

sense of animism that the editors and organizers of this conference find in northern beliefs.

The other chapters contribute rich comparative material to support this very broad idea. Chapter 13, by the famous Hungarian ethnologist Hoppal, provides perhaps the best history of the animism concept in both the British and the Russian traditions (this chapter should really be read first). Excellent ethnographies of contemporary ritual practice in Siberia among Sakhas (Yamada) and Khanti (Pentikainen) go far in substantiating this “feel of oneness” in both classic shamanist and non-Ainu contexts. The very fine set of chapters from some of the top anthropologists in North America take the concept in a somewhat different direction. Ridington stresses the power of “transformative experiences” to help living people achieve an understanding of their world through narrative. This pragmatic approach to what has been presented as a very abstract term (indeed an “-ism” in Ridington’s view) is further developed in two beautiful chapters by Smith and Sharp on Chipewyan understandings of meaning in the world. The chapters by Harvey Feit, Ann Fienup-Riordan, and Sergei Arutiunov deserve special commendation for providing two very powerful historical examples of ritual specialization in action. Feit presents and analyzes two rare transcripts of Cree shaking-tent ceremonies. Fienup-Riordan discusses the power of the image of the human hand in turn-of-the-century Yup’ik and Inuit ritual. Arutiunov provides an interesting account and analysis of the discovery of a transformative Yup’ik sculpture from the Chukotka.

Like the first volume in the set, this edited collection has a number of chapters performing the role of exceptions to the rule. The chapters in Part 4 on Pygmy and Papuan ritual do little more than verify the idea of “original oneness” in other non-northern cultures. However the compact set of chapters by Mongolians (Suyuge, Nacunbuhe) and scholars of Mongolia (Zhukovskaya, Konagaya) do much to emphasize that transformative experiences are not merely a circumpolar phenomenon. As Juha Pentikainen correctly points out, there may be a *northern* set of symbols common to rituals of this type, but they are far from limited to the polar realm. To continue to use the term “circumpolar” is in fact to imply that these rituals are linked by some process of diffusion through proximity, rather than emanating from one’s direct experience in the world around (which in the case of the North is very similar ecologically). Hoppal’s seamless analysis of Mongolian and Arctic material tends to reinforce the notion that there is much more to this ritual complex than its polar proximity.

Its rich material and fine analysis recommend this book highly to students of ritual and indeed spirituality in the North. It offers a rich collection of insights on a phenomenon that has driven anthropological writing on the North since the 19th century. Further, there is plenty in this volume which is new—the conference from which it springs is one of the sole forums where thinkers long divided from each other can come together to explore together the idea of “oneness through experience.”

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SACRED LANDS: ABORIGINAL WORLD VIEWS, CLAIMS AND CONFLICTS. Edited by JILL OAKES, RICK RIEWE, KATHI KINEW and ELAINE MALONEY. Canadian Circumpolar Institute Occasional Publication Series No. 32. Edmonton: Canadian Circumpolar Institute Press and University of Manitoba Department of Native Studies, 1998. ISBN 1-896445-07-1. 337 p., maps, b&w illus. Softbound. Cdn\$28.00.

This unique volume presents diverse viewpoints on ways to understand the importance of land for aboriginal peoples and, more practically, appropriate ways to protect aboriginal lands. These well-edited proceedings of the International Sacred Lands Conference, held at the University of Manitoba in October 1996, contain no less than 36 chapters, authored by 41 individuals. They provide accounts from a variety of settings: special emphasis is given to the Manitoba First Nations and to the Canadian Arctic, but six chapters offer comparative accounts from Sweden, New Zealand, and the United States. Approximately one half of the contributions were authored or co-authored by First Nations politicians and scholars of First Nations ancestry.

It is clear that the editors strove hard to include the greatest number of contributions from participants at the conference and yet keep the book a manageable size. Ordinarily this is a recipe for disaster, but this is no ordinary collection. Although some of the more philosophical and contextualized contributions seem clipped, on the whole each chapter not only brings into focus one aspect of treasuring and protecting sacred lands, but also gives the reader a rich bibliography of references drawn from ethnography, history, law, and political science. One might say that this book represents a microcosm of contemporary Canadian debates on the contradictions implicit in state and community tenure over space.

The volume is somewhat arbitrarily divided into seven subsections, which roughly distinguish more theoretical contributions from in-depth case studies: (1) Defining Sacred Landscapes; (2) Treaty Rights and Sacred Lands; (3) Philosophy of Sacred Land; (4) Loss of Sacred Lands: Flooding and Fisheries; (5) Protection, Reclaiming, and

Development of Sacred Sites; (6) Legal Strategies for Protection; and (7) Claims, Conflicts, and Resolutions. The most clearly distinguished parts of the book are section 4, which documents interesting historical material regarding the flooding of lands in southern Manitoba, and the final two sections (6 and 7), which focus on legal strategies and the severe colonial contradictions of legally arbitrated land claims. The chapters in other sections tend to approach the topic of sacredness from a variety of intersecting angles. Among the more unexpected approaches are those of Kulchyski, Nelson, Hart et al., and Cummings, who question whether the steel-and-concrete structures that enclose state-regulated “sacred spaces” do not in fact desecrate them. They propose alternative ways to keep special sites alive through community participation. Coyle, Pomedli, and Korsmo write somewhat controversially of the way land-claim negotiations might be structured sensitively, to promote healing rather than divisions in aboriginal communities. A large number of contributions examine the difficulty of using archaeological categorization to ratify (or dismiss) sites as worthy of historical protection. The chapters by Fitzgerald et al., Swan, and Andrews et al. on this theme are particularly evocative and detailed. Finally, a couple of well-thought out and broadly based philosophical pieces nicely frame the question of whether individual liberal rights can represent the meanings implicit in aboriginal landscapes at all (Turner, Correia, Barsh, Cummins et al., Little Bear). These chapters not only look at the difficulty that legal paradigms of tenure have in capturing relational forms of tenure but also refer to larger models of perception drawn from diverse areas, such as sociological discussions of community and linguistics. The contributions of Cant, Swan, Cummings, Nepinak et al., Heber, and Holzkamm et al., among others, give well-documented, practical examples of local struggles to protect specific sites. The chapters by well-known First Nation scholars and activists Ward Churchill, Leroy Little Bear, and Russel Lawrence Barsh should give the book an international profile.

One of the primary debates in the book on the meaning of “sacred” raises some questions as to the appropriateness of the title *Sacred Lands*. Several contributors (most significantly, Kulchyski, Little Bear, and Bobiwash) express caution about use of the word “sacred”—not so much because it evokes narrowing images from the Christian tradition, but because it leads us to imagine landscapes as being fractured into a small number of special places. Most contributors use the term “sacred” as a bridging concept, which allows them to lead the reader into broader discussions of “living spaces,” “people belonging to spaces,” and so on. The opening chapter by Vandebroek (the closing speech at the conference) speaks evocatively of the sense of balance that Crees draw from the landscape; however, a more formal preface from the editors or conference organizers to map out the possibilities and limitations of the term “sacred” might have been useful, especially to students. It is a small (but by no means distracting) irony

that with so many excellent contributions on the ambiguous nature of legal, archaeological, and political classification, the collection itself is enclosed by a term with contradictory associations.

The book is extremely well edited on a technical level and features several helpful pictures and maps (but no index). It will serve as an excellent resource for those who want an introduction to First Nations politics and identity in Canada. The lists of references will guide those who would like to probe these issues further. I recommend this collection highly, both to undergraduate students and to researchers of these complex issues.

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