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By Judith M. Daubenmier.

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more than a century after his death, suggests that there may be something to Reid's assertion that he is "emblematic of the fundamental dichotomies that define the specificity of Canadian cultural and political life" (70). So long as an understanding of Louis Riel "the man" remains stubbornly outside of our grasp and so long as his legacy remains fluid, undefined, and contested, Canadians will continue to engage in this collective "mythicization." The fundamental question, however, is whether we can ever understand Riel's impact on nonindigenous people and places if we do not fully understand who he was and what he means to Métis people based on his writings. Nonetheless, *Louis Riel and the Creation of Modern Canada* is an important contribution to our elusive search for a collective understanding.

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**The Meskwaki and Anthropologists: Action Anthropology Reconsidered.** By Judith M. Daubenmier. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008. 574 pages. \$55.00 cloth.

In *The Meskwaki and Anthropologists: Action Anthropology Reconsidered*, Judith Daubenmier credits Sol Tax and the Meskwaki community of Tama, Iowa, with the origins of "action anthropology." Daubenmier defines this method as "helping a group of people achieve the goals that they themselves set and simultaneously studying what occurred in order to draw general lessons from the process" (127). Among anthropologists, postwar disillusionment with the atomic age, coupled with decolonization movements, caused some to consider how their scholarship might contribute to the needs of the communities they studied. Daubenmier acknowledges these trends. However, she places even greater importance on sociologist Robert Lynd's *Knowledge for What?* (1939). In this essay, Lynd criticized social scientists for failing to create useful knowledge. The influence of Lynd's essay on Tax is indirect at best. However, Tax's graduate adviser, Robert Redfield, inspired Tax to immerse himself in the Guatemalan community that he studied for his dissertation. Such physical proximity to one's interlocutors brought with it lasting relationships, which, in Tax's case, lasted a lifetime. After graduate work in Guatemala and Mexico, Tax then created the University of Chicago field station on the Meskwaki settlement. Lasting from 1948 and 1958, this model of applied research forms the heart of Daubenmier's book.

*The Meskwaki and Anthropologists* is far more than a history of Tax and the field station near the settlement. Nearly two-thirds of the book is a descriptive

history of the Meskwaki people during the twentieth century. Although these and other histories contained in this book are interesting, they are often not directed toward a central thesis. As a consequence, *The Meskwaki and Anthropologists* contains many examples of the dissertation from which it arose. Daubenmier frequently strays from the intersection of Meskwaki history with action anthropology. For example, the author does not begin her analysis of the Chicago Project on the Meskwaki settlement until page 105. At more than four hundred pages with notes, Daubenmier could have offered a more focused and confident rendering of action anthropology. Nevertheless, Daubenmier's book is a useful case study that would be of interest to scholars thinking about how they intend to position themselves vis-à-vis the community they intend to study.

Most of the book explores how the Meskwaki cocreated this innovative new approach to cultural anthropology. Through intimate and long-standing encounters with anthropologists such as William Jones and Truman Michelson, the Meskwaki people came to appreciate the literal and figurative value of their culture for scholars concerned primarily with objective science and career advancement. For example, Michelson, who worked with the Meskwaki for eighteen years, paid his interlocutors for material culture, including medicine bundles, as well as linguistic and religious information. Such behavior was customary. The Meskwaki thus developed a nuanced sense of cultural privacy, and community members generally agreed on which aspects of their culture could be bought and sold as a commodity.

Throughout their long history with colonizers, the Meskwaki people have championed their own dignity. They have rightly chastised non-Indians for using their privileged position in mainstream America to take advantage of Indian people. When Tax arrived on the settlement in 1948, Meskwaki tribal member Ed Davenport challenged Tax to "work out some sort of a plan to fix things up, instead of just studying people" (1). Davenport challenged Tax to move beyond the parasitic and mercenary scholarship of many anthropologists during the first half of the twentieth century. If Tax hoped to be successful in the Meskwaki community, he would have to engage in a reciprocal dialogue with the people. Tax responded favorably to Davenport's challenge. As a result of their efforts, forty students spent a substantial amount of time at the field station on the settlement. They produced three dissertations, twenty-six articles, and two books. Graduate students involved in action anthropology went on to establish new fields of inquiry, including medical anthropology, as the result of this collaborative endeavor. In 1954, Tax and his students helped to establish Tamacraft, an arts-and-crafts company owned by the Meskwaki people.

