

with feminist theorists, "a way of acting that simultaneously engages the power of context and the context of power" (p. 66).

The three chapters of Part One, "The Culture of Biomedicine," critically examine what Kleinman calls the "deep cultural processes" (p. 16) that make biomedicine an effective technical-rational strategy and at the same time limit its effectiveness as a response to human problems. Biomedicine and bioethics, Kleinman argues in Chapters 2 and 3 respectively, privilege a very Western and late-capitalist understanding of illness as an individual experience that lends itself easily to regulation by market forces and the state. Even international public health, with its population- and community-based orientation, is conscripted by its reliance on the concept of "objective" measurement (critiqued in Chapter 4) into the service of the political and economic interests of states and international institutions such as the World Bank, oriented as they are to "science-based" development (p. 88).

The chapters in Part Two, "Suffering as Social Experience," return to the central question of *The Illness Narratives*—what is at stake for particular individuals?—but situate it in the broader context of power relations. This allows Kleinman to trace the delegitimation of illness experience through a variety of distinct but related domains: the dehumanizing potential of both biomedical and anthropological discourses on suffering (Chapters 5 and 6); a reframing of Goffman's concept of stigma through an exploration of the "social course" of epilepsy in China and its relationship to Chinese social policy (Chapter 7); and the "tenuous balance between therapy and violence" (p. 189) exemplified by the diagnosis and treatment of "posttraumatic stress disorder."

Part Three of the book consists of a single long chapter, a review essay on the "new wave of ethnographies in medical anthropology." This is a personal vision of the current state of the art, but one that all ethnographers of illness and medicine will read with profit. "Any good book," Kleinman observes (p. 255), "... shows its limitations in building its strengths," and this understanding permits him a seriousness and depth of engagement with the works of other scholars that he identifies as "the crucial inter-subjective practice of participation in the building of an academic field" (p. 197). His nuanced readings are models of and for what this practice can be at its best.

### **Victims of Benevolence: The Dark Legacy of the Williams Lake Residential School**

Elizabeth Furniss

Vancouver, BC: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1995. 142 pp. \$12.95 (paper)

### **When the North Was Red: Aboriginal Education in Soviet Siberia**

Dennis A. Bartels and Alice L. Bartels

Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995. xiv + 126 pp. \$39.95 (cloth)

*Reviewer:* Tony Fisher

University of Alberta

The books under review are quite different even though their topics are similar. They are historical and documentary rather than ethnographic, and both are quite short.

Furniss documents the history of the Williams Lake Residential School (St. Joseph's or "the Mission" school) from 1891 to the 1990s (pp. 48-50). The institution was closed in 1981, but it has been reappearing in British Columbia courts since the

late 1980s due to the disclosure of serious sexual abuse of pupils and workers in the Mission school (pp. 114-115). The Bartels' book covers a similar time period, but it focusses on a much larger picture, the history of Russian (erstwhile Soviet and now, again, Russian) influence on the indigenous peoples of Siberia—emphasizing the development of schooling for the offspring of these peoples.

The difference between the books is this difference in focus, one residential school versus a half of a continent, and the concomitant difference in closeness to the subject matter. Furniss was working with and for the Cariboo Tribal Council on her story. The Bartels were separated from theirs by several languages, Cold War ideological defences and an ocean and another half a continent. Much of Furniss's book is devoted to the discussion and documentation of the deaths of two Indian boys, one in 1902 (p. 62) and another in 1920 (p. 92). These discussions frame the larger discussion of the abuse of students in the Mission school and its failure(s).

Both books discuss the use of education to assist in the assimilation of indigenous peoples by the state. In this regard there is a difference, too. In the British Columbia situation, assimilation is to the institutions of the province and the Canadian state. In Siberia, during the 70 years of Soviet domination, assimilation is to the coming socialist millennium.

In each case ideology is used to accomplish this goal. The Oblates of Mary Immaculate were driven by religious feelings to convert the Shuswap to Christianity and to facilitate their gaining and accepting second-class citizenship in Canada and in British Columbia. The peoples of Siberia were confronted with "Sovietization" and "consolidation" as methods by which "cultural hegemony in the name of the proletariat" could be established (Bartels and Bartels, pp. 6-7, 97).

