

The book concludes that we are "a long way from developing some simple grand theory of *the body*" (p. 262), but calls for an approach to the body that studies the "self as embodied." This book is an important contribution to this ongoing search for a sociology of the body.

For an Amerindian Autohistory: An Essay on the Foundations of a Social Ethic

Georges Sioui

Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992. xxv + 125 pp. \$29.95 (cloth)

Reviewer: Karen Szala-Meneok
Wilfrid Laurier University

Georges Sioui offers us a probing and wonderfully provocative exploration of Amerindian history and world view. Sioui sees Amerindian autohistory as an "ethical approach to history" (p. 21) which "studies the correspondences between Amerindian and non-Amerindian sources" (p. xxii). He argues that Amerindian history is best written by Native people and others who understand Amerindian cultural values. This book's purpose is to show how these values are reflected in Euroamerican thinking and how they may play a role in helping world populations deal with global environmental issues.

Sioui begins by discussing the impact of epidemics on the new world, and examines how these epidemics impeded the ability of Native peoples to "absorb the ideological and political shock" (p. 3) of European culture and hindered their ability to share their world view with Europeans and colonists. Amerindian world view focusses on "the sacred circle of life, wherein all beings, material and immaterial, are equal and interdependent" (p. 8) and the complementarity of the earth as mother and sky or universe as father or grandfather. Sioui explores the clashes that occurred between European androcentrism and paternalism and the animism and the "gynocentrism" of many Amerindian traditions.

In addition he addresses the assumptions of cultural evolution that excluded indigenous peoples from the traditions that are now characterized by technological hyper-innovation. Using the autohistory approach, Sioui tries to reconstruct 16th-century Huron culture. He discusses epidemics, war and social upheaval, examining how Amerindians were viewed by colonists and European intellectuals of the Enlightenment. Sioui examines how the ethnographically rich yet controversial 17th-century accounts of Amerindian culture by the French Baron de Lahontan were influenced by indigenous philosophers. Sioui powerfully argues that Lahontan's work (he cast Amerindians in a favourable light) was reflected in the ideas of Enlightenment writers such as Rousseau, Voltaire and Diderot. Lahontan served as an agent for the "Americization" of European thought. He concludes by employing the techniques of autohistory to document the conditions precipitating the dispersal of his Wendat (Huron) forebears in the hopes of empowering them and other Amerindian peoples to determine their history and their future.

This book may raise concerns among ethnographers and historians, who could take exception to his sometimes-sweeping assertions regarding a Pan-Indian philosophy. These assertions need greater substantiation. Given this book's brevity and its man-

date—laid out in its subtitle “An Essay on the Foundations of a Social Ethic”—I believe it is the author’s purpose to paint, in broad strokes, some general ideas and provoke more detailed research and dialogue from his readers. His most convincing arguments are situated within his own Wendat heritage.

The book’s central strengths arise from Sioui’s (a Wendat historian from Quebec) artful addressing of a constellation of issues ranging from Aboriginal influences on the Enlightenment, insights about the cultural values of Amerindians during the time of contact and Amerindian notions of gender and ecological interdependency and responsibility. He moves with enviable grace between standard academic and Amerindian materials. This book is many things. It is history, anthropology, philosophy and “poetry.” It is also an epistle or open letter to other Amerindians in which he declares confidently and quietly that writing their own history is possible. In the hands of a different writer this topic could easily have become a strident and bitter condemnation of the behaviour of Europeans since 1492. Rather this book is a model of reasoned reflection and rational discourse. Sioui has written in clear, concise and virtually jargon-free prose that, like poetry, powerfully evokes images and ideas and propels the reader by the power of the message and by the momentum of its stylistic form. In this regard, Sheila Fischman’s translation of *Pour un autohistoire amerindienne* into English should be commended for its careful rendering of Sioui’s arguments and for retaining the flavour of his distinctive literary style. Sioui offers a unique perspective on Amerindian history. He argues cogently within the confines of academic discourse while conveying the spirit of his Amerindian beliefs with power and conviction. This book is a pleasure to read and is a valuable source for students of Amerindian culture.

[*Managing Editor’s note:* This review was accepted for publication before its author became a member of *Anthropologica’s* editorial team.]

The Lance and the Shield: The Life and Times of Sitting Bull

Robert M. Utley

New York: Henry Holt, 1993. xvii + 413 pp. \$25.00 (cloth); Camp Hill, PA: Quality Paperback Book Club, 1994. \$14.95 (paper)

Reviewer: Lawrence F. Van Horn
National Park Service, Denver, Colorado
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The author organizes his material into 24 chapters with additional sections serving as preface, prologue and epilogue. Sitting Bull (*Tatanka Iyotaka*) lived from about 1831 to 1890. Utley characterizes him as a brave, outstanding Lakota leader and a man of great generosity to his family, friends and colleagues. Utley generally succeeds in portraying Sitting Bull as an individual dealing with enormous problems during a sad but dynamic period in the history of the North American continent, characterized by cultural and physical conflict between peoples and rapid change on the frontier.

Utley is at his best in this book describing Sitting Bull’s four years in Canada, 1877-81 (pp. 183-233). We are told about the essential decency and honesty of Major John M. Walsh of the North-West Mounted Police—traits that are contrasted with the intrigue at higher levels of government, involving diplomacy between Canada and the United States over the presence and status of Sitting Bull and his followers in Canada.