Daubenmier chronicles the painful evolution of this innovative project through an extensive analysis of student field notes, dissertations, and

correspondence, as well as oral histories with knowledgeable Meskwaki historians such as Johnathan Buffalo and Suzanne Wanatee. Tax challenged his students to move from being “participant-observers” to being “interferer observers.” Not surprisingly, the Meskwaki people responded cautiously and critically. Most Meskwaki believed that Tax’s graduate students had a childlike understanding of their culture. The Meskwaki often treated them like children, and many graduate students realized much later, if at all, that the Meskwaki had manipulated them to suit their own purposes. This might have been just the process Tax had in mind. Tax frequently claimed that “he learned anthropology from the Indians.”

Throughout her book, Daubenmier reflects on the limited influence that action anthropology had on the field of cultural anthropology. Tax is responsible for some of these limitations. At times, he did not offer a great deal of guidance to his graduate students, and the Chicago field station was chronically underfunded for much of the decade during which it existed. These considerations seem secondary to the culture of professional anthropology at the time. Franz Boas and the anthropology department at Columbia University criticized anthropological research that abandoned objectivity. Also, they argued against collaborative research with the US or tribal government because such research invariably caused discord within American Indian communities.

Nevertheless, since 1969, when Vine Deloria Jr. first published *Custer Died for Your Sins*, most anthropologists have embraced some form of assistance to the people they have studied. Service learning and experiential learning have filtered into most colleges and universities. Tax’s emphasis on engaged, socially meaningful research is now widely accepted. Daubenmier implies that action anthropology failed largely because Tax was ahead of his time.

*Custer Died for Your Sins* certainly helped to transform the relationship between scholars and their interlocutors. But in two important respects, Daubenmier suggests that Deloria was wrong. First, he ignored action anthropology. Acknowledging Tax’s efforts might have offered a more nuanced assessment of the discipline of anthropology. But more importantly, Deloria mischaracterized the American Indian communities that had hosted anthropology researchers. He argued that Indian people and their communities were unwitting victims of callous and self-serving professional anthropologists. But Daubenmier’s assessment of the Meskwaki suggests otherwise. Throughout their long history of engagement, the Meskwaki have manipulated non-Indians to suit their own purposes. In 1948, Tax recognized this reality and fashioned a research model that worked within their parameters. Too often scholars fail to see American Indian communities as effective agents of their own sovereignty. *The Meskwaki and Anthropologists* offers a case study that corrects this stereotypical understanding of culturally conservative Indian communities.

*The Meskwaki and Anthropologists* contains many important insights into Meskwaki history and the profession of anthropology. Daubenmier's book should encourage scholars interested in ethnographic fieldwork to consider the moral implications of their research. This case study offers useful insights into how future scholars might conduct research that is socially responsible and academically rigorous.

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**Mohawks on the Nile: Natives among the Canadian Voyageurs in Egypt, 1884–1885.** By Carl Benn. Toronto: The Dundurn Group, 2009. 280 pages. \$40.00 cloth.

The Mohawk of northeastern North America have long attracted attention. From the imagery of the ferocious warriors of the Six Nations Confederacy through to the contemporary militancy of groups at Caledonia, Ontario, and Kanehsatake, Quebec, the Mohawk have developed a reputation for assertiveness, engagement, and independence. As a larger community, they baffled observers with their affinity for steel work on skyscrapers, their political innovation when defending their rights, and their presence at the forefront of indigenous protests and legal challenges. That the Mohawk would play a significant role in nineteenth-century British imperial action in the Sudan, however, does stand out as something of a surprise.

Carl Benn has produced an interesting narrative of the participation of sixty Mohawk on the Canadian Voyageur Contingent, dispatched to Africa during 1884 and 1885 in order to assist the British with the movement of troops and supplies during the Sudan War. Major-General Charles Gordon had been sent by the British government to Khartoum to put down the Mahdist Rebellion, an assignment that ended with Gordon dead and British authority in the area in ruins. The British, prompted by officers with experience in British North America, decided to recruit First Nations people for their abilities as boatmen. The British troops had to navigate the difficult waters of the Nile and believed that the special expertise of the Mohawk would be helpful in the campaign.

That the British had called on the new Dominion of Canada to assist with the imperial mission in Africa represented a significant increase in Canada's political standing. The specific request for boatmen capable of working the treacherous waters of the upper Nile River suggests that the British viewed their Canadian subjects through the long-standing lens of frontier life and