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Mississauga Portraits: Ojibwe Voices from Nineteenth-Century Canada. By Donald B. Smith. Balancing Two Worlds: Jean-Baptiste Assiginack and the Odawa Nation, 1768-1866. By Cecil O. King.

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Mississauga Portraits: Ojibwe Voices from Nineteenth-Century Canada. By Donald B. Smith. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013. 496 pages. \$85.00 cloth; \$37.95 paper.

Balancing Two Worlds: Jean-Baptiste Assiginack and the Odawa Nation, 1768–1866. By Cecil O. King. Saskatoon: Saskatoon Fastprint, 2013. 329 pages. cathyandcecil@sasktel.net.

Mississauga Portraits and *Balancing Two Worlds* are historical studies of the unprecedented social, political, economic, and spiritual transformation that characterized the lives of the Anishinaabeg throughout the nineteenth century, specifically the Mississauga and Odawa nations. Taking up similar tensions and themes of cultural change, both texts prominently feature interrelated processes of missionization: the conversion from an economic mode of production involving hunting, gathering, and non-sedentary agricultural/aquaculture to a permanent or near-permanent agrarian economy; the transition from a population that aggregates and disperses seasonally with the annual economic round to a population that is settled permanently or near-permanently; the influx of settlers, Anishinaabe dispossession and relocation, and racist British policy and land tenure law; the questions of linguistic competency, the power of language, and the role of the translator as cultural intermediary; and, above all, the exercise of individual agency throughout all these forms of change in the midst of a shifting universe.

The latter is a critical feature of both texts. Each undertakes its historical exploration using the same methodological device: individual Anishinaabe are offered as lenses through which the reader might understand the local context for change, the processes of change and how power worked through them, and finally, the individual, embodied, and often ambiguous experience of cultural upheaval as British and American imperialisms expanded across Turtle Island.

The title of *Mississauga Portraits* invokes this approach. In this follow-up volume to his highly regarded *Sacred Feathers* (1987), Smith revisits Peter Jones and explores how he and seven other Mississauga individuals experienced similar changes at similar times, but often responded in different ways. In a lesson as valuable today as it was in the nineteenth century, the author's approach emphasizes the significant internal differentiation amongst members as indigenous communities respond to colonial pressures. *Mississauga Portraits* offers an unprecedented opportunity to come to know individual Anishinaabeg of southern Ontario whose triumphs and exertions shaped their communities and Canada's colonial history. George Copway, in particular, seems to jump right off the page as Smith renders this unbelievable personality, believable. Also of note is Smith's rich description of changing cultural landscapes and his

attention to the often incomplete, contingent, or even reversal of Mississauga commitments to particular forms of change.

Four decades in the making, Smith's book is an exemplar of careful textual study that effectively marshals tremendous detail. His meticulous archival research, his close reading of Mississauga individuals' own publications, unpublished notes, and original correspondence and his attention to Methodist publications all offer a tremendous amount of information. The force of Smith's textual research, however, comes at a cost. His great emphasis on the textual means he gives little attention to other sources. When possible, he provides English translations of Anishinaabe place names and personal names, and paintings feature prominently, yet he doesn't adequately attend to sources of knowledge which ought to be privileged from an emic Anishinaabe perspective. Such sources would include oral tradition—although this general omission perhaps can be forgiven since, as the author suggests, this isn't generally available until the twentieth century—but also Anishinaabe worldview itself, including its ontology, epistemology, and cosmology, in addition to linguistic evidence and our traditional stories, most importantly including our sacred *aadizokanag*. The result of these omissions is that while the broader historical movements of nineteenth-century Upper Canada/Canada West are described in wonderful detail, the portraits themselves are sometimes painted too thinly.

