

what painful and disturbing experiences have motivated her to study law and work as a university teacher (45–46). A second strong point is her precise and critical examination of basic notions she applies in her analysis, such as “participation and exclusion,” “racism, anger and pain, intent, and discrimination” (35–36), and of concepts such as “education” (115). A third important feature is her perceptiveness, which seizes upon small and—at first sight—insignificant events to unveil the mechanisms of inescapable daily discrimination in and outside academia. In this respect the book will be of great interest to all who want to share a thoroughly reflective first-hand perspective by a female Canadian Native intellectual of today: “Whenever I write or speak I often complain that I feel like I am engaging in a long process of footnoting life” (32).

Patricia Monture-Angus does not stop at simply commenting upon reality: Her goal is to bring about change. Her understanding of the traditional Mohawk “Great Law of Peace” may not be based primarily upon historical evidence; however, she is no historian, but has been taught by the Elders. Her cultural struggles revolve around the right of representation: “The power to define is essential” (38). It is both against the idea of aggression as the basic assumption of Euro-Canadian law and of cigarette smuggling as a modern Mohawk warrior’s appropriate mode of subsistence that Monture-Angus portrays her own vision of Aboriginal justice: “Grandmother makes the rules; grandfather enforces them.” And as far as such concepts provide hope for Monture-Angus’s clientele, for Native prison inmates, for survivors of abuse and of residential schools, for recovering alcoholics, for unemployed youths, and for single parents, they gain a degree of “evidence” far beyond the historians’ considerations. On the other hand, Monture-Angus’s otherwise careful analyses of notions and concepts fail when she explains Aboriginal cultural persistence by referring to one of the most critical of all European concepts—the idea of a “natural order”: “Aboriginal people have maintained both a sense of community and culture that is related to the natural order” (227).

With respect to formal features there are some minor objections to the book, e.g., the extensive footnoting and the unnecessary and confusing mode of grouping the articles in subdivisions. Furthermore, I would have welcomed a publisher’s note about

the author and—as Monture-Angus addresses a wealth of legal decisions, key cases, law studies programs, and so on—a glossary.

Altogether it may be said that *Thunder in My Soul* is a challenging, controversial, up-to-date contribution to legal, feminist, and political debates—refreshing and thought-provoking because of the personal stance taken throughout the book. Beginners in Canadian Aboriginal law will find some suggestions for additional reading in the accompanying reference list.

Cora Bender

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O-kee-pa

Colin F. Taylor: *Catlin’s O-kee-pa. Mandan Culture and Ceremonial. The George Catlin O-kee-pa Manuscript in the British Museum*. Wyk auf Foehr 1996: Verlag für Amerikanistik. ISBN 3-89510-050-1. 174 pp, ills, notes, bibliography, index. DM 120.00/£50.00.

Since George Catlin described the O-kee-pa of the Mandan in his popular classic, *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs and Condition of the North American Indians* in 1841, our understanding of that ceremony and its chronicler has considerably deepened. Although Catlin devoted a large section of *Letters and Notes* to the O-kee-pa, he could not overstep European standards of morality by describing the overt sexuality which figured prominently in the ceremony. However, between 1864 and 1865 Catlin managed to disseminate the sexual and phallic imagery of the O-kee-pa in a set of eight illustrations accompanied by lengthy captions. Additionally, in 1865, he anonymously published a longer, unexpurgated O-kee-pa monograph, apparently without illustrations. Although the distribution of these two texts was largely limited to the smoker club set, they must have stirred considerable interest, for Catlin published an illustrated and expanded sequel, *O-kee-pa: A Religious Ceremony and Other Customs of the Mandan*, just two years later. In order to circulate this book among a wider audience, the descriptions of

sexuality were collated in a “folium reservatum” and inserted into a very small number of copies destined for “scientific men.” John Ewers included the “folium” in his centennial republication of this work. In his recent book on the O-kee-pa, Colin Taylor has marked the 200th anniversary of George Catlin’s birth by publishing the two forbidden texts, which are today preserved in the British Museum.

Taylor has devoted more than the first half of his abundantly illustrated German/English bilingual book to a scholarly discussion of the Catlin documents. He examines Mandan religion, history, and material culture first in a general way and then specifically in relation to the O-kee-pa. His study of material culture related to the ceremony is particularly significant, as it pulls together a wealth of information and images not readily available in the literature. Taylor then introduces the O-kee-pa documents by tracing their publication histories, including previously unpublished archival material. The documents themselves are printed in facsimile form and are followed up by a discussion which expands on each of the eight segments of Catlin’s illustrated document. In his epilogue Taylor traces the fate of the Mandan’s O-kee-pa ceremony and its sacred sites from the time of the devastating small pox epidemic soon after Catlin’s visit to modern times.

Taylor’s study underscores both the complexity and confusion which cloud our understanding of the O-kee-pa. No doubt the personal and cultural biases of its chroniclers have contributed to this lack of clarity. There are, for example, conflicting interpretations of the great flood which would have destroyed the Mandan if not for the intervention of a central character in the O-kee-pa known as Lone Man or First Man. He built the wooden enclosure protecting the Mandan from rising flood waters, which later came to be symbolized by the central shrine of the O-kee-pa. Four drums in the shape of turtles also played a significant role in the ceremony. According to Mandan oral history, it rained ten days for each turtle—forty days in all. Not surprisingly, Catlin was quick to equate the O-kee-pa with the biblical deluge. With reference to the shrine, he freely interchanged the terms “curb” and “ark,” thus confounding similarities between Mandan and European mythologies. Similarly, one of the main characters in the ceremony, called “evil one” or “devil” by Catlin and “foolish one” by

Bowers's Mandan informants, is equipped with a "colossal" wooden penis hanging to below the knees which becomes erect through the manipulation of his staff or wand when preparing to mount a Buffalo Dancer or female onlooker. The audience responds with a mixture of glee, hilarity, and dismay. The leader of the ceremony finally subdues him with Lone Man's powerful medicine pipe and in a weakened state he is attacked by the women, one of whom succeeds in tearing off his penis. This woman, swaddling the giant penis like a child in her arms, is now empowered for a period of one year to bring bountiful numbers of buffalo to the Mandan or, if she pleases, keep them away. Thus, not unlike the Siouan trickster who sometimes kept his penis in a box, the protagonist is paradoxical and more aptly designated "foolish one." On the other hand, "evil one" and "devil" probably draw an inappropriate parallel to European lore.