In both cases the Shuswap and various Siberians have survived epidemics, exploitation, alcohol and manipulation. If one looks at each contemporary circumstance, which would be difficult, it would be even more difficult to judge which of these societies are better off in their survival of colonial regimes, capitalist or socialist. The Bartels report (p. 81) that the Chuckchi were suffering from social problems ranging from language loss, high infant mortality rates, lone-parent families, alcoholism and school troubles, and that "northern activists" saw one solution to these problems to be the creation of reserves, as in Canada or the United States (p. 84). These activists were unaware of the Canadian situation in the 1960s as described by Furniss; many of the northern Shuswap communities were plagued with high rates of unemployment, alcohol abuse, violence and family breakdown (p. 114). Ironically, in both Soviet-less Siberia and residential school-free British Columbia, the white (whiteman?) governmental and economic structures remain (Bartels and Bartels, p. 88; Furniss, p. 119), and in both cases seem to be roadblocks to recovery and change.

But as Chief Bev Sellars, of the Soda Creek First Nation, says,

... we have to remember the thousands who were so tormented by their experiences and years of being made to feel so totally worthless that they ended their lives. They no longer have the opportunity to try and change their lives, but *we do*. We also have the responsibility to help each other across this country, otherwise the horrible statistics of our people will not improve, and we will lose many more who do not know how to change the way they feel about themselves. It's time we started living again, and not just surviving, as so many of us did for so long. (Furniss, pp. 127-128)

The First Nations of Siberia and Canada have the same task, changing the way they feel about themselves, so they can live again and challenge the white institutions and

politicians who (and whose ancestors) have oppressed them. Each book gives readers a quick glimpse of the institutional and cultural picture. *Victims of Benevolence* gives readers better value for their money, and, for Canadian readers, it is familiar material.

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### **Forbidden Narratives: Critical Autobiography as Social Science**

Kathryn Church

Amsterdam: Gordon and Breach Publishers, 1995. 160 pp. \$45.00 (cloth), \$22.00 (paper)

*Reviewer:* Susan Heald

University of Manitoba

This book is volume 2 in a series entitled *Theory and Practice in Medical Anthropology and International Health*. The "Introduction to the Series" tells us that "The distinguishing characteristic of this new series is its emphasis on cultural aspects of medicine and their links to larger social contexts and concrete applicability of the anthropological endeavor" (no page number).

The "forbidden narratives" of the title are two. Church recounts the stories of psychiatric consumers/survivors who endeavoured to participate in an Ontario-wide consultation process, investigating community mental health legislation. Church's own narrative of her "physical and emotional breakdown" is presented as running through and contributing toward the conduct and presentation of her research into "consumer participation" in the mental health field. Including herself—to wit, the story of her professional and academic trajectory—as a major character in her work, Church takes up a variety of challenges to positivist conceptions of knowledge and "proper research," particularly those critiques generated within political economy, feminism and post-structuralism.

Church vividly illustrates how research projects and ideas develop—the confusions, challenges and changes often missing from research reports; she also gives presence to the various people who participated actively in the development of her ideas and the production of her work, something that is often relegated to a page or a paragraph of "Acknowledgments." She draws valuable and interesting parallels between the restrictions on her speaking as an "academic" about "personal" matters, and those confronting "consumers/survivors" as they endeavoured to become participants in a government consultation process. Church, unlike the consumers/survivors, is accustomed to being able to speak, and to being heard. But like them, she can be heard only if she says the right things. Throughout her book, Church provides a provocative challenge to standard academic forms.

In part because I agree that standard academic forms *need* to be challenged and that researchers need to locate themselves in our texts, I consider this an important book. Yet there were moments when I wanted Church to be less present, or to elaborate more explicitly her reasons for making her own story so painfully visible. Such reactions, which Church acknowledges also having to her own work, are part of what is being questioned here: why are we so committed to excluding feelings, pain and other elements of "the personal" from academic work? What have we lost by doing this, and what might be gained by reversing this? What is really being signalled by any impulse to reject certain kinds of statements as inappropriate? While I accept these as important questions, there is a need to try to clarify how, why, when and where such exposure