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consequences of the multifarious policies are described, including the direct impact of these policies on the individuals and groups she singles out. Carter does not directly connect her analysis of policies to her descriptions of their impact upon Indians. She acknowledges that Indians were busy seeking their own strategies of survival in the midst of uneven power relations in the various levels of both societies and their increasingly cohesive and comingling social relations.

This major Canadian contribution to a literature on Indian farming systems in the Americas makes a forceful comparison between the long-established Indian horticulturalists and those who were being forcibly acculturated to farming for economic subsistence on reserves/reservations. Carter's paradigm of how the government's construction of the acculturated Indian was modeled as a "peasant farmer" demonstrates the insidious foundations of Canadian Indian policy, both in theory and practice. This book about an underaddressed topic is extremely well written and should be included on a short list of best books to read about Canadian Indian affairs. The publisher is particularly urged to release a paperback edition in the next months to allow the ideas of this volume to be used in classrooms and to make it available to more than just academic consumers.

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My Elders Taught Me: Aspects of Western Great Lakes American Indian Philosophy. By John Boatman. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1992. 84 pages. \$29.50 cloth; \$14.50 paper.

Perhaps the most striking and controversial aspect of John Boatman's brief treatise is to be found in chapter 5, "The Star People." Here the author claims that the celestial beings of the Great Lakes and of Native American oral traditions generally represent extraterrestrial visitors who interacted with the ancestors and who, to some extent, continue to be involved in the affairs of earth. In this scenario, Original Man was a humanoid who, with his grandmother Nokomis, was lowered from the sky. The epic battles of the Thunderbirds and Water Manitous around Devils Lake, Wisconsin, and Lake Nipigon in Ontario (see, e. g., Norval Morriseau's *Legends of My People*) may have been the result of a war

between two different types of extraterrestrial beings. Thunderbirds, according to Boatman's teachers, are different from Thunderers and, unlike the powerful *animikeeg*, are not manitous or *atisokanak* but represent the "flying vehicles" of the Star People. In other words, they are flying saucers.

As I read these interpretations, I could not help but think of Erich von Daniken's infamous writings on the extraterrestrial origins of the pyramids, the Nazca lines, the vision of Ezekiel—in short, every extraordinary ancient place and/or event that one can name. Yet even as skepsis colored my reception of Boatman's theories, I found myself questioning my own reaction to this material. Having engaged in extensive study of Thunderers/Thunderbirds in the Ojibwe context and having listened to the teachings of many elders on the subject, I was struck with a peculiar realization. Why is it that I have little trouble accepting the experience of these beings as spiritual realities, yet I balk at an explanation of their visits as constituting interactions with beings from other planets, judging that explanation as too far out, too unorthodox? Given the fact that orthodoxy is not a religious hallmark of Native American traditions, one is forced to take seriously Boatman's caveat in his introduction: "Some may even take the position that what I have written is wrong. I ask these individuals to bear in mind that this book contains only that which my significant Elders taught me. It may be prudent to leave the decision regarding what is right and what is wrong to those in the Spirit-World" (p. ix).

Boatman's point is well taken, and yet, while I would not claim that he and his teachers are wrong, I would question the reductionist quality of these interpretations. For what concerns me is not that these teachings are radical but that they are materialist explanations for what most would consider sacred experiences. Throughout his book, Boatman, perhaps in an effort to communicate his material to nonnatives, continually refers to "scientific" or "pseudoscientific" explanations of the oral traditions and daily religious experiences of the Great Lakes peoples. He cites, for example, PSI phenomena as descriptive categories for the experience of vision, dream, healing, and metamorphosis that mark the power world of Anishinaabe people. It is the reference to these indices that robs Boatman's book of its own power. In attempting to persuade the reader that these things are scientifically possible, he succeeds only in translating the pure, lived experience, the reality, of a lifeway into a language that cannot begin to communicate

either its inherent meaning or its relevance for those inside or outside the tradition.

