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of what's wrong with mainstream representations of Aboriginal people but also its all-important corollary, what can be done about it. Perhaps the most significant element absent from representations of Aboriginal people in the popular press is an Aboriginal context that includes both the historical background of issues and the values held by Aboriginal people. It is only through a complete retelling of Aboriginal history, stories, and experiences that a mutual understanding between Aboriginal people and the "immigrant population in North America" is possible (14).

While it is difficult to argue with the editors' point that Aboriginal people are "not understood in their own contexts," in fact, stories about indigenous people, particularly in the news, are often not presented in any context whatsoever (1). Research on media representations of indigenous people in other places suggests that the ethics of professional journalism may be partially responsible for decontextualized coverage. John Hartley and Alan McKee, in a book about Aboriginal people in Australia, suggest that the journalistic tenet of giving people "identical treatment" precludes the provision of detailed descriptions of the very aspects of context and history of Aboriginal issues that would make events comprehensible to Euro-Canadian audiences (*The Indigenous Public Sphere*, 2000, 338). *Walking a Tightrope* supplies some of the stories, values, histories, and contexts that can help Aboriginal people and Euro-Canadians understand one another. Future research needs to explore ways of ensuring that Aboriginal voices, perspectives, and contexts are included in mainstream media representations of Aboriginal issues. Until then, as one Aboriginal woman puts it in the book's introduction, "The most we can hope for is that we are paraphrased correctly" (1).

*Robert Harding*

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**The Westo Indians: Slave Traders of the Early Colonial South.** By Eric E. Bowne. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2005. 160 pages. \$48.00 cloth; \$24.95 paper.

Prior to contact with Europeans, Native Americans in what would become the southeastern United States lived in large, centrally organized, and socially stratified chiefdoms ruled by noble lineages. But in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the arrival of European explorers and colonists transformed Native American culture and society in the region. By the eighteenth century, Indians in the South, devastated by disease and warfare, had settled into new, independent, and autonomous towns with more egalitarian social structures. Previously scholars have overlooked, or at least underestimated, the significance of this dramatic transformation in the seventeenth century and its effect on European colonization. In 2002, however, Robbie Ethridge and Charles Hudson coedited a collection of essays entitled *The Transformation of the Southeastern Indians, 1540–1760* (2002) that demanded a reexamination of the colonial South in the 1600s. In the introduction,

Hudson called on scholars to analyze the South as one zone in part of an expanding world commercial trade system that was centered in Europe. In America, European traders and settlers, African slaves, and Native peoples all became part of this world system.

Influenced by the work of Hudson, Ethridge, and others, anthropologist Eric E. Bowne has applied this world system approach to his study of the Westo Indians. He contends that the Westos played a major role in the development of the colonial South, which became incorporated into this new world system. In *The Westo Indians: Slave Traders of the Early Colonial South*, Bowne argues that the Westos' aggressive pursuit of the Indian slave trade altered Native American political organization in the region, pulled southern Indians into a commercial world economy, and opened the door to English expansion westward in the 1700s.

The history of the Westos is something of a mystery. According to Bowne, the Westos were originally part of the Erie Indians, an alliance of Iroquoian polities that occupied the eastern shore of Lake Erie in the early 1600s. During the 1640s, the Eries, and other Indians in the region, traded beaver pelts to Europeans for manufactured goods, especially firearms. As the trade expanded, the beaver population dwindled, leading to increased competition. Consequently, the Five Nations of the Iroquois (Cayuga, Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, and Seneca), looking to enlarge their hunting grounds, expanded westward during the Beaver Wars of the 1650s and forced the Eries to disperse. Bowne contends that about seven hundred Eries migrated south in 1656 to the James River in Virginia, where they were called the Rickahockans. Subsequently, they moved south again and settled along the banks of the Savannah River. It was here that they became known as the Westos.

Although newcomers to the area, the Westos had several advantages that, according to Bowne, allowed them to emerge as a major power in the seventeenth-century South. First, their experience in the Northeast, especially during the Beaver Wars, taught them the value of firearms. Second, English colonists in the South, who were still unfamiliar with the geography of the region, were dependent on Native Americans for trade. Third, the Westos arrived just as the fur trade started to boom in the South. And finally, the Westos already possessed some guns, and they knew how to use them, whereas most other Native Americans in the South at that time were not armed. The Westos immediately began trading deerskins and beaver pelts to English colonists for guns and ammunition. But the Westos soon discovered a more lucrative trade good. As the plantation economy boomed in Virginia, Carolina, and the Caribbean Islands, the demand for slave labor skyrocketed. The Westos responded by raiding other Native American groups in the South for war captives to trade to English colonists. By the 1660s they had established a fort along the Savannah River from which they could conduct raids into coastal Carolina as well as Spanish Florida, where Native American groups lacked access to guns.

The rise of the Westos was simultaneously spectacular and brief. They burst on the scene in the South in the 1650s only to disappear in the 1680s, the victims of their own success. Two interrelated developments accounted for

the demise of the Westos. First, Westo aggressiveness in pursuing war captives in the 1660s and 1670s created much animosity toward them among other southern Indians. At the same time, the demand for cheap labor was so high that English colonists began to arm other Indian groups, such as the nearby Savannas, in order to acquire more Indian slaves. In 1680, an alliance of English colonists and Savanna Indians turned against the Westos and chased them westward out of the region. Less than thirty years after relocating, the Westos ceased to exist as a separate political entity in the South.

*The Westo Indians* is a significant contribution for several reasons, but two in particular are noteworthy. First, the author places his analysis of the Westos within the broader context of colonial politics and economics, or, in Hudson's terms, within that expanding new world system based on trade and the exploitation of American resources. In fact, Bowne astutely describes how the different colonial strategies employed by Europeans in the Northeast and the South contributed to the rise of the Westos. In the Northeast, the fur trade of the Great Lakes region gave the Westos the necessary tools and experience to conduct trade when they moved to the Savannah River. Meanwhile, the plantation economies of the South and the Caribbean created a demand for slave labor, which the Westos were only too happy to answer. Moreover, Spanish missionaries, who were there to make converts rather than to conduct trade, were reluctant to arm Native Americans in Florida and thereby make themselves vulnerable to slave raids. Second, Bowne's work furthers the recent trend of emphasizing the significance of the Indian slave trade in the development of the colonial South. In 2002, Alan Galloway authored a book-length treatment of the subject entitled *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South* (2002). *The Westo Indians* builds upon this theme, though work still remains.

Although Bowne makes a strong case for his thesis, *The Westo Indians* is not without problems. Only a handful of documents make specific reference to the Westos, and several of them were written by Englishmen who never actually met a Westo Indian. The archaeological evidence is also thin, as the main Westo settlement on the Savannah River, known as Hickauhaugau, has yet to be located. Consequently, Bowne is forced to rely on secondary scholarship, inference, and speculation to defend his argument. Despite this weakness, Bowne has made imaginative use of the scanty source material. The text is well written, though a touch repetitive, and free of jargon. *The Westo Indians* will appeal to anyone interested in Native American Studies, the Indian slave trade, or the history of the colonial South.

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