

The analysis of Indian-Settler relations in *The Native Game* starts out from the boundary that symbolically maintains distinctiveness between the two groups. However, unlike Barth and other writers on ethnic identity whose focus becomes the boundary itself, I choose to go behind the scenes of inter-group communication and focus on the way in which the members within one group manage their identity. Indians — the group with whom and against whom Settlers construct their identity — remain a “black box,” invisible except in the ways Settlers talk about them. Contradictory statements about Indians become understandable when the whole range of interrelated perceptions which the Settlers hold about their neighbours becomes apparent and are used in maintaining Settler distinctiveness. In stepping back from, or, rather, looking *in* from, Barth’s symbolic boundary, I immerse myself in the many perceptual worlds of the Settlers. And I do this because I think it is important to know something about the ways in which people appreciate ethnic difference.

In sum, I do not think that cultures can be studied at a “macro level.” My analysis might call upon “macro level” developments to shed light on “micro level” events, but my interest is with a culture as it is constructed among the people who live it. I contend that, from a “macro level,” a culture cannot be seen.

Frideres suggests, further, that I should have gone into the field armed with a model to test, that I should have applied the model more rigorously and come up with a more thorough application. But this was never my intent. I intended to immerse myself in Settler culture and I intended to have the analysis grow out of the field work. Hence, I allowed the experience of the field work and what I discovered there to suggest a model.

In methodology, aims and focus, I do not go the “right” way for Frideres and he is disappointed: whereas I focus upon the everyday interactions that go towards the maintenance of an ethnic identity, it seems Frideres would prefer me to have addressed the problems of class difference and the imbalance of power, something which is altogether different. I certainly do not suggest that my findings are applicable to every northern community or that they provide solutions to problems inherent in multicultural societies, but I still see value in looking specifically at an instance in time and space for an appreciation of the complexities of culture. I still value intensive *in situ* field work as a means of investigation and as a source of inspiration for analysis.

Perhaps the more tangible objections generated by Frideres’s reading of *The Native Game* spring from deep-seated differences between sociology and anthropology. He is criticizing anthropological aims and methods in what is essentially an anthropological, ethnographic study of a particular culture. But I do not think that choosing one set of field work techniques or one type of analysis over others should exclude the necessity of others to exist. The social sciences are broader than Frideres’s criticisms would allow us to believe. Indeed, epistemological and methodological pluralism is an important source of their vitality; and one set of preferences should not negate the freedom of others to interpret their fields of study in ways they see fit.

The crux of Frideres’s criticism of *The Native Game* is not one of the content of the book, then, but one of the relevance of one type of research and analysis as opposed to another. The logic of *The Native Game* is, essentially, a grounded ethnography. I am an anthropologist, and my methodology is that of ethnographic field work. Ethnography as both a methodology and a form of interpretive analysis is close to a century old; it is a tried, tested and still very vibrant methodology for data collection (for recent appraisals see Clifford, 1988; Clifford and Marcus, 1986; Marcus and Fischer, 1986). It is the key methodology of social anthropology because it allows for the observation of and participation in the everyday lives of people in the culture being studied. Frideres was hoping to find an altogether different study, a different book.

In the end it is difficult to counter Frideres’s criticisms, therefore, because his analytic inclinations are so vastly removed from my own. *The Native Game* attempts to understand the maintenance of an ethnic identity by examining everyday, ordinary actions and conversations among people. The ideas for analysis grew out of involvement in, and observation of, a community at close range. As Wittgenstein put it: “In order to see more clearly...we must focus on the details of what goes on; must look at them *from close to*” (Wittgenstein, 1978:20).

Admittedly, I had some guiding questions and hypotheses when I entered the field — and these were in any case based upon ten years’ familiarity with the community — but I allowed my interests and observations to be guided by what happened while I was there. I suggest one of many possible analyses of what I found and what I learned. And I believe in many different interpretations: no one single interpretation can possibly convey all there is to say about one culture, one community or one period in time. There is no such meaningful reality as the town of North West River: *the community is many things to many people*. All there is, in this instance, is my analysis — neither partial nor complete, neither encompassing nor definitive, neither insignificant nor entirely without value. *The Native Game* is one comment upon culture, ethnic-

ity and identity, one I enjoyed thinking with, and however small, it is nevertheless a contribution to the ongoing conversation that constitutes the world in which we all live.

