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literature courses that discuss issues of identity. With that said, however, the author's intent in writing the book, in my opinion, is not to satiate academic appetites, but to introduce to the general reading public the complexity of heritage and passing on traditions.

Every once in a while it is a delight to venture beyond the traditional disciplinary boundaries drawn by academia. By reading *The Roads of My Relations* I had the opportunity to do so. It was a pleasurable journey. The story is an absorbing tale, mixing history, legend, and the author's vivid imagination, accompanied by rich cultural insights. In her first collection of stories, Devon A. Mihesuah gives us a rich mosaic of interwoven lives. I look forward with great anticipation to the book's nonfiction counterpart.

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Subject Matter: Technology, the Body, and Science on the Anglo-American Frontier, 1500–1676. By Joyce E. Chaplin. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001. 384 pages. \$45.00 cloth.

Focusing on the years between Martin Frobrisher's Arctic expeditions and 1676, this ambitious book operates at the intersection of intellectual, cultural, and scientific histories. Using English writings about the North American environment and its inhabitants, this book investigates the connection Englishmen made between nature and empire. Chaplin's centers around her contention that current scholarship has created a false dichotomy between Europeans and Indians when it comes the connection between nature and science. She rejects the notion that "western views of nature are instrumental and native views are reverential" (p. 11). She argues that the separation between Europe's "scientific" reason and Native America's "savage" mind did not predate "the Columbian encounter," but "was a product of it" (p. 28). Her goal, then, is to explain how that separation occurred.

Chaplin identifies three overlapping periods of the colonial endeavor: 1500–1585, 1585–1660, and 1640–1676. In analyzing these periods, Chaplin sees the emergence of three distinct components to English colonization efforts. First, they introduced the concept of race to the colonial endeavor. Next, they identified technology as unique to a particular culture. Finally, English society rejected "mystical views of nature" (p. 14) for a more scientific perspective. Writings on America and Americans were essential in this evolutionary process, in part because the New World allowed Anglo-Americans to put Francis Bacon's call for experiential learning into practice.

In examining colonial endeavors of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Chaplin uncovers a specific pattern to English colonial efforts. First, the English demystified nature. They then attacked the Indians' bodies—literally through disease and war and figuratively in exploiting Indian society. Finally, the English used science to justify the world around them. While others have tackled some of these issues, what gives this work its verve is Chaplin's integration of English scientific trends into her analysis.

This book tackles some issues raised by Karen Kupperman and Carolyn Merchant. Like Kupperman's *Indian and English: Facing off in Early America* (2000), Chaplin pushes for a reconnection to our understanding of colonial America and developments in early-modern English cultural/intellectual history. Both authors use America's first inhabitants as a means to understanding an emerging seventeenth-century pan-Atlantic English society. Each makes use of English readers' interests in Tacitus to explain specific issues regarding English interpretations of Native American society. At the same time, *Subject Matter's* focus on the seventeenth century helps illuminate many of the points Merchant raised in her *Ecological Revolutions: Nature, Gender, and Science in New England* (1989). Chaplin's timeframe coincides with Merchant's colonial ecological revolution. Taking up Merchant's argument that ecological revolutions produce major transformations in human interactions with nature, Chaplin builds a framework for evaluating the role of science in Anglo-Americans understanding of nature and the place of the American Indian within it.

Nevertheless, it is important to understand where Chaplin's work differs from her peers' scholarship. First, she is far less inclined to rely on ethnohistorical analysis than Kupperman. Chaplin doubts, as Kupperman did not, that ethnohistorians can really comprehend sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Indian society. Chaplin is also less interested in Indian society than Kupperman. Chaplin's focus is the Anglo-American experience, not the Indians' knowledge. Chaplin differs from Merchant by focusing on the intellectual developments in the Anglo-American world. She is less concerned with Merchant's ecological transformations than in how Anglo-Americans interpreted the environment around them. Chaplin's interest is in the process Anglo-Americans used to place themselves above nature and the Native Americans they encountered. At the heart of her argument is that English and Indian views of nature were not as diametrically opposed as Merchant and others have argued.

Chaplin formulates her research agenda around two interrelated issues. The first deals with the question of technology. Chaplin sees English writers writing respectfully of Indian technology through 1640. This allowed writers to promote colonization, making the Indians seem more European. It also addressed an important scientific question: Could the English remain English in a new environment? The literature suggested the American environment would not impact the English biologically. For this reason, early accounts of bodily differences between the English and Indians were attributed to climate, inheritance, or custom. Chaplin's second issue centers around the Indians' physiology, and for this topic the author relies extensively on seventeenth-century debates about biology and culture. The result is the introduction of race in colonization. Understandings of biology became the explanation for the creation of empire. This topic is important to the book's success or failure because current historiography suggests "cultural differences mattered to early English colonists, but a biological one seems not to have" (p. 8). This book challenges these assumptions.

Focusing on seventeenth-century biology, specifically the atomist notion, allows Chaplin to reevaluate the texts of men like Thomas Hariot or Richard

Hakluyt (the younger). In doing so, she rejects the argument that seventeenth-century England worried about its growing population. She argues that Englishmen saw this population growth as a sign of future colonial endeavors, and that early promoters of English colonization saw English physiology as their nation's strength in colonial endeavors. While Englishmen worried that transplanting to America might threaten their individual bodies, the Indians' presence augured well for English efforts. For this reason, early accounts of the Indians emphasized their shared humanity with the English. Here, the Indian served as an indicator of America's colonial potential; they were "measures of the land's habitability" (p. 145).

As the colonies took root in the seventeenth century, new writings about the Indians helped Anglo-Americans develop a concept of race that separated, rather than united, peoples. Chaplin points out that these early writings occurred as "a racial idiom, not a coherent ideology" (p. 160). Nevertheless, her argument ought to lead scholars of racism to rethink the focus on racism's ideological roots in black-white terms. It was in addressing the scientific connections between bodies and nature that Englishmen began to articulate the connection between nature and empire. This discussion boded ill for the Indian, as the English began to revise their earlier positive assessment about Indians and their society. Now, as the writings of Roger Williams suggested, the Indians and their societies were suspect. Chaplin places these discussions within the context of the seventeenth-century debate between the Aristotelean and Galenic traditions on body physiology and disease.

Since European diseases ravaged seventeenth-century Indian communities, it seems natural that science had something to say about what was happening. English thought saw the human body as mirroring God's cosmic order; they interpreted disease and illness as a sign of moral judgment. Originally the colonists expected the Indians to have the same mortality rate(s) as Europeans when it came to disease. When Indians did not, then arguments about body type took on more sinister overtones. English writers began postulating that Indians were not indigenous to America at all, and that their bodies were weaker than English bodies. Science, it seems, explained what was happening to the Indian and why the English were destined to secure dominion over America. In the end, English writings on the body served two purposes: "it symbolized the nation, and it populated territory as a mark of national dominion" (p. 126). Scientific thought allowed the Anglo-American to remove America's first inhabitants from the natural landscape.

A couple criticisms of this book are in order. First, while you would not know it from this book, there is a lot of good scholarship being done in the field of New England religious history, literary theory, and ethnohistory. It would be nice to see the author recognize that work. Second, one does not understand the American Indian any better after having read this book. The Indian is a prop in this book, not a focal point. Having made these criticisms, *Subject Matter* is still an interesting addition to our understanding of colonial Anglo-America.

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