Smith never wavers in his message that the Mississauga actively shaped their own experience; none of the people he describes are presented as passive victims of history. But neither are we offered a rich sense of what was lost or given up, nor what reality existed prior to the massive change that forms the background to his study and hence the cultural resources which the Mississauga brought to meet it. If I am to take the metaphor of portraiture seriously, I want to see in the image presented the full complexity of agency that was exercised. That necessitates an articulation of Anishinaabe ways of being and knowing prior to colonial change—and there are wonderful examples of non-indigenous people doing this. It is only against such an understanding that readers can build a meaningful narrative out of a description of the processes of cultural change, however thick it may be. While Smith gestures towards such an understanding in chapter 2, his account isn't nearly robust enough. Moreover, he fails to use the worldview information his analysis provides, with the result that it sits disconnected from his project. Similarly, linguistic evidence might have opened a discussion about how various Mississauga came to accept concepts such as personal land tenure, the instrumentalization of nature, and the hierarchy explicit in Methodist doctrine and institutions. Where was agency here? A closer examination of our stories would have allowed Smith to turn less frequently to ethnographic work that took place primarily in Minnesota or other western Anishinaabeg communities, such as that of Frances Densmore,

Sister Bernard Coleman, M. Inez Hilger, and others. For example, Smith refers to the story of Nanabozhoo and the birds (42), but a much more local version was published in a collection of stories told by five elders of Rama First Nation, which is located an hour and a half's drive from Mississauga territory. Gracing the cover of *The Adventures of Nanabush: Ojibway Indian Stories*, is a picture of Nanabozhoo flying with the geese. One of the tellers, Sam Snake, even makes an appearance in *Mississauga Portraits*.

Directly connected to this absence of emic source material is the remarkably positive image painted of Methodism: an unfinished ninth portrait. Throughout the entire body of *Mississauga Portraits*, Methodism is only ever represented as a response to colonialism—a positive one. In particular, it is portrayed as a response to the three ills of alcohol-induced social ruin, settler-presence-induced economic ruin, and European-imported illnesses that produced catastrophic health and population ruin, but never portrayed as a form or cause of colonialism in its own right. Only in the conclusion does this shift. As a reader I was stunned by this oversimplification, which seemed to me to teeter on an apology, in the justificatory sense, for Methodist missionization. But then, I must confess I *am* one of the Rainy Lake Indians whom Smith four times describes as having resisted missionary purpose so fervently. Regardless, the point of central significance is that, had Smith more fully represented Anishinaabe sources in his work and then used them in his analysis, it would be hard to imagine how such a result could have occurred, for he would then have had to contend with the Anishinaabe cultural reality—not merely the dislocation and suffering existing when the Methodists arrived.

This is a methodological tension with which *Balancing Two Worlds* fares well. King's text can fairly be described as a work of ethnohistory, or even what George Sioui famously called an "Amerindian autohistory": King is an Odawa writing an Odawa history in an expressly Odawa way. His lens into Odawa history is the life of Jean-Baptiste Assiginack, born around 1768. Assiginack's story thus begins before Smith's narrative does. Like Smith, King effectively uses this community member's experience to explore Anishinaabe (Odawa) experience more generally, with the result that Assiginack is made available to us in a way he has never been before. Chapter 1 is an introduction to Odawa worldview and explores elements and institutions of Odawa legal, political, and social order, and spirituality, as King lives and understands it. He says, "These were the ways of my people. Assiginack's life and story emerge from the ways of our people. In order to understand Assiginack, an understanding of this background is necessary" (19). King generally applies an Odawa perspective with consistency, and in some areas it is a very strong component of his analysis. It appears, for instance, right on the surface of his discussions of war in chapter 6, and discursive power and hermeneutics in moments of formal

translation in chapter 7. King explains that both as a decorated warrior and as an orator and wampum-carrier trained from his youth, Assiginack is deeply enmeshed in cultural mediation in both contexts.

