

Sylvia VanKirk's essay documents the active role played by women in the fur trade frontier. Clarence Bolt shows how the Port Simpson Tsimshian were far from passive pawns in the mission setting and in their conversion to Christianity.

Other articles focus more on White behaviour toward Natives. Robin Fisher looks at the attitudes of two groups, fur traders and settlers, toward the Natives of coastal and interior British Columbia. Both John Tobias and Kenneth Coates examine local implementation of government Native policy, Tobias documenting the non-benevolent policy toward the Plains Cree (1879-1885) and Coates, the non-assimilationist policy toward Yukon Indians (1894-1950).

The final three papers deal with contemporary themes, albeit themes with historical roots. Hugh Brody's eloquent prose is excerpted from his *Maps and Dreams* (Douglas & McIntyre, 1981). Noel Dyck discusses non-Native attitudes toward Natives on the Prairies and the response of one Cree in an attempt to alter those attitudes. Finally, the views of George Manuel and Michael Posluns on the Natives as part of the "Fourth World" are presented.

The readability and forcefulness of the articles reflect well upon today's scholarship on Native Canadian history. One might disagree with the ordering of the chapters or regret that more maps were not included, but one must conclude that the papers are worth reading. While not quarreling with the editors' choices, it is worth mentioning that other scholars working in the area of Native history are producing work of similar high quality. Trigger's survey well documents the sins of omission and commission of the past. This book, and the work of many others over the past two decades, is doing much to rectify errors previously made in the name of history.

Rules, Decisions, and Inequality in Egalitarian Societies

Edited by James G. Flanagan and Steve Rayner

Aldershot, England: Avebury, 1988. x + 190 pp. U.S. \$44.95 (cloth)

Reviewer: Jerome Rousseau
McGill University

The eight articles in this book are linked by two main premises: (a) the contrast between egalitarian and inegalitarian societies is analytically invalid, so we must focus on specific instances of equality (and inequality) in each society; and (b) equality is not a given but rather requires rules in order to persist, and the rules which generate equality may be as complex as those which maintain inequality. These papers, which evolved from a session of an American Anthropological Association meeting, also share a broad framework that distinguishes equality of treatment from equality of characteristics. "Equality of characteristics focuses attention on those social attributes with respect to which men [*sic*] are to be considered equal. Normative statements about equality invariably concern treatment" (Flanagan, p. 165). One can distinguish further between equality of opportunity (where everyone has equal chances to achieve, but inequalities develop when actors perform differently) and equality of outcome (where strategies guarantee that everyone ends up with the same resources and power).

Methodologically, one must agree that it is necessary to identify specific instances of equality and inequality rather than simply to label societies as egali-

tarian or inegalitarian. However, these elements ought also to be placed in a wider context. Unfortunately, such a broadened perspective is not developed here. It is also indeed true that the maintenance of equality requires rules, although the point is not new. Clastres made it in *La Société contre l'état: Recherches d'anthropologie politique* (de Minuit, 1974).

The articles in this volume can be divided into two broad categories: four deal with corporate groups, in capitalist societies, which foster some kind of equality. Three other papers describe aspects of small-scale, nonindustrialized societies. In the first category, Steve Rayner compares a Trotskyite organization to two "Green" alliances. He describes the rules needed to maintain equality in organizations and the costs entailed in insisting on equality. The papers on cooperatives show that it is indeed difficult to maintain equality within a capitalist context. David Greenwood's clear, well-argued and well-documented paper on the Basque industrial cooperatives of Mondragon shows that participants are willing to accept hierarchy and differentiation to achieve solidarity and productivity. Stuart Henry's more rambling paper suggests that the attitude to deviants in cooperatives is an important indication of a group's conceptualization of equality. Gerald Mars shows clearly how ideology, buttressed by the siege mentality of the Israeli state, serves to hide the development of a stable hierarchy allocating special privileges in the kibbutzim.

The papers on small-scale societies are Luther and Ursula Gerlach's on the Digo of Kenya, William Donner's on a Polynesian outlier, and James Flanagan's on the New Guinea Highlands fringe. All three societies show gender and age inequality. One of the societies traditionally had a contrast between ruling lineages and slaves, another distinguished between chiefly and commoner clans, and the third had a big-man system. However, the authors focus on mechanisms which foster equality.