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE FORT CHIPEWYAN AND FORT VERMILION BICENTENNIAL CONFERENCE. Edited by PATRICIA A. McCORMACK and R. GEOFFREY IRONSIDE. Edmonton: Boreal Institute for Northern Studies, 1990. 319 p., maps, illus., bibs. accompanying some papers. Price not indicated.

The Fort Chipewyan and Fort Vermilion Bicentennial Conference brought together a large number of people who shared a common interest: the history and heritage of the communities of Fort Chipewyan and Fort Vermilion. The conference that celebrated the bicentennial of these two communities of Alberta’s far north was an ambitious one. The format was an innovative one, bringing together not only academics and “experts,” as is the case with most such conferences, but many residents of both communities who shared their personal histories and viewpoints. In fact each session was designed to include a resident of the community, a business or government person, and a scholar, ensuring a wide range of perspectives on each thematic topic.

The conference’s goals were equally ambitious, as outlined by conference organizer R. Geoffrey Ironside (p.6).

First of all, we hope it will provide greater understanding between people of different backgrounds and different experiences, a greater understanding about life in small, remote communities in Alberta and Canada and how it is necessary to listen to what the “north wind” is saying.... Secondly, we want to provide an expansion of knowledge about the histories, the economies, the geographies and the sociologies of these communities and regions about which so much is still unsearched and unpublished.

Do the proceedings succeed in achieving these goals — that is, in providing a greater understanding of life in the communities of Fort Vermilion and Fort Chipewyan and in providing an expansion of more technical knowledge about the communities?

In order to answer the first question, it is necessary to consider how well the oral presentations of community residents have been translated to the written medium. Not having attended the conference, the reviewer must depend only upon the written proceedings. While the voices of local residents provide a welcome contrast to the more academic presentations, much of the power of these voices has no doubt been lost in the transition to the written word. Furthermore, it

seems clear that the conference environment is not the most congenial for these sorts of presentations. The conference was held in Edmonton, hundreds of kilometres distant from the communities of Fort Vermilion and Fort Chipewyan. This urban setting no doubt resulted in less relaxed and full presentations from local residents, particularly native elders. This is clear when comparing the interview material collected by Patrick Moore, for example, in the homes of such elders with their presentations during the conference.

These criticisms, however, are relatively minor ones. In the final analysis, the conference organizers — and proceedings editors — must be applauded for including local residents. Their voices provide a fresh perspective often lacking at such conferences. As Dr. Milton Freeman pointed out during his closing remarks, “The format of the meetings, with community residents speaking about their past achievements and their future hopes, has really contributed to the sense of reality, something that is missing from many meetings when researchers get together to discuss their ideas rather than realities” (p. 311).

In effect, giving local residents the opportunity to share their stories allows them to retake ownership of their own history. Through their direct involvement, they shape the historical record by selecting the material and information they choose to share with those attending the conference and those who will read the proceedings. Indeed, maintaining control over local government, local economic decisions, and the preservation of local history was a common theme raised by many local residents in their presentations. As Fred Didzena said, when speaking about the experiences of the Dene Th’a Band, “We have seen many ideas but really only one answer. The Dene Th’a must again have the power to make decisions for themselves” (p. 160).

For some local residents, this clearly includes the power to preserve oral history for future generations. As Fort Chipewyan resident Elsie Yanik said, “I hope that, as one of our elders mentioned, this is not a lost history. I hope that these stories are recorded and kept because history is going down and being wasted” (p. 265). Dr. McCormack shared a similar view at the end of the conference, hoping that it would inspire “the people of Fort Chipewyan to hold their own conferences and write their own histories, both to regain the local control which many feel they have lost over this most critical aspect of their communities and to record for their descendants the stories of their lives” (p. 308).