A wonderful strength of King's text is its constant attention to the complexity of the myriad forms of conflict Assiginack and his people experienced, with chapter 2 offering many good examples. No one is represented as strictly good or bad, although the Americans don't fare well—understandably. The author represents all communities as pursuing their own interests as best they are able. For the Odawa, such efforts were often made under conditions much less than ideal. King shows the internal dynamic of various constellations of power, too, explaining that conflicts arose not only between the Odawa and various hegemonic powers, but also between the Odawa and other Three Fires nations as well as between northern and southern Odawa. His analysis is nuanced, sophisticated, and certainly pragmatic.

I struggle most with King's citation practices in *Balancing Two Worlds*. Some of my concerns are minor: a few of the citations are incorrect (at least once for a very important speech), while some of the older texts heavily relied upon offer an approach to history that would likely be challenged today and lack King's own degree of nuance. All of that is manageable. One of the larger challenges is King's sometimes infrequent use of citations. In some instances it occurred to me King was simply taking more license than he ought. But in many instances I thought instead that King is speaking from a space within the Odawa oral tradition, but hasn't expressly stated so. This raises complex questions regarding scholarly standards of justification. Presumably the expectation for citation arises because of the reading public's interest in the verifiability of an author's claims. However, anyone having engaged with the oral traditions of Turtle Island peoples will know that access to these living repositories of knowledge is generally limited, and access is granted only when certain conditions have been satisfied. This being the case, it isn't clear that citing when, where, and from whom information was obtained will prove remotely helpful, in addition to often being impossible, given the temporal frame through which information may be shared.

This is hardly the forum to resolve this issue, but I wonder about the merits of a practice of disclosing one's relation to oral tradition in any work in which it will feature prominently. This would shift the locus of transparency and plausibility from individual speech acts to the speaker him- or herself, and thus would offer a different form of accountability. Another approach, perhaps better suited for "Amerindian autohistory" than for ethnohistory more generally, might be to invoke an indigenous conception of truth—in the case of the Anishinaabeg, *debwewin*—as informative of the appropriate standards against which a text should be read.

Finally, in addition to enriching our understanding of Odawa history, King's burning mission in *Balancing Two Worlds* is to clean off the sullied name "Assiginack." King wants to challenge the prevailing Odawa conception of Assiginack as traitor, to look more deeply at how Assiginack acted, under what conditions, and for whose interests. King performs admirably in this task right up to the end. However, the end presents the greatest challenge. In the final chapter, Assiginack's position seems less complicated and now dogmatically rather than justifiably loyal to Britain. The interests motivating his continued loyalty in the face of a history of betrayal and the general will of his community go unexplained. I struggled to understand this. If the evidentiary record doesn't allow for a clear sense of Assiginack's motivations, this would not be devastating to me; by this point King had convinced me that he has both the goods and the gravitas to make the imaginative leap that exists in all rigorously told narratives, even if only implicitly. I was disappointed that he didn't share.

Both *Mississauga Portraits* and *Balancing Two Worlds* excel in particular, but different, modes of research and of writing. Both significantly enriched my understanding and are very welcome additions to my library. Yet commensurate with their differing approaches are important tradeoffs. How useful any particular reader finds either text will likely be a function of his or her disciplinary and methodological expectations.

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Oklahoma's Indian New Deal. By Jon S. Blackman. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013. 236 pages. \$24.95 paper; \$24.95 e-book.

Oklahoma is Native America. So say our vehicle license plates, attractively adorned as they are with a representation of Allan Houser's "Sacred Rain Arrow;" and so say the thirty-nine federally recognized tribes residing within the state's boundaries and the increasing political, economic, and cultural potency that has followed articulations of tribal sovereignty over the past two generations. Cherokees operate the Hard Rock Casino just outside Tulsa; Creeks manage multiple enterprises that promise to transform recreation along the Arkansas River; and Chickasaws educate Oklahomans on tribal history and culture via a series of impressively produced television advertisements. Tribes across the state host a nearly unbroken series of dances and festivals. But Indian country in Oklahoma also defies stereotypes. Cultural observers sometimes claim that Native people are everywhere, and nowhere, all at once. Such is the peculiar alchemy that is Oklahoma.