Taylor's study is very instructive in gauging the boundary between artistic license and fidelity to field observation in Catlin's pictorial works. Just as Catlin's pictures almost consistently depict the painted clothing and tipis of his Indian subjects inaccurately, he seems to have taken considerable license in the body painting and accouterments of the Buffalo Dancers in the O-kee-pa document. His dancers display concentric circles at the joints, face over the stomach with belly button serving as mouth, wide lengthwise stripes on the limbs, and waistcoat-like outline on the chest. In contrast, two drawings of a Buffalo Dancer commissioned from a Mandan in 1834 by Maximilian and a photograph of a Hidatsa wearing a Buffalo Dancer's costume taken by Curtis around 1908, show the same painted waistcoat effect and stripes along the limbs; however, unlike Catlin's version, there are three pronounced transverse stripes on the chest and the joint rings are absent. Dancers from all the above sources wear a buffalo hide on the upper body, but only Catlin's version has horns on the head. The Mandan draftsman shows a single horn on the dancer's back, a feature corroborated by several historical descriptions. The photograph and Mandan's drawing indicate that the dancer wore a fringed kilt and his hands hooked into the corners of the buffalo hide. In contrast, Catlin's dancer does not wear a kilt, nor does he bear the single horn and his hands do not anchor the hide but hold a staff and a rattle

respectively. Catlin is thought to have made only four *in situ* paintings when he viewed the O-kee-pa in 1832 and these provided the basis for about 14 of the 21 later O-kee-pa illustrations. These later versions tend to be considerably more detailed. For example, unlike the 1832 prototype, the later Buffalo Dancers hold rattles, wear narrower hides which expose the arms, and have circles painted around the joints. Although he also added joint rings and faces over the bellies in later depictions of the O-kee-pa sponsor and Foolish Man, we should not be too quick to accuse Catlin of over-embellishment for Maximilian too noted circles at the joints and a sun painted on the stomach of Foolish Man. Under these circumstances we can appreciate the difficulty in tracing the interplay between artistic license and field observation in Catlin's paintings of the O-kee-pa.

As indicated earlier, Catlin's deviations from field observation were not simply a matter of aesthetics, but were substantially influenced by the nature of his audience. In this regard, it is interesting to view the variations in Catlin's O-kee-pa paintings in light of his highly improbable "facsimile" of a painted robe in his "Souvenir Unique" folio in the New York City Library and its altered appearance in a one-of-a-kind book on smoking pipes commissioned by a private collector and presently in the British Museum. The former "facsimile" shows paired warriors engaged in combat, a typical subject in pictorial painting, except that all the victors have erect penises. Catlin replicated the same robe in the smoking book, adding to the mouth of each priapic victor a smoking pipe which evidently served to further magnify his prowess. No doubt Catlin's inspiration partly derived from observation, for a considerable number of early Plains Indian hide paintings east of Fort Union display warriors with erect penises. However, the addition of pipes must surely have been in direct response to the nature of the commission. Similarly, the particular circumstances under which Catlin produced the British Museum documents call for careful study.

Taylor has significantly advanced our knowledge in this regard, however, his work is not without shortcomings. In failing to physically describe Catlin's O-kee-pa illustrations in the British Museum, the reader is left unclear whether they are original drawings or prints of some kind. Although Taylor discovered an archival

cache holding several printed sets of captions for the O-kee-pa illustrations, he did not entertain the possibility that Catlin may have intended to print a limited-edition illustrated O-kee-pa folio. It is perhaps unfortunate that Taylor only cited and did not reprint Catlin's first article on the O-kee-pa, published in the *New York Spectator* in 1832, because it has been republished just once, and only in German translation, by Maximilian in 1841. He is somewhat misleading in describing the pipes in figures 44 and 45 as one and the same. Figure 41 showing the turtle drummers is not, as Taylor claims, reproduced from a sketch made by Catlin in 1832, but is a detail from an illustration in *Letters and Notes*. These few quibbles aside, Colin Taylor's book is a significant contribution to our understanding of the O-kee-pa ceremony of the Mandan and its greatest chronicler, George Catlin, and will no doubt stand as an important reference work on these very interesting subjects.

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Visions Revisited

Lee Irwin: *The Dream Seekers: Native American Visionary Traditions of the Great Plains*. Foreword by Vine Deloria, Jr. The Civilization of the American Indian Series 213. Norman, OK—London 1994: University of Oklahoma Press. ISBN 0-8061-2643-4. xii+306 pp, notes, bibliography, index. \$26.95 (cloth).

Irwin's book, released in August 1994, has been controversially received. While Jordan Paper (as quoted by the publisher) praised it as "a major breakthrough in religious studies" and "one of the best introductions to the religions of Native North Americans," it caused critical comment by others (cp., e.g., Calvillo 1995). Irwin presents a wealth of material, quoting from 350 recorded visions and vision-like experiences, and takes an unusual approach to understand these phenomena by the method of *epistemé*. If it were only for this attempt, *The Dream Seekers* deserves a closer look.

Having worked with the book in my own studies about contemporary