The choice to include local residents in the conference and record their words in the proceedings sends a powerful signal to northern communities: that the value of their knowledge and traditions is not only respected but worth sharing and worth preserving. The logistics of ensuring that a range of voices is heard in such conferences can be daunting, however, as has been seen in other jurisdictions. In the Yukon, for example, the Yukon Historical and Museums Association has been including local residents and elders in heritage conferences for ten years. Organizing such events has proved to be time consuming, but the rewards have more than made up for the hours spent.

Not only does such an approach recognize the value of the traditions and knowledge held by local residents, it also personalizes what can be an impersonal and academic event. As Father Casterman said in one presentation, “Fort Chipewyan is a real community. What I mean by this is that in the community everyone is recognized and dealt with as a person.... In Fort Chipewyan, everybody knows the persons that we are” (p. 232). While time constraints and unfamiliar surroundings might dampen some of this personal touch, if it offers the reader only a glimpse of the personal stories and the “real” communities of Fort Chipewyan and Fort Vermilion it has been worthwhile. As Dr. Ironside said at the beginning of the conference, “geographical locations only become places once they are stamped with the life experiences of people who live there...” (p. 6).

What about the second goal of the conference and proceedings, the goal of expanding knowledge about northern Alberta? If a reader is simply looking for more information about Fort Vermilion and Fort Chipewyan, he or she need look no farther. The proceedings contain information on everything from archaeological sites in the region to

the amount of grain produced in the Fort Vermilion district to the market potential of the granite deposits found near Fort Chipewyan. The geography, biology, economy, anthropology, and history of northern Alberta are described here in voluminous detail.

Much of this information is sure to be new and interesting, even to a long-time resident. (Indeed, I lived in the Fort Vermilion area for four years and return there often, yet I found much new information and research that I was unaware of before.) This reviewer found the presentations on the fur trade, the settling of the Fort Vermilion district, the tea dance religion in northern Alberta, and the history of the mission school in Fort Chipewyan particularly interesting. The preliminary research outlined by Ferguson, Carney, Moore, and Wilson will no doubt result in original and important contributions to the study of the North.

This wealth of information can be overwhelming, however, and does not necessarily result in a coherent picture of the region. The proceedings could have benefited by including brief introductory essays for those readers who are not familiar with this part of northern Alberta. The publication would also benefit from the addition of more maps and illustrations.

In summary, I recommend this publication to local residents, government and industry decision makers who deal with the region, researchers with specialized interests in the region, Albertans who wish to know more about Fort Chipewyan and Fort Vermilion, and anyone with an interest in preserving local history and oral traditions. It will be a particularly valuable resource for local libraries, schools, and historical societies as one of the few comprehensive publications on this part of Alberta. The average reader, however, might find the publication slow going at times and may find the publication more useful as a reference source.

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ALEUT TALES AND NARRATIVES. Collected 1909-1910 by WALDEMAR JOCHELSON. Edited by KNUT BERGLAND and MOSES L. DIRKS. Fairbanks: Alaska Native Language Center, University of Alaska Fairbanks, 1990. xvii + 715 p., black and white illus., maps, bib., appendices. Softbound. US\$25.00.

This massive accounting of many years of folklore work by several people is an archival accomplishment. Original materials in two nations' repositories (Russian and American), three languages (Russian, English, and Aleut), recorders, translators, linguists, editors, and others were involved periodically through 80 years, quite a language and literature rescue operation.

Because the Aleut people and their culture were partly erased by Russian fur traders in the second half of the 18th century and first quarter of the 19th, we have not had much evidence of the unaffected expressive forms in Aleut culture. Pre-literate folktales cannot be excavated by archaeologists. Although Jochelson's work in the Aleutian Islands came nearly a century after the first comprehensive ethnographic work (by the remarkable Ioann Veniaminov), nevertheless it occurred when the Islands were still relatively isolated. None of Jochelson's five publications in Russian and two in English on this work, appearing 1912 to 1933, is long, the longest one (1925) being a report of his archaeological work. Apparently because Franz Boas was dissatisfied with the linguistics of the recorded tales and narratives, he did not publish the manuscripts that Jochelson gave him, but Boas did get funding for his continued work when Jochelson lived in