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representations of Native Americans based on primary sources could and should still be done, perhaps by several scholars working together. Until such a study is available, scholars, like the general public, must be genuinely grateful to receive the slightly less than grand endeavors of books like this.

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In the Spirit of the Earth: Rethinking History and Time. By Calvin Luther Martin. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992. 176 pages. \$19.95 cloth.

Anyone interested in the personal perspectives and philosophical musings of Calvin Luther Martin should, by all means, read this book. The author wrestles with an inner emptiness, what he calls a "vague, perhaps distinctively male, sense of dissociation from the natural world" (p. 9). His years of wandering through the apparently arid wasteland of academia have failed to ease his soul's hunger, for its resident scientists and historians have failed to pursue what Loren Eiseley called "the real business of the artist," which is "man's salvation" (p. 120).

Martin's spiritual odyssey seems anchored in a deep conflict with his father, a Christian minister who appropriately named his son Calvin Luther. Readers with a Freudian bent would no doubt find ample evidence for analysis by noting Martin's scorn for Pastor Martin, who, his son believes, wasted his life telling "tales in folly" (p. 115)! Indeed, although Martin allegedly reveres Native American culture, he venomously violates a cardinal principle of its tradition: honor and respect for your elders, especially your parents. Still, those who happen to be interested in Martin will understand him better by noting his hostility toward his father.

Beyond those interested in its author, this book might appeal to those who wonder "what if" the world were not as it is, what if primordial pathways could be recovered. Would not the world be better without the technological "progress" of the past several thousand years? What if the shift from hunting and gathering to agriculture had never occurred? This issue has been profoundly discussed by Lewis Mumford in his two-volume study, *The Myth of the Machine*, and given careful analysis by Jacques Ellul in *The*

Technological Society. Yet the careful attention to fact and the judicious critique of historical development one finds in such works is missing in Martin's work. Instead we find an airing of the author's subjective aspirations.

The hostility that Martin heaps on his father extends to the culture he represents. Calvin Luther Martin cannot mention Christianity or the Judeo-Christian scriptures without contempt. He condemns a missionary who lives among the Navajo for failing to learn their language—an ignorant preacher “who could not bear to give himself, sensually, to the place” (p. 28). Martin, of course, does not know Diné, nor did he live in the “place” for long, but he somehow mystically intuited its essence. This happened, he tells us, in a transforming personal experience. He had a desert theophany, precipitated by meditating on some petroglyphs and a Paleo-Indian stone blade, whereby his essential oneness with the cosmos was revealed to him—the message of salvation he seeks to proclaim in this book.

Beyond that, Martin condemns all the “civilizations” that have, since the shift from hunting-gathering to agriculture in the neolithic era, severed us from our planetary roots. Civilization, best symbolized by the gun, has degraded the planet by celebrating and enstructuring the human arrogance that elevates our species over other life forms.

The grandeur of life in the archaic period, Martin seems to think, is most clearly apprehended in the poetic truths of imagination. Here, the author says, “I like to imagine that the speech and artisanry of modern . . . hunting peoples is a close approximation of that mesolithic ancestral model, since we see both societies harvesting the earth using pretty much the same strategies, devices, and focus” (p. 35). This is, of course, a highly questionable assumption for anyone trying to get at the truth of ancient cultures. That Martin “likes to imagine” such does not guarantee its truth! It is, of course, fine to “imagine” if you enjoy fictions and daydreams and alternative constructions of reality.

Readers interested in more than Martin's inner odyssey and utopian musings should test and weigh the contents of this book cautiously and should refuse to take it for much more than the author's poetic yearnings. Although Martin certainly has immersed himself in Native American studies, his treatise deals with primordial *Homo* rather than distinctly Indian peoples. To understand Sioux traditions, for example, one is far wiser to read Charles Eastman or Vine Deloria. Martin's opinions are more

likely to be rooted in Richard Slotkin, Mircea Eliade or Loren Eiseley, rather than Tecumseh or Sitting Bull.

Historians drawn to the book by its subtitle, *Rethinking History and Time*, will find the author (a professional historian) declaring—in a chapter entitled “Breaking History’s Hammerlock on Our Imagination”—the end of history! “Historical consciousness itself has become perhaps our greatest enemy to true progress, the greatest obstacle to imagining ourselves and recalibrating our affairs in line with the new environmental consciousness” (p. 120).

In ancient Greece, according to Martin, historians got off to a bad start, for Herodotus and Thucydides injected an “ominous” agenda: replacing myth with fact. Even Homer, Martin declares, helped sever the songs of Greece from their “mythic” base—a base we are asked to believe has been intuitively grasped by a Rutgers University professor. In my judgment, historians will find little of value in this book if they seek (as most do) to know the truth about past events and persons.

In fact, this is not a book of history. It is an effort at philosophy or at setting forth a worldview. And that leads us to a very serious question, a question basic to philosophy: the question of truth. Martin insists he is trying to eliminate “mendacious” (p. 103) words, to illuminate important truths about life. But the “truth” he asserts is a simplistic, reductionistic materialism. Martin promulgates “the manifesto of a new ecological consciousness. Thistles, mallards, and men are truly made of the same mud: fats, carbohydrates, nucleic and L-amino acids” (p. 119).

If Martin seriously holds this position, of course, he eliminates the question of truth, for if there is nothing but molecules-in-motion, there is no possibility of a “mind” that somehow understands truth. My thoughts are just random products of the material entities (mud, fats, etc.) that happen to circulate through my brain. Martin espouses a monistic materialism that has been persuasively punctured by some of the world’s finest philosophers, beginning with Plato and Aristotle.

Then, all too often, Martin punctuates the discussion with remarks such as, “[I]n the end it is all, including my own thoughts, conjecture” (p. 38). If that is true, of course, the only reason to read this book is (as mentioned above) if you are just curious about Calvin Luther Martin. If, ultimately, “all is conjecture,” one is left wondering about the author and the intent of this book. Does Martin really mean what he writes? Or is it, in accord with the

fashionable literary deconstructionism that oozes through his presentation, a verbal game of some sort?

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Navajo Tribal Demography, 1983–1986: A Comparative and Historical Perspective. By Cheryl Howard. Washington, DC: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1993. 272 pages. \$41.00 cloth.

As America enters the final decade of the twentieth century, our society has begun to debate the health crisis. Health issues such as cost containment, access to necessary medical services, and the decline of our national health status have captured the public's attention. Lost amidst the political rhetoric is the recognition that for many segments of American society, these medical problems have been prevalent for centuries. As a result, their health problems were often magnified and exceeded the national statistical standard. Native American health levels are one example. Despite some improvement since 1955, Native American health problems continue to resemble those of many developing countries.

Navajo Tribal Demography, 1983–1986: A Comparative and Historical Perspective, a recent contribution to Garland Publishing's "Contemporary Issues in Health" series, is a descriptive study of demographic factors between 1983 and 1986 affecting Navajo mortality. The expressed purpose of the work is to assess the disease mortality and to project future health challenges among the Navajo.

In an attempt to position her work, the author opens the book with a general cultural and demographic overview of the Navajo. This chapter highlights early changes in population size, select Navajo cultural practices, some significant historic events, and the Navajo's current socioeconomic status. Howard concludes by noting that not only are these background factors essential to interpreting the data presented; they contribute to the current socioeconomic deprivation faced by many Navajo people.

Having described the Navajo culturally and historically, Howard, in the next two chapters, discusses theory and methodology. In systematic fashion, she outlines critically the major theoretical constructs currently applied to explaining Native American demographic and epidemiological change. The chapter