

Stephen F. Feraca, *Wakinyan: Lakota Religion in the Twentieth Century*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998). xvii, 104 pp. cloth, \$25.00.

Julian Rice. *Before the Great Spirit: The Many Faces of Sioux Spirituality*. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998). xiii, 175pp., cloth \$45.00, paper \$22.50.

Each of these authors provides unique approaches and insights concerning Lakota ritual and belief. Julian Rice, a prolific writer on Lakota Literature, attempts to reconstruct the essence of Lakota religion before European contact while Feraca, who logged long periods of interaction with Lakota people on the Pine Ridge Reservation as a government employee and field worker, provides an intricate portrait of Lakota ritual during his tenure on the Pine Ridge reservation. They reach similar basic understandings of Lakota religious practice: the importance of the acquisition of spiritual power, the primacy of kinship, the democratic and charismatic nature of individual religious practice that is balanced by communal responsibilities, and the heterogeneity of Lakota belief and practice itself.

Rice draws on a wide variety of historical, literary, and narrative texts to recover what he believes to be the essence of Lakota belief before missionary contact. His stated goal is "...to try to help the Sioux people remember who they were and what they can be" (5). In this quest he critiques academic study of Lakota religion as well as New Age adoption of Lakota practices while providing an academic analysis of belief and maintaining the need for all to learn from the Lakota. He also decries the "contamination" of Lakota religion by Christian concepts, advocating for a purism that stands at odds with Feraca's observations of the easy interaction of the two belief systems. Rice works at his reconstruction by analyzing the function of trickster figures, the transforming roles of heroes and warriors, the significance of thunder beings and water monsters, the importance of symbols,

and the role of rituals, spirits and games in generating and channeling spiritual power. He holds that Lakota religion is ultimately about the here and now, contrasting this theology with his own impressions of Christianity. Stressing the heterogeneity of Lakota belief, Rice denounces the heterodoxy that he believes has crept into the scholarly study of Lakota belief. Ultimately Lakota spirituality, according to Rice, is about independence, competition, and irreverence. The author sees the role of the warrior as protecting that belief.

While Rice uses central symbols to reconstruct the original face of Lakota religion, Feraca considers near-contemporary rituals and ritual objects in presenting his portrait of Lakota religion. This work, essentially a revised republication of the author's 1963 *Wakinya: Contemporary Teton Dakota Religion*, presents a lively and engaging portrait of Lakota ritual life during the author's field experiences from 1954-1962. While this work was contemporary twenty-six years ago, the author uses footnotes, an essential part of this work, to bring his observations up to the present. Beginning with a basic history of the Lakota, the author then carefully examines a variety of Lakota rituals: Sun Dance, Vision Quest, Sweat Lodge, Yuwipi, Peyotism, and a number of healing ceremonies. The author combines scholarly research with vivid storytelling that brings to life his descriptions. Most admirable is his chapter on herbalism which focuses on the role of women in healing, a perspective quite unique for the time when the work was written. Although this edition has fewer photographs than the original publication, its redrawn illustrations and added bibliography are helpful.

Like Rice, Feraca recognizes the independence, creativity, and charismatic nature of Lakota ritual practice and yet does not sit easily with certain innovations. Feraca states in a footnote: "True yuwipi specialists are rare in the 1990s..." (90, n.4) and confesses misgivings in his conclusion as to the proper continuance of authentic Lakota religious life (83). While Feraca stresses that Lakota religion is dynamic, that past forms of ritual and belief can be, and in fact are, reintroduced and transformed by way of the dreams and visions of individual practitioners, neither he nor Rice suggest mechanisms to separate authentic versus spurious spiritual innovation. Both works give rise to an inter-

esting hermenutical dilemma: What bearing does the recovery and interpretation of past practices or the religious configuration of a specific time period have on contemporary religious practice and who has the right to make these recoveries and evaluations both from within and outside of the group? This is an important consideration for ethnic studies, and while neither work solves the issue, both certainly engage actively in the question and the process of discerning and perhaps defining religious essences.

Reviewed by: Raymond A. Bucko
Le Moyne College

Hoerder, Dirk. *Cultures in Contact: World Migrations in the Second Millennium* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002). 779 pp., \$85.00 cloth.

Cultures in Contact is an ambitious tome of the annotated world history of human mass migrations both within and between national boundaries. This book provides a glorious descriptive wealth of when, where, and to a lesser extent “why” mass migrations have occurred across the largest and most populous regions of the planet earth over the span of the past millennium. In this regard it may serve as a valued reference work for anyone curious about the “bigger picture” of migration flows; however, those seeking a simplistic theoretical synthesis that would account for the myriad patterns of human migrations over the past millennium will not be much gratified by Hoerder’s tome. As the author highlights in his introductory chapter, human migration flows may be either voluntary or coerced and in either case must be viewed in a socio-historically specific systems context.

Migration is here characterized as driven by a complex array of cultural, political, economic, demographic and ecological forces that converge at any one place and time in history to shape migration patterns across the globe. This fact does much to account for the great length and small font of this magnum opus. But make no mistake about it, *Cultures in Contact* is a noteworthy piece of scholarly writing summarizing as it does a millennium of intricate patterns of migratory flows. To assist the