

Throughout this powerful and important book, the author presents a varied set of thought-provoking ideas, all of which are impressively researched and presented in finely crafted prose. Academics will certainly enjoy this welcome addition to what we hope, one day, when Indian mascots are relics of the past, will simply be works of history. As one of the most significant works on the subject of Indian mascot imagery in sports, the general audience should read this book, in particular those with interests in sports and sports history. Furthermore, professors of American history should consider assigning this book to their survey courses because *Contesting Constructed Indian-ness* provides one of the most erudite and accessible studies of the historical persistence of racism that I have read in recent memory.

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Elder Brother and the Law of the People: Contemporary Kinship and Cowessess First Nation. By Robert Alexander Innis. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2013. 216 pages. \$31.95 paper; \$70.00 electronic text.

When I first received this volume for review, on the back cover I read, "In *Elder Brother and the Law of the People*, Robert Innis offers a detailed analysis of the role of Elder Brother stories in historical and contemporary kinship practices in Cowessess First Nation, located in Southern Saskatchewan." I was skeptical, for I had read other accounts that seemed to make similar claims, but I became very pleasantly surprised: reading chapter 1, I came to realize that, even though the author has been in an urban setting for the major portion of his life, Innis was learning about traditional relationships. Traditional relationships are tremendously important in most First Nations communities in that they position a person's acceptance within the community. Although no Elder Brother stories are actually included in this volume, Innis shows that the main focus of the Wisdom Keepers (elders) was maintaining kinship and family relationships, and the role that stories have in maintaining these ties. This focus is maintained throughout.

As Innis briefly describes, the "outsider-insider" dichotomy can make gathering research data in First Nation Communities difficult. In doing research for *Elder Brother and the Law of the People*, Innis first had to relate "his-story" to the Wisdom Keepers/storytellers. During his initial visit, one of his uncles filled in his biological relationships within the community. Once the author's family relationship was explained, in subsequent visits other First Nations members of Cowessess became more open and accepting of Innis. As he made subsequent visits, his relatedness with other Cowessess members continued to expand, despite the diverse backgrounds of all the people who took part in the visits and discussions. It became a common understanding during these visits that everyone was related to someone; nearly all could claim to be of more than one Aboriginal background, whether that were Saukteaux, Cree, Assiniboine, or Métis. Because Innis establishes his kinship relationships at the start of his research, he is able to gather his data more easily. This should

be a primary lesson for anyone who wishes to do research among First Nations communities. We need to establish our relationships with the subjects who will be a part of any research, for it is they who hold power over the information we seek. We have this extremely important work to read as a result of this author's establishing his relationships with the community.

Another very important concept appears in this book. Unlike many other works that tend to be reductionist, Innis uses a holistic approach, in every chapter bringing together various concepts to show the complexity that exists on Cowessess First Nation. Innis shows how other writers have dissected life among First Nations communities, and, as a result, have misrepresented or misinterpreted kinship relationships by presenting them as tribal boundaries. At the same time as he presents how First Nations have been dissected into concepts of tribes, the author continually inserts the concept of holism, viewing the world around him through the eyes of the Cowessess wisdom-keepers (elders) with whom he has contact. Chapter 3 very eloquently presents to the reader how many First Nations of the northern prairies are multicultural, using excellent examples, such as how a singular label like "Plains Cree" may be too limiting when describing a prairie First Nations community. In chapter 4, Innis shows us that this multicultural aspect of life, both historically and contemporarily, is within Cowessess as well.

In chapter 6 Innis describes both the negative and positive impacts on the membership of Cowessess of Canada's bill C-31, "An Act to Amend the Indian Act." He speaks of the bill's divisiveness, as well as how the on-reserve members of Cowessess mostly have come to view the change brought about by the enactment of this piece of legislation as positive. He states that many Cowessess members were pleased and happy to know that their relatives were back as status members of Cowessess. Innis sounds a cautionary note when he writes that because of unresolved tensions, Cowessess First Nation should not be looked upon as an ideal First Nations community. I agree wholeheartedly, for as a member of a different First Nations community I understand that there will be disagreements and tensions within any community. Innis concludes—and I concur—that in order to keep the cultural and multicultural aspirations of a community like Cowessess First Nation alive and well, both in the twenty-first century and for years to come, we need to be open-minded enough to be able to discuss these differences in the same manner as the elders of Cowessess who appear in Innis's work.

I highly recommend *Elder Brother and the Law of the People* for anyone interested in learning about our First Nations worldviews in a more holistic manner instead of a fragmented one. In my opinion, Innis has presented these concepts not as dualities, but as points on a continuum. For those wishing to pursue further research, Innis's bibliography makes an excellent starting point. As Innis has shown, when we wish to develop credible information about First Nations communities, we will need, first, to build a very good personal relationship with those communities.

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