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from family relationships to roles of the sexes. Sadly, this edition may not be found in university libraries, but it should be an ideal resource in libraries—community and public schools. As such, it fills a void of general studies about North America's original people. With ample illustrations, this book is a must in anyone's collection of Indian studies.

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"The Orders of the Dreamed:" George Nelson on Cree and Northern Ojibwa Religion and Myth, 1823. Edited and with commentary by Jennifer S. H. Brown and Robert Brightman. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1988. 226 pp. \$24.95 Cloth.

George Nelson, author of the manuscript around which this volume is based, was an Anglo-Canadian fur trader employed successively in the first two decades of the nineteenth century by the XY Company, the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company. While stationed at various posts in the United States and Canada, Nelson learned to speak Ojibwa, and chronicled the life and people around him. A keen observer, his writings represent a rich, though previously little known or used, source of information on numerous aspects of fur trade society. The decision to publish this manuscript separately from other material of Nelson's that is being prepared under the auspices of other scholars, was made on the basis of content. As editors Brown and Brightman observe, this text, written by Nelson at his post at Lac la Ronge in Saskatchewan in 1823, "stands apart as an ethnological contribution of high quality and great interest" (page 4). In the form of a long letter to his father, the manuscript is a detailed discussion of the religious beliefs and practices of the Native peoples, Cree, Ojibwa, and Metis, whom Nelson knew at Lac la Ronge. As such, it is a primary source, and the most thorough account of the religious beliefs of the Cree and Northern Ojibwa prior to the twentieth century.

The editors, Jennifer S. H. Brown and Robert Brightman, have done an excellent job presenting the manuscript in a framework most calculated to enhance its use as an ethnographic source. In

an introductory section, they present material on Nelson's early life, and on his fur trade career previous to his 1823 stay at Lac la Ronge. At some length, Brown and Brightman detail the intellectual dilemmas Nelson faced as he tried to understand Cree and Ojibwa religious beliefs and the demonstrated effectiveness of such rituals as the shaking lodge ceremony within the framework of his own Anglican Christianity. Although Nelson was often quite tolerant of cultural differences, clearly empathized with the Native peoples, and viewed many aspects of Cree and Ojibwa cultures as admirably suited for the harsh climate in which they lived, he was not without biases. Brown and Brightman call attention to the existence of such biases, but do not attempt to provide the definitive word on how such biases may have distorted Nelson's collection of data.

In addition to their introductory remarks, the editors have appended a helpful glossary identifying mythic persons featured in the stories Nelson recorded. They compare Nelson's information briefly with other written material and oral information from Native communities regarding these mythic persons. A lengthy section of comment follows the letter manuscript itself, in which the editors "seek to provide historical and comparative contexts for the stories and information that Nelson wrote down" (page 184). The editors place Nelson's information within the context of other writers from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries, noting discrepancies. They also offer explanations of complex mythic themes and motifs and suggest changes over time in Ojibwa and Cree conceptions of certain mythic personages.

A final section of commentary contains the thoughts of two Native Canadian scholars, Stan Cuthand, who is Cree, and Emma LaRocque, who is Cree Metis, on Nelson's work. For different reasons, both Cuthand and LaRocque have very mixed feelings about the work. Cuthand finds the life depicted by Nelson's account to be a hard one. Although Cree myths reinforced desirable social behavior, and much Cree belief persists to the present, Cuthand warns against a contemporary tendency to romanticize the past, and finds Nelson's "starker reality" (page 197) an important reminder to those who would see the past as a more perfect era. LaRocque is disturbed by the racism and sexism of Nelson's account, and asks "[w]herein lies our responsibility to combat slander, pornography, racism, hate, or plain ignorance in literature?" (page 202). Although she suggests no

clear answer to the question, her concern reminds scholars that ethnographic accounts frequently are biased, and the scholar must be on guard against adopting an ethnographer's prejudices along with his or her information.

Yet it is possible to move beyond the Eurocentrism of Nelson's manuscript to uncover insights into the Native past. Nelson's letter contains much valuable information on Cree and Ojibwa thought, suggesting, not surprisingly, that Cree and Ojibwa people were involved in on-going efforts to re-evaluate the world in light of new information presented by the traders. For instance, in the version of the Cree creation story that Nelson records, the Cree trickster-transformer, Wisahkecahk, oversees the creation first of Indians and then Europeans. The first Indians, a male and a female, are created as a pair from "a handful of common Earth" (page 48). Europeans were also made from earth, but the first European woman was created from one of the ribs of the first European man. It would seem obvious the Cree were reconciling accounts of Genesis learned from traders with their own understanding of human creation. Cree belief in their creation by Wisahkecahk was unshaken in 1823, yet they acknowledged differences between themselves and Europeans in their creation account.

In numerous other instances, Nelson notes similar Indian confidence in the correctness of their traditions, as well as a belief that Europeans, "who live at your ease, get your living out of your Nets or from your [I]ndians . . . make light of these Things." (page 91) Traders who depended on the labor of others and could not survive without Indian assistance, could be skeptical if they chose, for it was a skepticism born of laziness and ignorance. The Indians knew better. This level of confidence on the part of the Indian people of Lac la Ronge and their willingness to engage Nelson in intellectual and theological discussions, reveals much about the dynamic of the relationship between Indians and Europeans at one location and at one point in time.

The Nelson manuscript should prove itself of interest to scholars in a range of disciplines. It is indeed a valuable resource. Editors Brown and Brightman have done a fine job introducing the writings of the heretofore obscure fur trader to a wider audience.

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