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The Road of Life and Death: A Ritual Drama of the American Indians. By Paul Radin.

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lished in 1859, is a justification for the federal policies that dispossessed the nomadic peoples of the Plains as soon as the conclusion of the Civil War allowed those policies to be implemented.

I do not mean to suggest that the book should be suppressed. Rather, its republication in the present form is an example of the failure of scholarly publishing to fully explicate, and thus objectify, the mechanism of colonialism. The way in which the Lee narrative has been packaged and promoted by the University of Oklahoma Press perpetuates its colonialist usage.

Morris W. Foster
University of Oklahoma

The Road of Life and Death: A Ritual Drama of the American Indians. By Paul Radin. Princeton University Press, 1945. 345 pages. \$14.95 paper.

The Road of Life and Death, by Paul Radin, written in the old style of salvage anthropology, reflects the author's preoccupation with academic analysis of religious ceremony rather than trying to understand the real substance of Winnebago religion. Radin, who did fieldwork among the Nebraska band of the Winnebago tribe during the early 1900s, wrote a translated account of the medicine rite with his Nebraska informants but failed to record the linguistic depth of ceremonial elements of membership in the Medicine Lodge ceremony and how that affects the understanding of Winnebago religion. In his foreword, Mark Van Doren also reveals classic salvage anthropological thought by writing, "Winnebago culture is extinct, or is in the last stages of becoming so."

Traditional Winnebago religion is composed of several layers of small religions. The Medicine Lodge, one of these layers, is a cross-clan religious organization created by ritual revelation through the vision quest. Membership in the medicine rite is decided through a descendent selection process or through a payment and in-kind services to the descendent's elder. This strict selection process gives the group the air of a secret society, but, in effect, it is a strict group of selected kinspeople who demonstrate the characteristic of becoming true human beings.

As one reads this review, the Winnebago traditionalists of Wisconsin are still speaking their language and practicing their ongoing culture and religion. It is unfortunate that the salvage

anthropologists who wrote about the genocide and so-called extinction of the Winnebago tribe are not like Franz Boas, who used culture to counteract and neutralize social Darwinism and to create the discipline of cultural anthropology.

The translation of the Winnebago medicine rite text into English causes the original language to lose its dynamic meaning. The original language contains powerful environmental metaphors that are still embedded in Winnebago religion. The narrations of the medicine rite, which are spiritually powerful in their entirety, are linguistically gutted in Radin's translation and sound dangerously like new-age spirituality. The meanings become distorted because of the differences in values and ethical expectations between Winnebago culture and white society.

Good ethnographic work calls for comparative methods to substantiate fieldwork, but Radin ignores this requirement, failing to cross-check his medicine rite work with the traditional Wisconsin Winnebago tribe. A true ethnographer would have been more concerned with the cosmology and mythology found in the ongoing Winnebago religion, where profound respect for the spiritual past, practiced in the ceremonial present, makes it possible for the Winnebago religion to continue to exist in an ecological kinship relationship. These kinship ties must be preserved with all species and with the natural environment. The social reality of the Winnebago traditionalists lies in their cultural superstructure of clans, moiety, and tribe. These are still intact because of the Winnebago belief in the supernatural organization.

The Winnebago cosmology of Earthmaker and its mythologies is supported by a number of sacred concepts, such as energy conservation, the nature of harmony, the psychology of respect, and the balance of positive and negative forces. These principles are integrated into the religion through the use of natural metaphors, which ease the religious practitioners' progress toward becoming true human beings. The mythologies validate the Winnebago experience and facilitate the learning of truth, which is the foundation of their culture and spirituality. In the Winnebago religion, where the individual can realize his spirituality as a true human being, the environment is a symbol for a new world reality.

Radin excludes a very important part of the medicine rite. The antagonist in this book is the evildoer, and throughout the narrations, the four Winnebago heroes try to overcome the fear and destruction that the evildoer has inflicted on the Great Spirit's creation (human beings). The evildoer does not appear a priori but

is created as a malevolent spirit who has been endowed with great power. In the process of creating spirits, the Great Spirit accidentally joins one spirit's legs to its torso backwards. The error is corrected, but the rejoining of the legs leaves the spirit walking with a limp, and this spirit becomes the evildoer. Radin relates the story but does not explain that the evildoer myth is an illustration of how evil should be balanced. (In that balancing process, evil is placated but not destroyed.) He misses this point completely; instead, the process of interpreting the Winnebago medicine rite becomes an exercise in symbol management motivated by the historic struggle between native and white concepts of reality and its overt message of social control through the decline of a supposedly inferior Winnebago culture and the rise of an imported, superior, Western civilization. This raises questions about the rightness of colonial thought versus the traditional Winnebago worldview. Just whose reality is the valid one?

Kinship is a major factor that serves as one of the bonding elements in Winnebago culture, where ancestors and life are sacred. It is to those strong beliefs in kinship that we can attribute the persistent human spirit of the Winnebago throughout the genocidal era. Thus the struggle between the Winnebago and white society over the definition of reality provides a parallel approach to understanding ecological reality in the Western world.

Walter Funmaker

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Raven's Light. By Susan Hand Shetterly. New York: Atheneum, 1991. 28 pages. \$13.95 cloth.

Raven's Light, a story from the Northwest Coast people, could easily be dismissed as "just another pretty face" among children's books. However, both the content and the form compel its reading. This slick production should go a long way toward promoting the inclusion of Native American stories and storytelling within their legitimate domain—American literature.

Shetterly's retelling includes the story of creation as well as Raven's gift of the sun to his creations. As such, the story bears kinship to a whole slew of other folk stories, both Native American and foreign. In this retelling, the earth is created by Raven as he wings through darkness, carrying a stone. As he tires, the stone