None of the three papers — nor, for that matter, Flanagan and Rayner's introduction — adequately surveys the rich body of writings that exists on equality and inequality, such as the discussions about the domestic (i.e., "primitive communist") and lineage modes of production. Unfortunately, important Francophone work by Alain Testart is left out — *Les chasseurs-cueilleurs ou l'origine des inégalités* (Société d'Ethnographie, 1982) and the provocative *Le communisme primitif*, Vol. 1: *Economie et idéologie* (la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 1985). It is of course entirely valid for the authors to focus on mechanisms that foster equality, but the absence of a general theoretical framework creates the impression of an attempt to minimize the significance of inequality in the societies described. Setting aside age and gender inequality begs the question of the relationship between these and other forms of inequality. Traditionally, several anthropologists took the view that, as these were "natural" differences, they had little relevance to social inequality. However, the reverse is likely to be true: human societies have constructed other social inequality in part through the experience of age and gender inequality, and there is, of course, an extensive literature dealing with this issue.

The papers also pay little attention to the significance of colonialism. One example will suffice: the Digo have lost some forms of inequality, such as slavery; however, it may be an overstatement to say that "The Pax Britannica had promoted egalitarianism" (Gerlach and Gerlach, p. 117). Rather, it eliminated forms of inequality which ran counter to the colonial system or offended Western sensibilities, while bringing new forms of inequality. Thus, the Digo find it difficult to hold on to land which was traditionally theirs, because of colonial forms of land manage-

ment. (In fairness, I should note that the Gerlachs describe an interesting mechanism fostering equality, namely, the presence of contradictory rules, such as the opposition between matri- and patrilineality introduced by Islamicization.)

Except for papers by Greenwood and Mars, the articles in this volume could use further analysis and elaboration. Given this, and some inconsistencies in the reference sections, one wonders about the editorial services provided by Avebury Press. The typeface is not pleasant to read; neither are its printing standards impressive. At U.S. \$44.95, this short book is grossly overpriced. Nonetheless, it did help me to think about equality in a more systematic fashion, and other readers may benefit similarly.

An Error in Judgement: The Politics of Medical Care in an Indian/White Community

Dara Culhane Speck

Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1987. 281 pp. \$12.95 (paper)

Reviewer: Alexander M. Ervin

University of Saskatchewan

Personally, I would rate this book as the most significant publication in Canadian applied anthropology of the decade. It is all the more remarkable because it was not written by a senior academic but rather was originally formulated as a undergraduate thesis at Simon Fraser University. Although Speck is a novice academic (she is currently a doctoral student at the University of British Columbia), she does not come to this research inexperienced. She draws upon her years as a political activist and community developer at Alert Bay on Cormorant Island, British Columbia, a mixed community consisting of non-Natives and Kwakwaka'wakw Indians. She had married into the Native community and had served in various roles for the band council. She played a central advocacy role in the dispute that she describes.

The book centres on the tragically unnecessary death of a young Indian girl due to appendicitis. It is a passionate ethnography (a term used originally by the late Jules Henry) which vividly shows the effects of this death on the child's extended family and the community as a whole. That many Indian children die tragically does not lessen the pain of any particular instance for Native people. In this case the death was due to the negligence of an alcoholic doctor. As proven by a subsequent enquiry, two later deaths were also directly related to his negligence. But more than this, Speck shows that these incidents are not isolated but rather represent the sub-standard health care that Native people in Canada receive, a situation related to their colonized status.

Speck does not explicitly indicate her theoretical perspective; a political-economic one seems implicit and she handles it very well. In fact, one of the book's strengths is that it contains a well thought out anthropological perspective for social criticism without burdening the reader with the standard "genueflections" to literature reviews, conceptual operationalizations, and other overly academic "baggage." To do so would have taken away from the chronicle of the tragedy of Renée Smith's death and the portrayal of the injustices imposed by colonialism upon the Native people of Alert Bay. The types of data and literature used and the implicit theoretical