are heard, but few fleshed-out historical actors, be they individuals or institutional groups, appear. Narrative and the dynamic of historical change after the introduction of anesthesia yield to a largely static analysis of issues. This happens when symbolic figures such as ancient medical authors, Francis Bacon, nineteenth-century poets, and present-day ethical dilemmas are evoked as if one could assume that they spoke directly to the historical development.

Part of the problem, I think, is that the anesthesia issue, notwithstanding Pernick's perceptive revision of its early history, simply did not provide the sort of "window" into the beliefs and practices of nineteenth-century Americans that, for example, the series of cholera epidemics, used by Charles Rosenberg in similar ways, did. Not only is anesthesia a more problematic indicator of broad social and intellectual change but its temporal dimensions are also more elusive. Pernick exacerbates the latter problem by restricting his analysis (especially the brief but crucial quantitative section) largely to a narrow band of time before and after the introduction of ether. For this period, he constructs an elegant framework of explanation for selective anesthetization in terms of professional ideology. Ongoing changes during subsequent decades leading by the 1880s to the decline of selectivity in favor of anesthesia for virtually all surgical patients receive no corresponding interpretation.

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Jacqueline Peterson and Jennifer Brown, *The New Peoples. Being and Becoming Métis in North America*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1985. pp. xvi, 266, maps, illustrations.

In 1970, W.L. Morton observed that Canadian tended to ignore the Métis, in spite of their obvious importance to Canadian history. At the time, Marcel Giraud's massive study, *Le Métis canadien : son rôle dans l'histoire des provinces de l'Ouest* (Paris, 1945) was still the primary academic reference, and in most textbooks, the Métis appeared only briefly as participants in the two Riel rebellions. By the late 1970s, however, a flurry of research activity had begun in both Canada and the United States, and in 1981 a conference was sponsored by the Newberry Library in Chicago in an attempt to bring together scholars from various disciplines to share the results of their new interests. This book is a selection of essays from that meeting, published as the first volume of a new series from the University of Manitoba Press entitled "Manitoba Studies in Native History".

The essays are grouped under four general themes which are appropriately representative of the current major interests of researchers. These include questions of Métis origins, types of communities, the Métis "diaspora" and Métis culture. The most exciting of the papers are those in which new methods are used or discussed. A number of scholars have concluded that the larger questions of group identity or "nationhood" cannot be answered until detailed analysis is done of what Jennifer Brown calls the "microcosm" of family and kinship. In this volume, Jacqueline Peterson offers a condensed version of her painstaking study which traces the origins of the Red River Métis. They did not emerge suddenly at Seven Oaks in 1815, she argues, but had coalesced from several older populations, one of which may be traced to the "Old Northwest" of the eighteenth century. Using demographic reconstruction and linkage techniques, she argues that the pressures of American expansion forced the Great Lakes trading communities to move west and north. Irene Spry challenges the theory that the English-Protestant and French-Catholic Métis groups at Red River were separate and hostile communities, arguing instead that divisions between the sedentary agriculturalists and the mobile bison hunters were more important than language or religion. Trudy Nicks and Kenneth Morgan reconstruct the Métis population at Grande Cache, Alberta using demographic sources to illustrate that this community developed at the regional level quite independently of the better-known group at Red River.

Other papers in the collection are more traditional in method or interpretation although these serve a useful purpose in pointing out (by implication at least) the variety of questions which have been asked about the Métis. One of the basic issues for both historians and anthropologists has been the question of whether the North American Métis peoples can be said to constitute a distinct culture or an identifiable political nation. Although none of the papers in this volume directly addresses that general issue, it is the implicit concern of nearly all the authors. In a perceptive afterword, anthropologist Robert K. Thomas notes that generalizations about the Métis may not be possible, but the apparent absence of a continental community does not negate the possibility that group consciousness developed in separate "sociogeographic populations the studies of local and regional groups presented in this volume are an important beginning towards a better understanding of such developments.

Simply studying the internal dynamics of Métis communities is unlikely to reveal all the answers, however. Attitudes of others appear to have played a vital role in determining personal choices and social behaviour, while the broader pressures of fur trade rivalries and settlement were obviously so important that historians had assumed for many years that they were the primary determinants of Métis identity at Red River. Unfortunately, the impact of such external historical forces is not considered in this volume with the same degree of sophistication as the anthropological assessment of internal dynamics. Perhaps some of the new fur trade scholarship will soon be applied to Métis studies to strengthen the historical context and bring new interpretations to old materials.

Very little emerges from these essays about the Métis relationship to their Indian cousins. While Sylvia Van Kirk and Jennifer Brown document Métis cultural ambivalence toward the EuroCanadian community, the question of relations with Indians certainly deserves further study. Did Indian communities accept the Métis as brothers, or were they more like the white communities in seeing the Métis as "outsiders"? Were there regional differences in their relationships? What were the economic and political implications of these relationships?

The reader is also left anxious for a better sense of what scholars consider to constitute Métis identity. Ted Brasser attempts to define Métis art, which he hopes to differentiate from that of the surrounding Indian communities, and John Crawford discusses Turtle Mountain "Michif" which may be a unique regional language, but there seems to be a wide and potentially rewarding field of study still open. What about religion, world view, styles of political leadership, and economic attitudes, to name a few possibilities? Did the Métis adopt their beliefs and behaviour wholesale from one "parent" or the other, or did they develop a synthesis which might be considered uniquely Métis?

Nevertheless, it is perhaps unreasonable to expect too much from what is still very much a preliminary study. *The New Peoples* is clearly an important and useful book. It is a good demonstration of the new methods being applied to Métis studies. It provides a clear argument that population "mixing" was an important factor across North America, not just at Red River. It is evidence that historians and anthropologists can communicate effectively with one another and enrich both disciplines in the process. It is also a physically attractive book which deserves to be widely read.

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Charles Rearick — *Pleasures of the Belle Epoque: Entertainment and Festivity in Turn-of-the Century France*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985. Pp. xvi, 240.

The dozens of tour buses parked each evening near the Place Pigalle in Paris bear testimony to the continuing identification of the French capital with night life, at least in the minds of the Americans, Germans and Japanese who journey in those buses. Charles Rearick's *Pleasures of the Belle Epoque*