

BOOK REVIEWS

GRETCHEN M. BATAILLE, DAVID M. GRADWOHL, and CHARLES L. P. SILET (Editors). *THE WORLDS BETWEEN TWO RIVERS: PERSPECTIVES ON AMERICAN INDIANS IN IOWA*. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1978, 148 pp., \$7.95.

The presentation of symposia papers in book form poses several editorial problems, the chief of which is maintaining a unity of focus between the various offerings. With one or two notable exceptions, the papers in this collection treat aspects of the Native-American experience within the boundaries of the present state of Iowa, but, unfortunately, that rubric is too broad to provide an organizing principle definite enough to hold the book together. The result is something of a mixed bag. Although each of the papers is presented as a "chapter" and some attempt at cross-reference between individual papers is made, it is necessary to approach each of the sections on its own terms.

Fred McTaggart's "American Indian Literature: Contexts for Understanding" is a useful account of the difficulties involved in studying Native-American literature from the perspective of the dominant culture, and his suggestion that Indian narratives might better be presented through the medium of animated film rather than straightforward prose is especially intriguing. Charles Silet's "The Image of the American Indian in Film" promises much more than it delivers, and his assumption that the Indian as portrayed in traditional American literature is without a voice is patently absurd in view of the interest American writers have taken in Indian rhetoric from the beginning. Edward Purcell's survey of negative stereotypes and misinformation in Iowa public school textbooks is a valuable reminder of the extent to which racism can be fostered, whether consciously or not, in the name of education. David Gradwohl's paper touches upon this same problem in part and proceeds to discuss the role of archaeology in correcting some recurring misconceptions about Iowa's prehistory.

"Mesquakie History--As We Know It," by Bertha Wasekuk, is an interesting attempt to synthesize tribal history from oral and written sources and, in its modest way, bears comparison with a work like Momaday's *Way to Rainy Mountain*. The remarkable collection of photographs entitled "The Red Earth People in 1905" provides a glimpse into the world of the Mesquakie around the turn of the century. These pictures are moving testimony to the resilience of a traditional society as it experiences transition yet resists total transformation. Donald Wanatee's study of the interchange between tribal and Euro-American systems of government, despite its tendency to oversimplify the complexities of tribal polity, helps explain the United States' failure to grasp the needs of tribal cultures for their own social order.

Essays by Reuben Snake, Owana McLester-Greenfield, Adeline Wanatee, Michael Husband and Gary Koerselman, Joseph Hraba, and Donald Graham explore the problems of assimilation, urban relocation, and Indian education from the Native-American perspective and constitute a more unified segment of the book than do the earlier selections. A selected bibliography on the Indian in Iowa, compiled by Gretchen Bataille, rounds out the volume.

The unevenness of *The Worlds Between Two Rivers* suggests something of the uncertainty of purpose that continues to plague American Indian Studies, or the "Indian biz," as an Osage friend of this writer refers to it. It is still unclear whether Native American Studies should be academic or activist in its final orientation, and thus far a productive balance between these two equally desirable ends has proven elusive. However, the discipline is young, and the amount of scholarship and debate it has already generated bodes well for its future. Meanwhile, *The Worlds Between Two Rivers* reflects the relative strengths and weaknesses of the discipline at this stage of its evolution.

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KAY GRABER (Editor). *SISTER TO THE SIOUX: THE MEMOIRS OF ELAINE GOODALE EASTMAN, 1885-91*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978, 175 pp., \$10.95.

Elaine Goodale Eastman was a white woman from the East who decided early in her life that her "mission" was to educate the Sioux Indians of the Dakotas. The memoirs, published in 1978, were written in the thirties from notes and diaries kept by the writer from 1885-1891. Thus, there are three distinct periods of time the contemporary reader must consider. By 1978 standards, Eastman is a sympathetic, if somewhat naive, young woman. Placing her within the context of the late 1900's, however, the reader finds that she was extraordinary in her compassion for the understanding of native life. One must accept as a given that Elaine Goodale, as a product of her times, believed first in educating, Christianizing, and Americanizing the Indians. Beyond this, however, she was not shy about criticizing the government as "indifferent or inefficient." She once wrote to a Congressman, "Perhaps on no subject does the average Congressman display a more whole-souled, confiding and self-gratulatory ignorance than upon the Indian question." Unlike most of those who accepted assignments in the outposts reluctantly, she went willingly and against the recommendations of those around her. Once there, she learned the Sioux dialect, participated in the daily life of "her people," and ministered to the physical as well as the spiritual and mental health of the children.