

be hoped that those messages echo and linger long after the conferences are over.

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Swift Runner by Colin A. Thomson. Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 1984. Pp. 114; *Indian Tribes of Alberta* by Hugh A. Dempsey. Calgary: Glenbow Museum, 1986. Pp. 100.

Windigo, the cannibal giant, is a phenomenon largely confined to Algonkian areas of northeastern and northcentral Canada, but with some spillover into the parklands that mediate between forest and plains. These Algonkians share with other Amerindians of the Canadian north an abhorrence of cannibalism, in marked contrast to such peoples as the Iroquoians south and east of the Great Lakes, the Mexica of Mexico and the Tupinambá of Brazil, all of whom belonged to the world-wide fraternity of those who elevated cannibalistic practices into ritual. In such societies there was nothing discernibly abnormal about those who ate their fellows. In the northern forests, however, the situation was quite otherwise. The cannibal giant may have been a mythic figure, but the psychosis which transformed ordinary human beings into windigos with uncontrollable appetites for human flesh was an all-too-real and much-feared occurrence. The social pattern of the northern Algonkians, with its belief in acting out dreams without consultation, and absence of alternatives to control such impulses as cannibalism, appear to have left the way open for this type of aberrant behaviour. But the phenomenon remains poorly understood.

Swift Runner was a Cree who turned into a windigo, and who was hanged on 16 August 1879 for eating his family and some near relatives, a total of nine individuals. The date is significant, because it was a time of stress as traditional lifestyles were losing their subsistence base, and tribesmen were being forced to give up their migratory habits and confine themselves to reserves. Hunger was not made easier to endure as a cost-conscious government enforced its work-for-rations rule in an attempt to expedite the transformation of hunters into farmers. Swift Runner reacted by becoming withdrawn, eventually turning on those closest to himself. Unlike many windigos, he gave no obvious sign of what happened either before or afterwards, except for being tormented by bad dreams and crying out in his sleep; it was fellow Amerindians who eventually became suspicious and took the matter to authorities. The case became a *cause célèbre* as both Amerindians and Euro-Canadians reacted with fascinated horror. However, it was not the first capital trial by jury in the west, as the author claims; Sir James Douglas, for one, had Amerindian malefactors tried by jury and hanged on the West Coast in 1853.

Thomson has assembled incidental and tangential data about the affair, and attempts to make the most of its more sensational aspects. He has also listed some other windigo cases, and provides an interesting map of known occurrences. But his treatment is inept, and he displays only a superficial knowledge of Cree lifeways, and little understanding of the phenomenon of windigo. The reader will not emerge any the wiser as to why Swift Runner reacted the way he did, or why this unritualized and socially uncontrolled form of cannibalism should be peculiar to northern Algonkians.

As a popular introduction to the native peoples of Alberta, *Indian Tribes of Alberta* has proved its usefulness since its original publication in 1978. Written in an easy, conversational style, it encapsulates enough of each tribe's story to satisfy the general reader at the same time as it helps students to get started. Both groups will welcome this revised and expanded edition.

The ten tribes of the original edition have been augmented by the inclusion of the Ojibwa, Iroquois, Gros Ventres, and a final section dealing with Shoshoni, Kootenay, and Crow. Only the first two of the additional groups have current representation in the province; the others are now based in the United States and British Columbia. Some individuals among them still maintain personal ties with Alberta, recalling the time when demographic distributions were more fluid than they are today.

The original text has been left largely intact (apart from minor changes in presentation), with some additions to the sections on the Blackfoot, Peigan and Sarcee; the most extensive was to update the introduction. Interestingly enough, in the first edition, section headings for the Blackfoot Confederation, here called "Nation," listed only the Blackfoot as a tribe; the other members, the Blood, Peigan and Sarcee, were simply "Indians," as were peoples outside the alliance. The new edition has changed this, to list all four members of the confederation as "tribes," retaining the "Indian" appellation for the others. No explanation is given for this classification. A useful addition is a section at the end of the volume listing the sources cited.

In contrast to the text, the illustrations have been heavily revised and augmented. The purpose behind this is not entirely clear, as the new choices, while different, are not always an improvement, and some good material has been dropped. One picture that has made it through both editions, of the interior of a Woodland Cree lodge in 1820 (first edition, p. 60; second edition, p. 58), does not concern Alberta. The artist, Lieutenant Robert Hood, was with the first Franklin Expedition (1819-22), when he visited and sketched the lodge while on a detour through Saskatchewan's Pasquia Hills near the Manitoba border.

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