This attempt at translation is at the heart of the flaw in Boatman's book. He appears to be directed toward two goals: (1) to challenge European and Euro-American interpretations of Native American lifeways and to assert the primacy of the traditional teachings of the elders (both in terms of content and as a methodological model); and (2) to establish that western Great Lakes American Indian lifeways constitute a "philosophy" and to introduce the reader, in a systematic way, to the philosophical nature and content of this belief system. In the first case, Boatman succeeds initially, speaking eloquently to the need for reappraisal of scholarship in this area and in the models that produced that scholarship. And yet he undercuts his argument by referring to nonnative sources even while he criticizes them: He cites Dennis and Barbara Tedlock's sound notion of the "double vision" that American Indians have of reality and, in the most obvious case, defends the existence of an original Native American monotheism by critiquing Allouez's animistic assessment of Great Lakes religion, with the help of Louis Hennepin and John Cooper. One cannot have it both ways.

While any reputable scholar of Native American studies realizes that the time is long past when neglect of elders as authoritative is even remotely defensible, one must also recognize that native traditions on all continents are still held to artificial and inappropriate standards of "traditionalism." Boatman is wise to point out that tribal religions, like world religions, react and adapt, grow and change, and the "authenticity" of contemporary teachers should not be questioned. If, for example, one were to apply to Christianity the standards of authenticity and traditionalism that have been applied to the Ojibwe religion (see, e. g., Christopher Vecsey's *Traditional Ojibwe Religion and Its Historical Changes*), one would be forced to say that, as soon as Paul won the battle over the circumcision of Gentile converts, Christianity was no longer "authentic."

Religion is an activity, and in Native America it remains a lifeway in which belief and practice are rarely separable from everyday life. This is why Boatman's second goal is problematic. Certainly, these religious teachings can be systematized, and yes, they do constitute a philosophy—but not in the way that Boatman understands the term. In this text, he uses *philosophy* to describe the western European science that includes metaphysics, epistemology, aesthetics, ethics, and logic. He refers to the subdisciplines of

metaphysics—ontology and cosmology—attempting to set his discussion within an intellectual framework that cannot fail to constrict it. Boatman has collected a wealth of teachings here that should be communicated on their own terms, not through the uneven use of the language of a formal, intellectual discipline born of European consciousness. This is the very consciousness that the author accurately contends has failed to apprehend or appreciate the considerable wisdom of the Americas. The teachings of the elders stand up just fine on their own, and one cannot help but wish that Boatman had chosen to distill these teachings into a treatise consistent with his stated rejection of nonnative standards and methods. This is precisely what both Edward Benton Banai and Basil Johnston accomplished in their respective books, *The Mishomis Book: The Voice of the Ojibway* and *Ojibway Heritage*. Boatman knows both of these texts, citing them extensively, and he would do well to produce another work of his own using them as models. He clearly has a good deal of wisdom to share and should be urged to do so—quickly and in the spirit of the elders rather than the scientists and philosophers. We have listened to their answers long enough. As Boatman says, “It is time to ask questions. It is time to remember” (p. 65).

Theresa S. Smith

A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison. By James E. Seaver. Edited by June Namias. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992. 192 pages. \$24.95 cloth.

Mary Jemison's story is one of the best, and best-known, in the literature of Indian captivities. Captured with her Scotch-Irish family by Shawnee in the Seven Years Wars in western Pennsylvania, she was traded to the Seneca, who adopted her to replace a slain brother. The Shawnee had killed her parents, but Jemison found a new life in Seneca society. She survived two husbands (a Delaware and a Seneca), had eight children, and became a Seneca in culture and allegiance for the rest of her long life, refusing opportunities to return to white society. Before she died in 1833 at about ninety years of age, she related her life story to an upstate New York doctor, James Seaver, who embellished and published it. The narrative is a vivid personal account of Iroquois life and the forces affecting the Seneca in some of the darkest years of the tribe's